



Date: February 10, 2003

**TO: Board Members - Parks and Recreation**  
**FROM: General Manager - Parks and Recreation**  
**SUBJECT: Vancouver Park Board Occupational Health & Safety  
Compliance Plan**

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

*THAT the Board receives this report for information.*

## **POLICY:**

The Board of Parks and Recreation is committed to providing a safe and healthy work environment, and to promoting positive attitudes toward accident prevention within the organization.

## **BACKGROUND**

As a requirement of the Workers Compensation Act and the Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) Regulation, it is the employer's responsibility to implement an occupational health and safety program to prevent workplace injuries and disease. Recognizing that the devastating impact a workplace injury can have on the lives of employees and their families far exceeds what can be measured in dollars, increasing workplace safety is one of the initiatives of the Park Board Strategic Plan.

In April 1999, the City of Vancouver was designated by WCB as a Focus Firm. A Focus Firm is an organization that has injury rates above the average of their rate class. The Worker Compensation Board (WCB) also advised the City that our Occupational Health and Safety Program was out of date and not meeting regulatory compliance with the OH&S Regulation and the WCB Amendment Act.

In May 2000, in conjunction with the City, a WCB Compliance plan was developed to address OH&S issues and reduce injuries. This plan described the initiatives of each City department including the Board in the prevention of accidents and injuries and was approved by the WCB.

The City (including the Board) total annual WCB premium is approximately \$7.5 million based on total payroll expenditures and claim history.

## **PROCESS**

To fulfill our statutory responsibilities and to create a safe working environment, the following strategies were implemented:

### **Step one:** Close monitoring and follow-up of injuries

- a) Tracking of injury data identified work units with high injury rates and trends is a starting point for injury reduction process. Quarterly reporting was provided to all staff and safety committees to analyze and implement action steps to prevent incident recurrence.
- b) Safety committees had regular monthly meetings, reviewed existing programs and developed action steps to address any injury concerns.

### **Step Two:** Active participation by staff and contractors

- a) Joint Occupational Health and Safety committees were restructured consisting of union and staff representations from all areas of the Board. Committees regularly reviewed injury data, conducted accident investigations, inspected workplaces, developed and implemented action plans to prevent injury recurrences.
- b) Each work unit set annual targets in reduction of injuries. These targets help maintain a focus on safety and ensured continuous improvement each year.
- c) Initiatives to improve safety in the work place are included in each work unit's annual business plans.
- d) Creating awareness for staff through newsletters, regular crew talks, and making safety on the agendas of staff meetings has helped to maintain a focus on the importance of safety.

### **Step Three:** Training and support

- a) Staff was trained on their roles and responsibilities for safety.
- b) In order to prevent injuries and educate staff on safety, a detailed training plan was developed to support staff. Safety Committees reviewed elements of the safety program manual and identified training requirements for staff and assisted in the implementation of program elements such as, accident investigations, workplace inspections, confined space entry, fall protection, and workplace violence. The following table outlines training courses and number of staff trained in 2001 and 2002:

Training Course	Number of Persons Trained	
	2001	2002
Chainsaw Safety	10	10
Safety Committee Member Training	58	5
Conducting Workplace Inspections	58	58
Accident Investigations	22	55
Contractor Site Coordination	12	-
SAP/WCB Claims Administrator	-	4
SAP/WCB Claims Process	-	69
Confined Space Entry Awareness Training	-	9
Traffic Control	18	10
Verbal Intervention/De-escalation Skills	148	216
Confined Space Entry ( Train the Trainer )	2	-
Confined Space Entry	53	43
Audiometric Testing	225	227
Fall Protection ( Train the Trainer )	1	-
Fall Protection Training	16	56
Confined Space Entry ( Refresher Course )	-	16
Scissor Lift / Boom Lift Operation	-	7
Building Maintenance Safety Conference	103	93
Respectful Workplace Seminar	-	90
Road Smart	-	35
Park Board New Employee Orientation	-	92
Total	726	1095

## RESULTS

Listed below are some of the achievements that the Park Board staff attained over the past three years:

a) Since 1999 the Park Board has been leading the City of Vancouver in the reduction of lost time injuries and hours lost due to workplace injuries. Lost time injuries have been reduced by 36.7%, resulting in a 49.3% reduction of person-hours lost due to injuries.

Incident Type	1999 Injuries	2000 Injuries	2001 Injuries	2002 Injuries
Lost Time Injuries*	155	123	110	98
Medical Aid Injuries**	62	75	72	66

\* **Lost Time Injury:** Defined as an injury where the employee was off on compensation beyond the day of the incident.

\*\* **Medical Aid:** Defined as an injury which the employee sought medical attention of a general practitioner, however was able to return to work on their next scheduled workday.

b) In 2000, 41 WCB inspection orders were written and brought against the Park Board. In 2002 there were no WCB inspection orders written. This has been a result of our compliance activities and improved working relationship with WCB. Many work units now contact a WCB Officer and consult with them on complex safety issues prior to work.

## PLAN

In 2003, the Park Board focus will be to work with outside workers such as Parks Maintenance, Trades and Arboriculture, which account for 75% of all compensable injuries. The following injury reduction plan will help to address the staff needs for injury reduction.

**Ergonomics:** Soft tissue injuries attribute 60% of our lost time injuries. The City of Vancouver has recently developed a written ergonomics program for field ergonomics. With the implementation of this program key staff such as supervisors, foreman, and safety committee members, will be provided with training and education in risk factor identification, assessment, and control. These assessments will include work procedures, tools, and personal protective equipment.

**Safety Audits:** In conjunction with the City of Vancouver compliance plan. The Park Board will be conducting a safety audit to confirm work that has been implemented and identify other opportunities to further improve our performance. These audits will be conducted by both management and union participation.

## **CONCLUSION**

Significant progress has been achieved to create a safe working environment and protect employees from avoidable injuries. Commitment from all levels of staff, collaboration with the City of Vancouver and union support have been the major contributing factors in our accomplishment. Continued working in a synchronized manner will sustain our success in minimizing workplace injury.

Corporate Services  
Board of Parks & Recreation  
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