

# **Quantitative Research Report**

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## **Client Satisfaction Survey – 2008 WorkSafeNB Overall Findings**

February, 2009

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# Background

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*ESTABLISHED IN 1995, WORKSAFE NB (WSNB) PROVIDES  
WORKPLACE PREVENTION AND INJURY COMPENSATION  
SERVICES TO EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES IN NEW BRUNSWICK.  
IMPROVING SERVICE TO CLIENTS IS ONE OF THE FIVE STRATEGIC  
GOALS ADOPTED BY WORKSAFE NB.  
OVER THE PAST EIGHT YEARS, WORKSAFE NB HAS  
IMPLEMENTED A CLIENT SATISFACTION PROGRAM.*

Established in 1995, WorkSafeNB was created from the merger of the Workers' Compensation Board and the Occupational Health and Safety Commission of New Brunswick.

WorkSafeNB is responsible for providing workplace prevention and injury compensation services. WorkSafeNB actively promotes the prevention of accidents, provides insurance and related services to the employer community, and delivers prompt, effective and efficient rehabilitation through compensation, medical and vocational services to injured workers. WorkSafeNB's vision is to have healthy and safe workplaces throughout New Brunswick.

In re-affirming the corporate goals for 2008, WorkSafeNB has once again made service delivery a key measure of success. WorkSafeNB's goal of "providing prompt, effective, just, fair and caring services to its clients" remains as critical today as in 1998. WorkSafeNB recognizes the importance of knowing how clients rate WorkSafeNB in its ability to provide quality service as a means of identifying and improving aspects of service delivery.

## STUDY PURPOSE

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The client satisfaction program strategically measures and monitors client awareness and satisfaction related to four of the five strategic goals. This includes:

- Safety – vigorous pursuit of a safe work culture resulting in a decline in the overall frequency of accidents and a significant decline in the overall frequency of accidents in industries and firms where their resources are focused;
- Return-to-Work – decrease the time injured workers return or are ready to return to employment;
- Service – provide effective, efficient, just, fair and caring services to clients; and,
- Efficiency – hold assessment rates to employers at the lowest level possible, consistent with the best possible benefits to clients.

Broadly speaking, the intent of the research was to measure the delivery of service related to each of these topics:

- Administering relevant compensation programs and services;
- Producing and disseminating timely and accurate workers' compensation information;
- Meeting the claim management needs and demands, including timely distribution of income replacement benefits; and,
- Meeting the treatment goals that focus on functional restoration, rehabilitation and recovery of the injured worker to pre-injury status.

The results of the study allow WorkSafeNB to:

- Measure client service levels and provide the necessary framework for the development of a Client Satisfaction Index (CSI), Case Management Index (CMI), Performance Index (PI), and Awareness Index (AI);
- Assess current performance in achieving outcomes set forth in WorkSafeNB's strategic plan to service users;

- Provide a benchmark against which future performance can be monitored over time and provide satisfaction trend analyses;
- Contribute to service evaluation and subsequent improvements to the service system; and,
- Ensure future planning and development of services is based on comprehensive statistically valid information.

The client satisfaction program measured the extent to which client expectations were being met across five main client groups: injured workers, general workers, registered employers, non-registered employers, and stakeholder groups (See Appendix for Detailed Study Methodology).

While overall results of each survey may be considered accurate to within plus or minus (injured workers  $\pm 3.5\%$ ; registered employers  $\pm 6.0\%$ ; general workers  $\pm 5.0\%$ ; and non-registered employers  $\pm 6.9\%$ ), nineteen times out of twenty, results of sub-groups contain larger margins of sampling error.

- Note that sampling error is the only potential error that can be measured. In addition, results of any survey may contain non-sampling error, and in some cases, other types of error (e.g., response bias). The quality of the survey rests on the effective management of these sources of potential error to achieve the lowest total survey error. Also note that client satisfaction surveys cannot be exact measures of performance, but only approximations at a certain point in time.

This final report contains both written and graphical interpretation of the study results, including a composite measure of awareness and client satisfaction for injured workers, general workers, registered employers and non-registered employers, along with implications and recommendations based on the study results.

# Key Findings

In 2008, the Client Satisfaction Index (CSI) for injured workers and registered employers was 81% and 84% respectively. This indicates WorkSafeNB's goal of providing prompt, effective, efficient, just, fair and caring services to injured worker and registered employer clients by maintaining or exceeding high levels of satisfaction, in excess of 80%, has been realized.

TABLE 1: CLIENT SATISFACTION INDICES (2000-2008)

Population	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000
Injured Workers	81%	83%	80%	82%	86%	81%	80%	83%	80%
Registered Employers	84%	84%	84%	83%	86%	86%	85%	85%	85%
<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>83%</b>

The Awareness Index in 2008 recorded a significant increase in the non-registered employer population, at 73% from 69% in 2007. Not surprisingly, given registered employers' high level of awareness with respect to specific WorkSafeNB programs and services (as evidenced in the study findings), this group had the highest index overall at 83% (unchanged from 2007). While awareness in the general worker population dropped slightly by 3% from 2007 to 69% in 2008, awareness in the injured worker population rose slightly by 2% from 2007 to 74% in 2008. Averaging the index across all four populations indicates the level of awareness has steadily increased over time, from 67% in 2000 to 75% in 2008.

