
News Release

April 21, 2020

**WORKERS COMPENSATION BOARD OF MANITOBA RETURNS
\$37-MILLION SURPLUS TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL RELIEF TO EMPLOYERS**

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**Welcome Relief to Manitoba Employers
During COVID-19 Pandemic: Pallister**

The Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba is returning a \$37-million surplus to provide financial relief to eligible employers in the province, Premier Brian Pallister announced today.

“The COVID-19 pandemic is having a dramatic impact on employers across the province, with businesses especially hurting right now, and we’re working across government and with our partners to find ways to provide relief to employers that need it,” said Pallister. “Given the economic uncertainties, these actions will provide money to employers at a time where cash flow is a challenge.”

The Workers Compensation Board (WCB) board of directors has approved and authorized further relief for employers who fund the WCB by returning approximately \$37 million in surplus funds.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the majority of our customers and we have actively explored how we can help mitigate the financial impact to employers,” said Michael Werier, chairperson of the WCB. “With a healthy reserve fund, we are pleased to provide a refund of approximately 20 per cent to employers to help bolster their bottom line. It’s incumbent upon businesses like ourselves to do our part to actively help support financial recovery efforts over the next several months.”

This is the second year the WCB has returned surplus funds to eligible employers while still maintaining the lowest assessment rate in Canada. In making this decision, the WCB’s board of directors considered the long-term financial projections in conjunction with maintaining rate stability and still protecting the workers compensation system against risk, uncertainty and market volatility.

In May, eligible employers will receive a credit to their account based on 20 per cent of their 2019 premium. To be eligible to receive the surplus, employers must have fulfilled their payroll reporting responsibilities for 2019 and paid a WCB premium in 2019. Employers can still report their 2019 payroll to receive the surplus distribution.

For the health-care sector, which includes regional health authorities and several other agencies such as CancerCare Manitoba, Riverview Health Centre and personal care homes, this equals an approximate \$6.2-million refund.

Of the \$37 million, WCB expects \$29 million will be returned to the private sector, with approximately \$7 million going to small businesses in Manitoba.

“We are proud the work we’ve done over the years to increase our system efficiency allows us to have the lowest WCB rate in Canada and we can now offer some measure of relief to employers suffering the financial hardships COVID-19 has created,” said Winston Maharaj, president and CEO, WCB. “We applaud all of the employers and front-line workers who continue to serve the public in these extremely challenging times.”

Earlier this month, WCB announced it would defer premium payments until the end of May, not charge business interest and/or penalties for non-payment until October, extend the payroll-reporting deadline until the end of May and ensure that coverage remains active for accounts that choose to defer payments until the end of October. Clearances will remain in good standing.

The WCB is a mutual workplace injury and disability statutory corporation funded by employer premiums. It insures more than 34,000 employers and 76 per cent of the Manitoba workforce.