

May 15, 2000

Occupational Health and Safety Week is from May 15-21

The Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board is encouraging employers and workers to "*renew their commitment to safety*" during North American Occupational Health and Safety Week.

"We still have a long way to go to make safety the first priority on Yukon job sites," commented Sheila Lilles, Director of Occupational Health and Safety. Too often time or money concerns make safety a low-ranking priority on a worksite.

"But in both the short and the long term, unsafe work practices take a huge toll on employers and workers. The consequences of workplace accidents are tragic, expensive and time-consuming. And the vast majority are 100% preventable," Lilles added.

According to Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board's claim statistics, in the last five years, there have been 10 workplace fatalities and over 6,000 workplace injuries in the Yukon. This works out to over 20 injury-causing accidents a week.

A key concern for the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board is young workers. According to statistics gathered by compensation boards across Canada, workers under the age of 25 are one third more likely to be injured on the job.

"Many young workers will be entering the workforce this summer," said Lilles. "We are asking employers to make sure that their new employees know what the safety procedures are for their job. Young workers bring a lot of enthusiasm to a jobsite. Unfortunately that enthusiasm sometimes gets them into trouble when they forget to wear their protective gear or don't take the proper safety precautions."

During Occupational Health and Safety Week the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board will be running a series of ads highlighting six keys to safety: *Wear the Gear, Get Trained, Think First, Drive Sober, Buckle Up* and *Help Others*. The Board's new newsletter **WorkSafe™ Yukon** will also be distributed throughout the Yukon.

"We want to encourage employers and workers to call us and find out how we can help them prevent accidents at their worksites. We offer training, jobsite evaluations and a safety video library to both employers and workers," Lilles concluded. The training and information that the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board offers covers a wide range of worksites: from health hazards in painting and carpentry to landscaping safety.

The Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board is a crown corporation that administers both the *Workers' Compensation Act* and the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. It is run by a Board of Directors made up of two employer and two worker representatives, a neutral chair and an alternate as well as the chair of the Appeal Tribunal and the president and CEO of the board.

For more information please contact:

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