TABLE 2: AWARENESS INDICES (2000-2008)

Population	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000
Injured Workers	74%	72%	71%	72%	72%	70%	65%	66%	68%
General Workers	69%	72%	69%	71%	75%	75%	72%	65%	61%
Registered Employers	83%	83%	82%	84%	87%	81%	80%	78%	78%
Non-registered Employers	73%	68%	77%	69%	74%	77%	71%	61%	62%
<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>67%</b>

The Performance Index (PI) has been in place since 2005, and is a measure of injured workers' and registered employers' satisfaction of only those service attributes rated critically important by the client. Injured workers rated WorkSafeNB's performance at 2.26 in 2008, a decline of 0.06. In contrast, registered employers' performance rating increased by 0.07, achieving the highest performance rating since 2005 for this population. Overall, the performance ratings averaged 2.37 in 2008, which shows a 0.05 increase from 2005.

TABLE 3: PERFORMANCE INDICES (2005-2008)

Population	2008	2007	2006	2005
Injured Workers	2.26	2.32	2.23	2.28
Registered Employers	2.48	2.41	2.42	2.35
<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>2.37</b>	<b>2.37</b>	<b>2.32</b>	<b>2.32</b>

And, finally the Case Management Index (CMI) recorded a slight drop of 2% from 2007, but still remains high overall at 82%.

TABLE 4: CASE MANAGEMENT INDICES (2001-2008)

Year	Percentage of Total
2008	82%
2007	84%
2006	80%
2005	81%
2004	85%

## SERVICE

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*WE WILL CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN OR EXCEED THE HIGH LEVEL OF SATISFACTION, IN EXCESS OF 80%, THAT OUR CLIENTS HAVE COME TO EXPECT.*

In 2008, overall quality of service met or exceeded expectations of 83% of injured workers and 80% of registered employers; the Client Satisfaction Index score for injured workers was 81% and for registered employers 84%.

### Gap Analysis

By using a series of paired importance and satisfaction ratings on the twelve (injured workers) and nine (registered employers) service elements, we were able to identify the factors having the greatest opportunity for improvement in the areas of greatest importance to injured workers/registered employers.

Both injured workers and employers identified prompt service, and effective handling of their respective concerns (e.g., claims, compensation issues).

- Injured workers also identified appropriate amount of benefits and understanding their needs as areas of greatest importance.
- Employers also attributed greatest important to accurate compensation related information and competence.

By focusing on these attributes to improve service, WorkSafeNB can direct its limited resources in a more effective manner.

### AWARENESS INDEX

To gauge clients' understanding of specific programs and services provided by WorkSafeNB, an awareness index was established in 2004. This index is a composite of client awareness of specific programs and services provided by WorkSafeNB. Not surprisingly, given registered employers' high level of awareness with respect to specific WorkSafeNB programs and services (e.g., prevention programs, accident, rehabilitation, and return-to-work services), this group had the highest index overall at 83%.

In 2008, individuals who had previous interactions with WorkSafeNB had a higher level of awareness than those who would not have regular contact. This suggests the need to increase education and marketing to populations with infrequent contact:

- Both injured workers' and registered employers' awareness reached its highest level since inception of the survey: for injured

workers, 74% (+6% from 2000), and for registered employers, 83% (+5% from 2000).

- The general worker awareness index stood at 69% (+7% from 2000), and the awareness index for non-registered employers was 73% (+9% from 2000).

### **Familiarity with WorkSafeNB Programs and Services**

Similar to previous years, registered employers reported a higher level of familiarity (72%) with WorkSafeNB’s programs and services than all other groups (45% - 50%). Noteworthy changes in familiarity over time included:

- Fifty percent (50%) of injured workers reported being “very” (16%) or “fairly” (34%) familiar with WorkSafeNB programs and services – a 9% increase in familiarity since 2000.
- Forty-two percent (42%) of general workers were “very” (11%) or “fairly” (31%) familiar – considerably higher than what was recorded in 2000 when tracking first began (29%).
- One-half (50%) of non-registered employers indicated they were “very” (16%) or “fairly” (34%) familiar. Looking backward, what is significant about this figure is the increase in the percentage of non-registered employers who reported they were “very familiar” – from 7% in 2000, to 16% in 2008.

Stakeholder groups had a consistently high degree of stakeholder familiarity with WorkSafeNB programs and services. They perceive workers to be most aware of the program that provides money for lost wages and least aware of return-to-work assistance. Conversely, stakeholder groups perceived employer awareness of WorkSafeNB programs and services to be at a consistently higher level when compared to their perceptions of worker awareness.

