

## **The Toronto and Ottawa ACSESS Safety Groups now accepting new members for 2005**

### ***Program Overview***

The WSIB Safety Groups Program is designed to promote health and safety in the workplace. This is accomplished through mentoring, pooling of resources and sharing of best practices between ACSESS member firms, the Association and the [Workplace Safety and Insurance Board \(WSIB\)](#). Along with improved safety records, member firms can receive financial benefits in the form of rebates from the WSIB. Members interested in joining the group are encouraged to contact ACSESS prior to **December 15th, 2004**.

The program rewards firms that incorporate prevention measures into their daily business. It began as a three-year trial in 2000 and due to its success, became an ongoing prevention initiative in July 2002. The program has received high approval ratings from participating members.

ACSESS is currently sponsoring the Temporary Agencies safety group in Toronto and Ottawa made up of 50 firms from the services sector.

### ***How the Program Works***

At the start of the year, member firms select five safety elements they will initiate or improve upon, from a list provided by the WSIB. Firms attend meetings, share ideas and pool resources; learning from each other how to put these initiatives into place.

At the end of the year, the safety group may receive a rebate, based on the entire group's success in the program. For example, if the average firm implements 60% of their changes, then the group will receive 60% of the potential rebate.

### ***Role of ACSESS as Sponsor***

Each safety group has a sponsor. The sponsor leads and coordinates the group. Working with the WSIB and Health and Safety Associations, ACSESS encourages and helps workplaces develop health and safety programs. If a firm is having trouble implementing a safety element, it can approach the sponsor for support and guidance. The sponsor also recruits new members, organizes meetings and reports the group's progress back to the WSIB.

### ***Program Participation***

To participate in the Safety Groups Program a firm must:

- Be an ACSESS member
- Have commitment from the owner or senior management to participate in the program.
- Create and enhance a safety culture in the workplace.
- Be a schedule 1 firm.
- Be in good standing with the WSIB.
- Be committed to participating for a least one full calendar year.
- Be in only one safety group at a time.
- Not be a member of the Safe Communities Incentive Program.
- Complete all of the requirements of the Safety Groups Program such as:
  - Participate in at least three safety group meetings throughout the year.
  - Complete baseline and year-end

assessments of the firm's health and safety program strengths and weaknesses.

- Develop and implement an action plan of health and safety elements.
- Keep sponsor informed of progress.

### ***How to qualify for a rebate***

- Every firm in the group must complete a workplace assessment. The WSIB provides a generic assessment tool that may be altered to suit the firms in the group. The group decides if the assessments should be self-administered or conducted by a third party. With the results of the assessment, each firm develops a plan for improving their health and safety programs.
- The group meets periodically to network, share practical experience and assess progress.
- One year later, the assessments are repeated.
- The sponsor reports the results to the WSIB. If results show that safety and prevention programs have been implemented or improved upon, rebates will be distributed to the firms.
- Rebates are not guaranteed, the group must provide evidence that it has made progress in developing health and safety programs.
- The WSIB will spot-check at least 10% of workplaces in a safety group.

## *Benefits*

Along with its portion of the group's rebate, a member firm continues to receive refunds or surcharges under its regular experience rating program (NEER, CAD-7, or MAPP), based on individual performance.

In addition to financial gains, safety group members stand to gain:

- **Improved Public Perception**
- **Increased Productivity**
- **Improved Quality**
- **Healthy and Stable Workforce**
- **Increased Employee Morale**
- **Access to Health & Safety Resources**
- **Enhanced Access to WSIB Network**
- **A special rate for the 2004 Staffing Industry Health and Safety Guide**

## **Contact:**

If your firm is committed to improving health and safety and interested in joining the ACSESS safety group, contact

Mary McIninch, Manager of Government Relations, ACSESS at 905-826-6869, 1-888-232-4962 or email: [mmcininch@acsess.org](mailto:mmcininch@acsess.org).

Deadline to submit application is **December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2004.**

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