

NEWS RELEASE

Registration campaign ensures fairness for New Brunswick businesses and protection for workers

Saint John, New Brunswick, December 10, 2008...The Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) and WorkSafeNB (formerly the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission) have entered into an information-sharing agreement through a Memorandum of Understanding. The agreement allows the organizations to share employer registration information, helping them identify employers who may be registered with one organization, but not the other. The information will also be used to determine if an employer should be paying both assessment premiums to WorkSafeNB as well as income tax and harmonized sales tax to the CRA.

William V. Baker, Commissioner of the Canada Revenue Agency, emphasized the importance of maintaining a level competitive field for businesses and of ensuring employers and workers are well protected against workplace injuries.

“It’s essential that every business pays its fair share towards government programs and services. The Canada Revenue Agency believes in using responsible enforcement to ensure everyone contributes equally,” Baker said.

“New Brunswick businesses need to know that their competition is paying the same costs they are,” said Roberta Dugas, Chair of the WorkSafeNB Board of Directors. “Our stakeholders expect us to practise due diligence.”

Compliance with both organizations is mandatory for most employers. Discovering after the fact that an employer’s company should have been registered can create significant financial hardship. If employers are not registered, but should be, they may be charged backdated premiums and penalties.

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Mary Tucker
Manager, Communications Department
WorkSafeNB
Ph: 506 632-2828
E-mail: mary.tucker@ws-ts.nb.ca

Heather Cameron
Communications Manager
Canada Revenue Agency
Ph: 506 636-5485
Email: heather.cameron@cra.gc.ca

Backgrounder

The Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) and WorkSafeNB (formerly the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission) entered into an agreement to exchange business data to ensure that New Brunswick businesses are properly registered with both organizations.

The CRA and WorkSafeNB registration campaign is designed to increase fairness and equity within the business community, while ensuring that New Brunswick's employers and workers are protected against the impact of workplace injuries and have access to expert advice on health and safety matters. The campaign will also ensure that employers are contributing their fair share to the tax base, which funds our country's social programs and services.

Information-sharing between the CRA and WorkSafeNB meets the legal requirements under freedom of information and privacy legislation. An amendment to the *Income Tax Act* in 1999 provided the CRA with the authority to disclose taxpayer information to administer the Act. Section 241(4) of the Act specifies that the CRA can provide taxpayer information to provincial government bodies. Similarly, Section 12 of the *Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission (WHSCC) Act* authorizes WorkSafeNB to enter into information-sharing agreements with other levels of government and various types of governmental organizations.

In fairness to the employers who have been contributing to our federal and provincial tax base and workers' compensation over time, employers who have not met these same requirements will face penalties and interest fees, as well as retroactive premiums.

Both the Canada Revenue Agency and WorkSafeNB will recognize a 30-day response period to permit voluntary compliance. Employers who are required to register and who come forward voluntarily will not face penalties; however they will be required to pay arrears plus interest where applicable. A delay in responding may result in penalties.

If businesses requested by the CRA or WorkSafeNB to register fail to do so within the 30-day period indicated in the initial contact letter or before a follow-up phone call, they will be required to pay arrears, interest and penalties.

The CRA currently has information-sharing partnerships with the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board of Ontario, Newfoundland and Labrador Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission, Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board and the Workers' Compensation Board of Nova Scotia.

These partnerships have demonstrated that information sharing provides the opportunity to better identify, contact and register employers, which in turn creates greater fairness and equity for businesses across Canada.

WorkSafeNB administers no-fault workplace accident and disability insurance for employers and their workers, funded solely through employer assessments. WorkSafeNB is committed to preventing workplace injuries and illnesses through education and the enforcement of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.

WorkSafeNB is a Crown corporation governed by a board of directors that serves more than 300,000 workers and 13,600 employers.

The CRA promotes compliance with Canada's tax laws through communication, quality service, and responsible enforcement and plays an important role in the economic and social well-being of Canadians.