### **INFORMATION ON WORKSAFENB PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

*MEASURE THE ABILITY OF WORKSAFENB TO PRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE TIMELY AND ACCURATE COMPENSATION INFORMATION.*

WorkSafeNB promotes WorkSafeNB legislation, policies and services so that injured workers, employers, and the public know what to expect from WorkSafeNB and where to access the resources they need. Their knowledge helps them contribute to accident prevention and collaborate on finding timely return-to-work solutions.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 2007-2012 WorkSafeNB Strategic Plan and Risk Assessment

Before filing their most recent claim, 37% of injured workers had been provided information on WorkSafeNB programs and services by their employer, up 2% from 2007, but at almost the same level as in 2000 (36%). From 2002 onward, the percentage of injured workers claiming they had received information on WorkSafeNB programs and services increased steadily from last year.

- This finding suggests the majority of workers' experience did not receive basic WorkSafeNB information from their employer before an injury happens. And, despite the fact that WorkSafeNB programs and services are in place to inform workers before an injury occurs, workers often learn about their rights and health and safety responsibilities post-injury.

Similar to injured workers, 33% of general workers were provided information on WorkSafeNB programs and services by their employer. This figure represents an increase of 3% from 2007, and 9% when compared with the percentage of general workers who had received information in 2000.

Study results suggest that age and location influenced the receipt of information on WorkSafeNB programs from employers:

- General workers located in the Northeast region of the province were more likely to receive WorkSafeNB information from their employer than workers residing in the Southwest or Southeast regions (39% versus 29% respectively). Conversely, injured workers located in the Southeast region were more likely to receive information than those in the Northwest (42% and 37%, respectively). This refers to general workers only – except addition of injured workers' data.
- For example, 45% of workers 55 years of age or older had received WorkSafeNB information from their employer versus only 26% of workers 18-34 years of age.

In the past year, 75% of registered employers reported receiving WorkSafeNB information on programs and services, a drop of 6% from 2007, but nevertheless a 9% increase from 2000 (66%). Registered employers most likely to report receipt of WorkSafeNB information were:

- Those who indicated they were "fairly familiar" with the *OHS Act* (82%);
- Those who had received WorkSafeNB training (81%); and

- Those who agreed WorkSafeNB was “very helpful” in enabling them to fulfill their legislative obligations (83%).

By region, registered employers in the Southeast region were most likely to report receiving WorkSafeNB information on programs and services (similar to injured workers), while employers in the Southwest region were least likely (73%).

Smaller-sized employers were somewhat less likely to report receiving WorkSafeNB information (73%) when compared with their medium-sized counterparts (78%).

Slightly over one-third (33%) of non-registered employers had received information from WorkSafeNB in the last year, a considerable jump of 14% from 2007, but consistent with the proportions in previous years.

Non-registered employers most likely to have received information from WorkSafeNB in the last year were:

- Those “very familiar” with WorkSafeNB programs and services (52%);
- Those who had contact with WorkSafeNB in the last year (67%);
- Those “very familiar” with the *OHS Act* (44%);
- Those who had procedures in place to record accidents/near misses (44%);
- Those who had received “other” information from WorkSafeNB in the last year (39%); and
- Those who had participated in four WorkSafeNB training programs (42%).

### Quality of Information

About four in ten (37%) injured workers (before their most recent injury) and 75% of registered employers had received information from WorkSafeNB on programs and services. In both populations, there was a very high degree of satisfaction with the quality of information received.

In general, stakeholder groups were satisfied with the information provided to them by WorkSafeNB on programs and services; however, there was a slight drop in overall satisfaction from previous years with respect to written correspondence/publications and phone contact with WorkSafeNB. Primary areas of dissatisfaction in communications with WorkSafeNB continue to be the ability to have questions or concerns addressed in a complete, consistent and timely manner; and, the ability to speak to someone directly when calling WorkSafeNB as opposed to an automated or voice mail system. All stakeholder groups had Internet

access, with approximately half using the Internet to access information on WorkSafeNB programs, services or policies.

### **SATISFACTION WITH STAFF INTERACTION**

*WE WILL PROVIDE PROMPT, EFFECTIVE, EFFICIENT, JUST, FAIR, AND CARING SERVICES TO OUR CLIENTS.*

Overall, both injured workers and registered employers had high levels of satisfaction with their interactions with WorkSafeNB staff (88%), especially with regard to the courtesy and politeness extended and the amount of time spent with them.

### **SATISFACTION WITH CASE MANAGER**

*MEASURE THE ABILITY OF WORKSAFE NB TO MEET THE CLAIM MANAGEMENT NEEDS OF INJURED WORKERS*

Just over half (56%, down 5% from 2007) of injured workers reported their most recent claim had been handled by a case manager who was responsible for developing a return-to-work plan and/or medical treatment plan on their behalf.

