



## **Workplace Health/Safety Measures Worth the Cost**

Some people think workplace health and safety costs are too much. They should think again. A workplace injury or illness can be very costly. It can be especially devastating to a smaller, more vulnerable business.

The costs are direct and indirect - direct in terms of pain and suffering to the injured worker and his or her family; indirect to the employer in terms of a shrunken bottom line and interrupted production.

### **Let's be more specific:**

#### The Workplace Safety & Insurance Board's costs:

Companies with poor safety records pay more in WSIB assessments. Permanently disabling injuries are particularly costly.

#### Lost Time:

An injury often results in time lost not only of the injured employee but also the other employees coming to the aid of the injured worker, or time spent discussing the situation. Equipment and workplace damage may also have occurred.

#### Modified Work:

Injured or sick (from occupational illness) workers often need changes to their workstations and/or hours of work when they first return to work.

#### Replacement Workers:

Retraining another worker to do the injured worker's job or paying overtime to others can cost a lot. Meanwhile, the money spent for training the injured worker is wasted.

#### Customer Problems:

Worker injury or illness may mean delays in serving customers who may take their business elsewhere.

#### Reduced Productivity:

The injury/illness investigation may take several hours or even days to complete. Result: production downtime and disruption in service, leading to rework and rescheduling.

## **What can a company do to avoid injuries and illnesses?**

The first and foremost requirement is the owner/manager's commitment to a healthy and a safe workplace. Everything flows from that.

Next: Companies must realize that health and safety is part of doing business and must be built into everything they do.

So workers must be clearly told what a company's expectations are for assuring personal safety, the safety of others, and the success of the company's health and safety policies.

Effectively managing health and safety requires the same types of approaches used to achieve high standards of quality and productivity. Health and safety is part of production, and vice-versa.

The successful company achieves this integration. It's a win-win situation. Costs are avoided and productivity and worker well-being is increased.

The information and resources for achieving a healthy and safe workplace are now available to you in your community. The Safe Communities Incentive Program provides you with information and a means to share in the savings from the Workplace Safety & Insurance Board.

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