

INTRODUCTION

The new *Workers Compensation Act* (Chapter 10, Acts of 1994-95) came into force on February 1, 1996. This represented the first fundamental re-write of the *Workers' Compensation Act* since its inception in 1915 and introduced several major reforms, including:

- the move to an earnings-replacement system of benefit calculation for many permanently-impaired workers;
- the requirement for most larger employers to offer re-employment to their injured workers;
- the change to an experience rating system with respect to employer assessments; and,
- creation of the Workers' Compensation Appeals Tribunal (WCAT).

The Policies in this Manual indicate the rules the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) applies when interpreting the words of the new *Workers' Compensation Act*. Policies are binding for Board staff, as well as WCAT. The Workers' Compensation Board of Directors consists of equal representation from both workers and employers, a neutral Chair and a Deputy Chair, who are granted policy-making authority by Section 183 of the Act.

For your convenience a 'User's Guide' has been included immediately following this Introduction to provide more information with respect to how this manual is organized. You may find it helpful to review the guide before continuing on to the rest of the Manual.

The process for policy development at the WCB is as follows:

- Policy issues are researched and a recommendation brought before the Board of Directors for consideration. The Board may, after discussion, request that the recommendation be revised, or ask that further research be prepared to facilitate the discussion. Once satisfied that a policy recommendation is appropriate, the Board may approve its adoption (usually by consensus).
- The policy is then signed by the Executive Corporate Secretary, officially issued, and distributed to all Policy Manual holders.

All new policies approved by the Board of Directors are provided to Policy Manual holders as updates to the Policy Manual. In addition, a record of the Board of Directors' deliberations, in the form of a one-to-two page summary, is distributed following each monthly Board meeting. This record is known as the 'Retrospective' and is provided to all Policy Manual holders as part of the Policy Manual subscription service.

If you have any questions or comments about the Policy manual or would like general information about the WCB and its programs, please contact us at:

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This Policy Manual is also available for viewing free of charge at all regional libraries in Nova Scotia.

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