- In 2008, about eight in ten (82%) injured workers with case managers agreed (completely/mostly) the amount of contact they had with their case manager was enough, given their circumstances. This represents a small decline of 3% of 2007.
- Injured workers who had returned to work had higher levels of satisfaction (completely/mostly) with the amount of contact with their case manager versus those who had not returned to work (85% versus 74%).
- Those who had not appealed their claim decision were considerably more satisfied (completely/mostly) than those who had appealed (87% versus 64%).

The amount of contact a case manager provides the injured worker clearly has a dramatic effect on how the injured worker views the overall quality of their service experience:

- Thirty-five percent (35%) of injured workers whose quality of service was rated as “failing to meet their expectations” reported the amount of contact provided by their case manager was enough (compared to 97% of injured workers who rated their service experience as “exceeding their expectations”).

Elements of service that ranked the highest levels of satisfaction were:

- My case manager knows all about my case (86%);
- My case manager demonstrates professionalism (86%); and
- My case manager treats me with respect (85%).

The lowest ranked elements of service (i.e., those rating lower levels of satisfaction) were:

- When I leave a phone message, my case manager usually returns calls promptly, within one working day (78%); and
- My case manager keeps me up-to-date (76%).

Overall, registered employers were slightly more satisfied with case management services than injured workers (86% versus 82%). Registered workers' satisfaction ("completely"/"mostly") with six aspects of the case management process increased when compared to 2007 figures; of note:

- Fairness in WorkSafeNB handling of injured workers' claims increased 13% over 2007 (95%);
- Amount of benefits provided to injured workers increased 12% over 2007 (84%); and
- Assistance provided by WorkSafeNB to adapt employers' worksites to meet the needs of injured workers increased 17% over 2007 (77%).

Other findings worth mentioning:

- In general, injured workers who received services in the Northwest region were the most satisfied overall.
- First and finalised claimants were the most satisfied overall, with the least satisfied being long-term disability and long-term medical aid only claimants.
- Injured workers employed part-time were most satisfied overall and injured workers on disability and/or unemployment were the least satisfied.

Quality of service ratings had a considerable impact on satisfaction levels on each of the nine case manager service aspects:

- Most notable were the satisfaction ratings given to the ability of case managers to care about an injured worker’s needs – only three in ten (31%) of those who had rated their overall service experience as “failing to meet their expectations” were satisfied with this aspect of service.
- Similarly, for injured workers who rated their service experience as “failing to meet their expectations,” only 35% were satisfied with the ability of their case manager to keep them up-to-date.

Stakeholder groups were of the perception that injured workers were generally satisfied with the amount of contact provided to them by their case manager. Common areas of dissatisfaction pertaining to case managers were lack of timely response to inquiries and the inability or lack of ease in reaching case managers directly. The majority of stakeholder groups believe case managers care about the needs of injured workers; provide them with information that they need; have a clear understanding of their needs; and treat injured workers with professionalism and respect. A shared belief expressed by a number of stakeholder groups was that dissatisfaction with case management services has little to do with case managers per se than the system under which they operate.

Stakeholder groups perceived injured workers were completely or mostly satisfied with the ability of WorkSafeNB to: understand their needs; keep them informed and up-to-date; provide them with prompt service; treat them with respect; and demonstrate professionalism in their dealings.

**Case Management Index**

The Case Management Index (CMI) (a composite of injured workers’ satisfaction with case management services provided by WorkSafeNB), since its inception in 2004, has ranged between 80% and 85%. In 2008, this index recorded a slight drop of 2% from 2007, but still remains high overall (84%).

**TIME TO RECEIVE FIRST INCOME REPLACEMENT BENEFIT**

*MEASURE THE ABILITY OF WORKSAFENB TO PROVIDE TIMELY DISTRIBUTION OF INCOME REPLACEMENT BENEFITS TO INJURED WORKERS*

One of the most well known programs offered by WorkSafeNB is money for lost wages (income replacement benefits) when a worker becomes injured on the job (83% of injured workers were aware of this program). Moreover, 75% of injured workers agreed (“completely/mostly”) that the wage replacement benefits provided by WorkSafeNB were reasonable.

- Almost half (47%, down 6% from 2007) of the injured workers surveyed indicated they had received income replacement benefits in the past year; 43% did not receive income replacement benefits; and for 7% of injured workers the question did not apply, as they were pensioners or surviving spouses.

The research revealed the following additional pertinent findings:

- Satisfaction with length of time to receive first cheque was also rated highly (78% “completely/mostly” satisfied), however, this figure represents a moderate drop in satisfaction from 2007 (down 5%).
- And, satisfaction with time to receive first income replacement cheque has a direct impact on overall quality of service rating – only 49% of injured workers who rated their overall experience as failing to meet their expectations were satisfied with length of time to first cheque versus those injured workers who had rated their overall quality of service as exceeding expectations (90% satisfied).
- Sixty-seven percent (67%) of injured workers expected to receive an income replacement within one to two weeks of filing their claim.
- About three-quarters (76%) of injured workers reported that their income replacement benefits were clearly explained to them (a drop of 8% from 2007).
- How clearly benefits were explained to injured workers has a fairly significant impact on how their quality of service experience is rated. Of those injured workers rating their experience as “failing to meet expectations”, four in ten (44%) were satisfied with the explanation provided, compared to the 92% of injured workers who rated their experience as “exceeding their expectations”.

