



Yukon Workers'
Compensation
Health and
Safety Board

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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YWCHSB announces increased enforcement and increased penalties for violations of Occupational Health and Safety regulations.

Whitehorse: YWCHSB records show that employers' compliance with OH&S orders to correct workplace hazards has been lacking.

In 2009, a total of 169 workplace inspections resulted in orders being written but only 49 or 29% provided notice of compliance by the order's deadline.

This non-compliance contributes to increased workplace injuries and more claims costs. It also results in increased administration costs as Safety Officers are required to write additional warning letters requesting compliance and often having to re-inspect workplaces to ensure compliance. It's not fair that these additional costs have to be shared with employers that are in compliance.

Employers have made it clear to YWCHSB that they want to see a greater incentive for their competitors to not cut corners on safety.

Starting June 1st 2010 employers who fail to notify YWCHSB of compliance with written orders within the deadline provided will receive an immediate penalty of \$250. For every week the employer has not notified YWCHSB of compliance the fine will double.

For employers who have not complied, not corrected the hazard or situation or have serious infractions of OH&S regulations – penalties will also increase.

For violations classified in the low to medium severity range, penalties for employers will increase from \$500 to \$1,000. For supervisors and workers the penalties remain the same at \$250 and \$50 respectively.

For violations classified as severe, the penalty for employers will increase from \$1,000 to \$2,500. Supervisors' penalties increase from \$500 to \$750. For workers the penalty will increase from \$100 to \$150.

The penalty increases are not aimed at increasing revenue for YWCHSB.

The focus of these actions is to make penalty levels sufficient to make it more cost effective to fix the safety issue than to continue to pay penalties. It's also about motivating an improved safety culture in Yukon workplaces.

OH&S is also adopting a zero tolerance policy for safety violations involving machine guards and equipment maintenance. There have been a number of serious injuries in these two areas and OH&S believes this policy will contribute to improving safety.

A similar zero tolerance policy that started in July 2009 for workers not wearing the required personal protective equipment and clothing resulted in significant compliance improvement.

Also beginning June 1, 2010 and continuing on a quarterly basis, YWCHSB will be listing on its website, the names of the companies who have been fined for OH&S violations in the previous month.

To aid employers in the compliance process, YWCHSB has added a compliance notification form to its website which can be submitted online. In addition to written confirmation of compliance, employers can also attach a photo showing that the hazard has been corrected.

YWCHSB also recognizes that some Yukon businesses are working hard to improve safety in their workplaces.

Each year those companies who have achieved their Certificate of Recognition (COR) equivalency or their Small Employers Certificate of Recognition (SECOR) will be recognized with a full page ad in the newspapers publicly recognizing their commitment to safety.

In addition, YWCHSB is working with its stakeholder partners to develop a high profile annual awards program to recognize those businesses that are leading the way in workplace safety.

YWCHB believes this award event will create peer and public respect for their safety efforts and it will encourage others to join them in improving the culture of safety in Yukon workplaces.

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