



**Charting New Directions in Health & Safety Excellence**

## **COMPASS NEWSLETTER Summer 2009**

Hi everyone. Well summer is upon us and we hope everybody makes it a happy one. Please drive safely if summer vacation plans include travelling.

### **PERCEPTION SURVEY "DEMO" VIDEOS NOW AVAILABLE**

We have created two new short videos. One video is on the rationale for conducting perception surveys and the other is an overview of our web-based survey application. You can check them out under our Products section.

To view the video [\*\*click here\*\*](#). (note: the first video on the rationale for conducting perception surveys will play automatically. To view the overview of the web based application click on the "View Demo Video" near bottom of page)

### **SAFETY PERCEPTION SURVEY GUIDEBOOK**

The 3rd "new and improved" edition of our book has just been released. We've added some interesting new material as well as a workshop at the end of the book to test what you have learned. [\*\*Click here\*\*](#) to preview a chapter.

### **NEW COURSE - ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLES TO ACHIEVING SAFETY EXCELLENCE**

This is a one day course for managers and supervisors looking for more than just the basics. It's ideal as a primer for middle and senior management and an extension of safety basics for supervisors. The course is designed to explore key factors leading to safety success and failure. Some of the topics include:

- safety culture
- leading the H&S process
- employee behaviour
- effective recognition programs
- lag and leading indicators
- techniques to improve investigations and inspections
- and much more

Participants will learn what it really takes to achieve safety excellence.

This course is scheduled for Nov 18, 2009. Call for more details and to **register**.

## **DEFENSIVE DRIVING TRAINING**

Over half of all workplace fatalities are driving related. The Canada Safety Council's Defensive Driving Course has been designed to help you and your employees become better and safer drivers. In our defensive driver training course participants will learn to apply safe driving techniques and practices. Successful completion offers the additional benefit of a 3 demerit reduction to the participant. Employers everywhere want to protect their most important asset, their employees.

### **DRIVING FACTS:**

- Motor vehicle injuries are the number one single factor of injury and death in the workplace
- Every day 8 people die in vehicle collisions in Canada
- 85% of traffic collisions are preventable (by the driver)
- Safe driving requires the adoption of an attitude known as defensive driving

**Give us a call** and we will help you minimize motor vehicle incidents and costs.

## **RESTRUCTURING OF ONTARIO HEALTH & SAFETY ASSOCIATIONS**

Ontario safety association structure is similar to many other Canadian provinces. Most of their safety associations are funded by employer WCB premiums. In return, the associations provide safety services to the industries that support them. Until recently, the employers of the province of Ontario supported 14 safety associations. For a number of reasons (primarily cost) they have restructured down to 4 shared services associations. In addition, two groups will remain as training and medical clinic services.

Why did the Workers Safety Insurance Board (WSIB) restructure?

- Cost – there are significant costs associated with all of the various associations operating independently, (e.g. HR, IT, training, auditing, services). Consolidating these services should save employers a great deal of money.
- Consistency – the new structure promises to provide a standard bundle of products and services. In the past, one association would charge significantly more or less for the same course. One association may offer the same course as another association in a one day format while another may offer it in 2 or more days. Fewer providers will allow for more consistency in course delivery.
- Consensus – with 14 associations it was difficult to obtain consensus on key health and safety issues. It will be much easier to obtain a consensus with fewer decision makers at the table.
- Duplication – many of the services provided by the 14 associations were duplicated. It is hoped that the realigned groups will be able to agree on a wide range of best in class training and program services currently offered by some of the associations as well as some external agencies.

- Specificity – restructured associations should be able to provide better industry specific services at less cost. With some of the efficiencies mentioned above, the associations should be left with more time and resources to provide industry specific services.
- Innovation – many of the associations were so busy providing variations of basic services that they were unable to initiate other innovative health and safety initiatives. The restructured associations should be more responsive to industry needs and receptive to innovative solutions.

The new association structure promises to provide existing and new industry specific services at less cost to employers.

### **PARTNERSHIPS IN INJURY REDUCTION (PIR) PROGRAM - AN OPPORTUNITY TO IMPROVE**

Supporters of the Government of Alberta, Partnerships in Injury Reduction (PIR) program will attest to how it has helped companies become safer places to work. With any program there are always opportunities to improve. I believe the real benefits to the PIR program are yet to be realized. Every year employers spend millions of dollars to support Certifying Partners (CPs) through WCB assessments, course and audit fees, etc. In return they receive safety services such as safety training and PIR administration. One fairly recent change to the PIR program (i.e. the requirement for auditors to pass an exam in order to receive an auditor certification), gives me some hope that Alberta Employment and Immigration (AEI) is taking a serious look at improving and standardizing the PIR program.

To achieve an auditor certification AEI is now requiring CPs to administer the standard auditing exam. I applaud this new requirement and hope this change will help standardize how CPs administer the PIR auditing standards. Employers from all industries are led to believe that all PIR participating companies are participating on one level playing field but they are not. There are numerous differences between how CPs administer the PIR auditing process making it more or less difficult to obtain a COR. Let's take a look at some of these differences:

- Certifying Partner auditor pre-qualifications requirements are all over the map. Some require a two day program building course to qualify while others require much more. Auditor certification training varies anywhere from only two days to as many as five. At least one CP requires perspective auditors to have a number of years of experience within the industry in order to meet their auditor requirements - others do not.
- Some CPs employ a peer auditing process while others encourage or require the use of a professional auditor. As you may suspect, there may be significant differences in audit quality between a peer auditor who may audit once a year and a professional auditor conducting twenty or thirty audits per year.
- Depending on the CP, the audit quality assurance review process takes anywhere from approximately two weeks to many months. Employers may have little time to act on recommendations before their next audit.

- The degree or extent to which all or none scoring is used is another significant difference as is the percent positive required to award full points.
- There are CPs that require auditors to stick to a set script of questions for each interviewee depending on whether it is a worker, supervisor or management. Others allow the auditor to focus questions appropriately depending on the information required from the interviewee (eg. focus on training related question with the Training Supervisor).
- There are some differences in how some CPs interpret questions and scoring using the same audit protocol.
- The list goes on but is too lengthy for this newsletter.

The above differences are reason enough for standardization. Some CPs indicate their audit protocols need to be industry specific. Well, take a look at these protocols. Are they industry specific? Not really. Generally what has happened is a few questions have been rearranged, some scoring changes made, the questions have been placed into six or more categories, but the reality is, their protocols are all really asking for the same information. None of them exhibit the industry specificity they claim to.

These differences between how CPs administer the PIR process are significant. I see this examination requirement as an opportunity to standardize the process. Set one audit standard that all CPs have to live with. Remove the auditor training from the CPs and place it with a sole provider or one institution that can offer one comprehensive training course instructed by a qualified instructor(s). All of this will help level the PIR playing field. It will eliminate auditor frustrations as meeting some CP audit standards can be like hitting a moving target. It will bring about parity throughout the PIR process regardless of the industry. And finally it will allow CPs to focus their prevention efforts on specific programs for their industry. These specific services are what employers hope and expect to receive for the financial support they provide to their CPs. Let's see if AEI picks up the ball and runs with it.