## SAFETY

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*OUR VIGOROUS PURSUIT OF A SAFE WORK CULTURE  
WILL LEAD TO A DECLINE IN THE OVERALL FREQUENCY  
OF ACCIDENTS AND A SIGNIFICANT DECLINE IN THE  
OVERALL FREQUENCY OF ACCIDENTS IN INDUSTRIES AND  
FIRMS WHERE OUR RESOURCES ARE FOCUSED*

Health and safety training is vital to the success of WorkSafeNB's initiative to instil a safe work culture and promote the reduction of workplace accidents. To ensure this goal is met, WorkSafeNB prepares young workers to safely join the workforce and provides education to workers, employers and the public that focuses on key health and safety issues and training Joint Health and Safety Committees.

### **SOCIAL MARKETING**

Clients were asked four general questions to better understand their perceptions about workplace accidents and injuries. Injured workers (75%) were most likely to agree that "workplace accidents and injuries are a serious problem in New Brunswick today", but were least likely to agree that "we are paying the right amount of attention to reducing workplace accidents and injuries in New Brunswick today". Interestingly, more than half of all client groups (51% - 65%) agreed that "workplace accidents and injuries are an inevitable part of life", and injured workers' perceptions were not significantly different from perceptions of members of the general population surveyed in August 2006 and in February 2008.

### **WORKSAFENB PROGRAMS AND SERVICES PROMOTE PREVENTION OF WORKPLACE ACCIDENTS**

Most injured workers (88%), general workers (92%), registered employers (92%), and non-registered employers (86%) agreed WorkSafeNB programs and services promote prevention of workplace accidents. In both the injured worker and non-registered employer populations, this represents a 3% increase from 2007, while general workers' and registered employers' level of agreement remained unchanged from last year to this year. Virtually all stakeholder groups agreed WorkSafeNB programs and services promote the prevention of workplace accidents.

### **AWARENESS WORKSAFENB PROVIDES ACCIDENT PREVENTION SERVICES**

Injured and general workers were least aware that WorkSafeNB provides accident prevention services (61% respectively), while registered and non-registered employers were most aware (85% and 71% respectively). Overall awareness of this service has, on average, increased 4% from 2007 among all four population segments.

### **HEALTH AND SAFETY PRACTICES IN THE WORKPLACE**

Between 61% and 77% of injured workers, general workers and registered employers reported having health and safety procedures to record and

investigate near misses or potential accidents; a health and safety policy; and a copy of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act and Regulations* at their workplace. In contrast, only 35% to 43% of non-registered employers reported having the same policies and procedures available at their workplaces.

## TRAINING

Employee safety training is vital to the success of WorkSafeNB's initiative to promote the reduction of workplace accidents and instil a safe work culture. Moreover, under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, which WorkSafeNB administers, a worker has three basic rights – the right to know about workplace hazards; the right to participate in solving health and safety problems; and, the right to refuse dangerous work.

The workplace health and safety services provided by WorkSafeNB helps prevent workplace accidents and injuries. This, in turn, can positively affect employers' bottom line because reduction of accidents and compensation claims lower the cost of employer compensation insurance.

In terms of training provided, registered employers were most likely to provide their workers with training on how to safely do their job (87%); how to safely operate equipment and machinery (75%); hazards in their workplace (78%); and their employees' responsibilities for health and safety related issues (80%). In contrast, non-registered employers were least likely to provide their employees with these types of health and safety training. For example,

- 67% of non-registered employers had provided their employees with training on how to safely do their job;
- 53% had provided training on how their employees could safely operate equipment and machinery;
- 56% had provided employees training on hazards in their workplace; and,
- 58% had provided information on employees' responsibilities for health and safety related issues.

Also of note, only 52% of general workers had been provided training on how to safely operate equipment and machinery.

Stakeholder groups viewed all workplace training as critically important or important, but not critical. Safety training continues to be the highest priority of stakeholder groups. In this regard, while WorkSafeNB was

commended for its efforts in this regard, there was a perceived need for WorkSafeNB to continue to focus its attention in this area. How workers can safely do their jobs is perceived to be a top training priority, but one that is inclusive of all training, rather than exclusive. Stakeholder groups in blue collar industries tend to place high priority on how to safely operate equipment and workplace hazards, and safety is perceived to be a shared responsibility between workers and employers.

- Stakeholder groups perceived employers had the highest level of awareness when compared to workers in all areas;
- Stakeholder groups perceived employers had the lowest awareness of a worker's right to refuse dangerous work; however, stakeholder groups perceived workers had the highest awareness of this policy; and
- Compared to 2007, there was a slight drop in perceived awareness of workers in all areas regarding safety issues and responsibilities.

