

# WCB Voice



## Asbestos Kills - it's best to test

The number one threat to workers in Manitoba isn't a slip, trip or fall. It isn't a cut, crush or burn. Instead, the threat is a naturally occurring mineral composed of flexible fibers that are resistant to heat, electricity and corrosion. While these qualities make the mineral useful, it can also be very toxic. The threat is asbestos.

Asbestos is the number one cause of workplace deaths in Manitoba, and is still present in many homes and buildings built before 1990. It was commonly used in more than 3,000 building materials and products because of its insulating qualities, strong fibres and resistance to fire.

Harmful asbestos fibers can be found in a multitude of materials such as: spray fire-proofing material, mechanical insulation, linoleum backing, floor tiles, vermiculite, drywall taping compound, cement board and tiles, cement pipes and decorative textured coatings.

The danger to people occurs when materials containing asbestos are disturbed, releasing tiny fibres into the air that, once inhaled, can lead to life-threatening lung diseases such as lung cancer, asbestosis and mesothelioma.

Asbestos kills. The actions you take today can reduce or even eliminate exposure to this potentially lethal hazard. SAFE Work Manitoba has resources to help all Manitobans learn about the dangers related to asbestos and how to prevent exposure, including when to test for it.

See where asbestos can be hiding,  
visit [safemanitoba.com](http://safemanitoba.com)

## A return to work plan helps you get back to work safely.

Learn how at  
[wcb.mb.ca](http://wcb.mb.ca)



## 2021 Annual Report highlights strong financial performance and benefits of injury prevention and Return to Work programs

The WCB's 2021 Annual Report and Five Year Plan was tabled in the Manitoba Legislature on May 11, 2022. The report highlights the strong financial position that allowed the WCB to return surplus funds to employers and the continued success in reducing workplace injuries.

"The WCB continued to deliver excellent service to our employers and support to injured workers in another year that was marked with a continuously shifting operating environment," said Richard Deacon, President and CEO of the WCB. "We continued to build resiliency and adapt the way we do things, including offering more remote learning opportunities in the areas of safety and health and creating greater collaborative efforts with the healthcare community."

There were signs of a recovering economy as vaccination rates increased and more businesses reopened, resulting in a three per cent increase in the number of registered employers. Premium revenues increased as well, along with operating expenses of \$107.1 million. Investments enjoyed a 9.9 per cent return, ending the year with \$165.4 million. "Overall, the WCB ended 2021 with an operating surplus of \$78 million, which was offset by another surplus fund distribution of \$95 million to eligible employers," said Deacon. "Our fund reserve remains well above the 130 per cent funding target at 150.4 per cent."

As more workers returned to the workforce, resulting injury claims increased by 8.3 per cent compared to 2020. Compared to pre-COVID time loss claim volumes, 2021 time loss claims were down in most industries with a time loss injury rate of 2.7\* per 100 full time workers.

"Safety and health continued to be top of mind with employers and the WCB was pleased to have another 119 employers become SAFE Work Certified and another 187 employers working their way through the certification process," said Deacon. "As a top employer, we are practicing what we advocate by also working toward our own safety certification."

Visit [wcb.mb.ca](https://wcb.mb.ca) to view the WCB's 2021 Annual Report and Five Year Plan

\* estimated at time of printing

## Motorists can help protect workers' safety on Manitoba roads

The 2022 SAFE Roads campaign officially launched on May 19. The annual campaign serves as a reminder to motorists to reduce their speed and drive with extra caution as the summer construction season brings more workers to Manitoba roadways.

Richard Deacon, CEO and President, Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba, said the annual SAFE Roads campaign is vital to reduce occurrence of workplace injuries and illnesses in Manitoba.

"Workers deserves to feel safe at work, and that includes those who make their living working on, or near Manitoba roadways," said Deacon. "While commuting, motorists play an important role in recognizing the potential risks. We can do this by being more cautious and aware when we encounter a situation where workers are present."

*Speeding Will Get You There Faster* is the theme of the 2022 SAFE Roads campaign, which aims to increase awareness through social media, radio spots and billboards that feature several different outcomes of a motorist's decision to speed, putting construction workers, emergency responders and others who make their living on and near our roadways at risk.

"As the weather warms up, we know that marks the beginning of a busy construction season that will see a lot of workers working on, or near our roads," said Doyle Pivniuk, Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure. "Serious consequences can be avoided by drivers understanding the dangers of speeding and recognizing that the roads are someone's work space."

The annual campaign has had an impact – leading to increased awareness among drivers about the need to protect the safety and health of Manitoba workers, according to Chris Lorenc, President of the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association and Chair of the SAFE Roads Committee.

"Every year, we hear about numerous dangerous near misses or tragic collisions causing injuries and sometimes deaths at road construction sites. This is entirely avoidable and inexcusable," said Lorenc. "We need drivers to slow down and proceed with caution, to ensure our people repairing your roads get home safely to their families."

For more information on the SAFE Roads campaign visit [safemanitoba.com](https://safemanitoba.com)