### **ACCIDENTS AT WORK<sup>2</sup>**

If an accident happened at work, the majority of injured workers would:

- Report it to their supervisor/manager immediately (56%);
- Get medical help/go to hospital (43%); and
- Apply first aid/assist the injured individual (26%).

Six percent (6%) indicated they would contact WorkSafeNB. When asked, almost two in ten (16%) injured workers did not know what an employer must do to report an accident that happens at work. This figure represents an improvement over 2007 where 21% of injured workers were uncertain of an employer's responsibility when an accident happens in the workplace. Of those injured workers who volunteered a response to this question, the top three following actions were offered:

- Fill out an accident form/Form 67 (40%);
- Report it to WorkSafeNB (35%); and
- Investigate cause of accident (14%).

If they were working and an accident happened in their workplace, to them or a fellow worker, actions general workers believed they must take included:

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<sup>2</sup> Note: under this section, multiple responses were permitted by participants. Listed here are the top three responses, in order of magnitude.

- Report it to their supervisor/manager/employer immediately (46%);
- Get medical help/go to hospital/call 911 (38%); and
- Assist anyone hurt/apply first aid (28%).

General workers were asked what they think their employer must do to report an accident that happens at work:

- Fill out an accident report/Form 67 (34%);
- Report it to the WorkSafeNB (30%); and
- Inform Head Office/supervisor of accident (12%).

If a general worker was working in an unsafe area or job, the majority would report it to their supervisor/employer (51%), while a substantial portion would refuse to do the work (46%). Other mentions included reporting the problem to WorkSafeNB, Human Resources, Union or their Health and Safety Committee (13%). About one in ten (8%) reported they would make a change to the process to make it safer.

Registered employers believed that if an accident happened in their workplace, their employees were responsible for:

- Telling their supervisor/manager/employer about it immediately (66%) or before leaving the workplace (7%);
- Getting medical help (48%); and
- Filling out an accident report/Form 67 (26%).

According to registered employers who participated in the survey, when an accident happens at work, their responsibilities included:

- Reporting it to WorkSafeNB (52%);
- Filling out accident form/Form 67 (43%); and
- Getting medical care (42%).

According to non-registered employers surveyed, in the event of an accident at work, a worker must do the following:

- Tell supervisor/manager/employer about it immediately (50%);
- Get medical help (46%); and
- Fill out accident form / Form 67 (18%).

If an accident happened at work, the majority of non-registered employers would:

- Get medical help/call 911 (39%);
- Report it to WorkSafeNB (35%); and
- Fill out an accident form / Form 67 (27%).

It is interesting to note that in both cases, worker and employer, 14% and 17% of non-registered employers were unable to provide a response to the question.

## RETURN TO WORK

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*WE WILL DECREASE THE TIME BY WHICH INJURED WORKERS RETURN OR ARE READY TO RETURN TO EMPLOYMENT*

This section explores injured workers' work history after their most recent workplace injury. As safety programs seek to prevent injuries, the goal of successful return-to-work programs are to prepare injured workers for safe and productive employment in the shortest possible timeframe.

Eight in ten (79%) injured workers reported returning to work after their most recent workplace injury, of which 93% returned to the same employer. However, this was considerably less likely for workers who were on LTD (64%). Nine in ten (87%) returned to the same job (the only exception being injured workers who were on LTD, those who had appealed their decision, and those who had been treated at the WRC).

While return-to-work is an important goal for most injured workers, the direct impact of being employed again after a workplace injury appears to have nominal affect on how an injured worker perceived the quality of their service experience. To explain, little variance occurred between injured workers who had rated their quality of experience negatively, neutrally or positively.

Other items of note:

- Those not receiving income replacement benefits were considerably more likely to have returned to work after their most recent injury versus their counterparts who did receive income replacement benefits (94% versus 66%).
- Those who had appealed their decision were less likely to have returned to work than those who had not appealed WorkSafeNB's claim decision (61% versus 82%)
- Those who were being claim managed were less likely to return to work after their most recent injury versus those who were not being claim managed (72% versus 91%).
- Younger workers (18 to 34 years of age) were considerably more likely than their older counterparts (92% versus 68% for workers 55 years of age or older) to have returned to work after their most recent injury.

## **PROGRAMS AND SERVICES OF WORKSAFE NB ALLOW INJURED WORKERS TO RETURN-TO-WORK**

In general, among the four WorkSafeNB populations surveyed there was a high level of agreement with the statement that WorkSafeNB programs and services allow injured workers to return to work, ranging from 78% (injured workers) to 89% (registered employers). Of note, injured workers' level of agreement dropped 14% from 2007, from 92% to 78%.

## **HELPFULNESS OF WORKSAFE NB IN WORKING WITH INJURED WORKERS' EMPLOYER TO ASSIST IN RETURN-TO-WORK**

In 2008, six in ten (60%) injured workers indicated that WorkSafeNB was "very/somewhat helpful" in working with their employer to assist them in their return-to-work. This represents a drop of 4% from 2007.

Those least satisfied were:

- Long-term disability claimants (67% "not helpful at all"); and
- Injured workers who had appealed WorkSafeNB's claim decision (49% "not helpful at all").

Those most satisfied were:

- Injured workers who had used the services and programs of the WRC (84% "very helpful").

## **HELPFULNESS OF WORKSAFE NB IN HELPING INJURED WORKERS RECOVER FROM WORKPLACE INJURIES**

In 2008, eight in ten injured workers (80%) and registered employers (79%) believed WorkSafeNB was "helping a great deal/to some extent" injured workers recover from their workplace injuries. In the injured worker population, the figure represents a decline of 4% from 2007 and in the registered employer population a 12% increase over 2007. The vast majority of stakeholder groups believe WorkSafeNB is helping injured workers recover from their workplace injuries. While most believe WorkSafeNB is helping injured workers recover, there was a shared belief by several stakeholder groups that workers are sometimes sent back to work a little too soon after their injury.

## **HELPFULNESS OF WORKSAFE NB IN ENABLING EMPLOYERS TO MEET THEIR LEGISLATED OBLIGATIONS**

Registered and non-registered employers were asked if the services and programs offered by WorkSafeNB are helpful in enabling employers to meet their legislated obligations under the *Workers' Compensation Act* and the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*? Registered employers were more likely to believe WorkSafeNB is "very/somewhat" helpful in enabling them to meet their legislated obligations than non-registered employers (87% versus 79%). Despite this, more non-registered employers in 2008 than 2007 believed this to be true (79% versus 74%). This represents

the highest level of non-registered employer agreement on this statement since client satisfaction was first measured. Stakeholder groups' perception of WorkSafeNB helpfulness in enabling employers to meet their legislated obligations remains high.

**AWARENESS OF WORKSAFE NB RETURN-TO-WORK PROGRAM**

Awareness (completely/mostly) of WorkSafeNB programs that provides injured workers with return-to-work assistance such as job search techniques and skills development ranged from a low of 57% (general workers) to a high of 89% (registered employers). Of note is the 14% increase in non-registered employers' awareness of this program from 2007 (70% versus 64%).

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## EFFICIENCY

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*WE WILL HOLD THE ASSESSMENT RATES TO EMPLOYERS  
AT THE LOWEST LEVEL POSSIBLE, CONSISTENT WITH  
THE BEST POSSIBLE BENEFIT TO CLIENTS.*

This section explores injured workers' perceptions of WorkSafeNB – whether they believe the compensation provided to injured workers is reasonable and their level of satisfaction with the amount of benefits provided to injured workers, as well as assessment rates which ultimately fund these programs.

### **AGREEMENT AMOUNT OF BENEFITS PROVIDED TO INJURED WORKERS IS REASONABLE**

There was a wide divergence in agreement (completely/mostly) on the statement “the amount of benefits provided to injured workers is reasonable” between the four populations surveyed. General workers and non-registered employers were least likely to completely/mostly agree with this statement (59% and 53% respectively), while injured workers and registered employers (i.e., those who have more experience with WorkSafeNB) were most likely (75% and 73% respectively). Twenty-eight (28) stakeholder groups “completely” (6) or “mostly” (22) agreed that the compensation provided to injured workers is reasonable. Eight (8) stakeholder groups “mostly” (5) or “completely” (3) disagreed, while four (4) did not have an opinion.

### **SATISFACTION WITH AMOUNT OF BENEFITS PROVIDED TO INJURED WORKERS**

Injured workers' satisfaction (completely/mostly) with the amount of benefits provided to them dropped significantly in 2008 when compared to 2007 (67% and 82% respectively). Overall, registered employers' satisfaction (completely/mostly) with amount of benefits provided to injured workers increased 12% over 2007 (84%). Twenty-five (25) stakeholder groups were of the perception that employers were “completely” (4) or “mostly” (21) satisfied with the amount of benefits provided to injured workers. Seven (7) stakeholder groups were of the opposite view, perceiving that employers were “mostly” (5) or “completely” (2) dissatisfied with this aspect of service. Of note, 8 stakeholder groups did not provide an opinion (don't know).

## ASSESSMENT RATES

*WE WILL HOLD ASSESSMENT RATES TO EMPLOYERS AT THE LOWEST LEVEL POSSIBLE, CONSISTENT WITH THE BEST POSSIBLE BENEFITS TO CLIENTS.*

WorkSafeNB employer premiums are calculated by determining an assessment rate, based on the assessable earnings<sup>3</sup> of the company's employees. Assessment rates are influenced by several factors including current and future compensation claims for the year; accident and injury trends; health care costs; and, safety and prevention program costs.

To provide context, in 2008, 66% of registered employers agreed (18% completely/49% mostly) WorkSafeNB assessment rates are reasonable (a decline of 3% from 2007) and 88% of employers were aware (completely/mostly) that annual assessed premiums help fund WorkSafeNB programs and services. Twenty-seven (27) stakeholder groups "completely" (5) or "mostly" (22) agreed WorkSafeNB assessment rates are reasonable. Nine (9) stakeholder groups "mostly" (6) or "completely" (3) disagreed, while four (4) did not have an opinion.

In the past year, only 13% of employers had an assessment payroll review (down 4% from 2007 and at the lowest level since 2000) and only 14% of employers accessed assessment information through a 1-800 number (up 2% from 2007).

- Only 4% of registered employers had used any other program or service offered by WorkSafeNB, apart from the two mentioned.

Almost eight in ten (79%) employers who had an assessment payroll review in the last year were satisfied (completely/mostly) with the review performed by WorkSafeNB. This represented a very significant decline in satisfaction with this program of 20% from 2007. In fact, 12% of employers were "completely dissatisfied" with this program.

Nine in ten (92%) employers who had obtained assessment information services through a 1-800 number were "completely/mostly" satisfied (representing an increase of 2% from 2007).

About half of registered employers surveyed (49%) were aware that annual WorkSafeNB assessments could be paid through Service New Brunswick, an increase of 7% over 2007. This figure has steadily increased since tracking of this question began 39% (up 10%). Of registered

<sup>3</sup> Assessable earnings are all payroll and payroll-related monies up to an annual limit for the reporting year

employers who were aware that annual WorkSafeNB assessments could be paid through Service New Brunswick, roughly four in ten (42%) had used the service. This figure represented a substantial increase in usage over 2007, up 15%.

Employers' method of assessment payment was somewhat divided between paying assessments in-person at Service New Brunswick office (47%) or through the Service New Brunswick website (36%) or using both methods of payment (10%).

# Recommendations

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The summarized findings along with detailed reports for each client population (under separate cover) have determined specific actions deemed necessary to improve services. The following recommendations are based on the result of the research study and address some of the more important issues related to the research findings. They are provided for WorkSafeNB's consideration.

*ESTABLISH AND ENFORCE STANDARDIZED, MINIMUM BASIC SERVICE GUIDELINES TO ENSURE CONSISTENT SERVICE DELIVERY PROVINCE-WIDE*

While high rates of overall satisfaction were reported by all client populations, some clear differences emerged. Specifically,

- Injured workers with a LTD claim (and who were on long-term disability and had appealed WorkSafeNB's decision regarding income replacement benefits) reported lower than average levels of satisfaction than first and finalised/regular loss of earnings claimants who were employed full-time at time of survey.
- Small to medium sized registered employers were less satisfied overall than large employers, those who had appealed WorkSafeNB's decision, and those "not very familiar" with WorkSafeNB programs and services.

Also:

- In terms of client satisfaction, first and finalised and regular loss of earnings claimants, who had not appealed and were working at time of survey, had the highest CSI score; conversely, long-term disability claimants who had filed an appeal, and were not working at time of survey had the lowest index.
- In terms of registered employers, those who did not file an appeal and those "very familiar" with WorkSafeNB programs and services had the highest CSI versus registered employers, who had appealed a WorkSafeNB decision, and were "not at all familiar" with WorkSafeNB programs and services.

*INCREASE COMMUNICATION WITH ALL CLIENT POPULATIONS TO STRENGTHEN AWARENESS AND FAMILIARITY OF WORKSAFE NB PROGRAMS AND SERVICES*

The research revealed those workers and employers who had direct experience with WorkSafeNB were considerably more satisfied with their overall service experience. This contact with WorkSafeNB took many forms such as receiving health and safety training, having an employee injured on the job, receiving information on *OHS Act* and legislative responsibilities and WorkSafeNB programs and services.

This indicates that information on WorkSafeNB programs and services, prior to workplace injury, is an important determinant and driver of satisfaction. Moreover, enhancing communication and engaging stakeholders is a goal of WorkSafeNB, as outlined in its most recent strategic plan.

Special attention should be given to increasing awareness of WorkSafeNB programs and services with three client populations in particular – long-term disability claimants, small employers, and general workers 18-34 years of age employed on a part-time basis.

- Long-term disability claimants who were receiving income replacement benefits and were not working at the time of survey, had the lowest awareness of WorkSafeNB programs and services overall versus no lost time claimants, not receiving income replacement benefits who had returned to work. They also had the lowest overall rates of satisfaction of all populations surveyed.
- In the general worker population, the most aware were workers employed full-time, who had received information from WorkSafeNB, were college/university graduates, earning \$30,000 or less per annum, 55 years of age or older. Those least aware were workers employed part-time, who had not received information from WorkSafeNB, with less than high school education, earning \$45,000 or more per annum, between 18 and 34 years of age.
- Large registered employers located in the Northeast region of the province, who had received training from WorkSafeNB, and who had had a worker injured on the job in the last year were most aware versus small employers, who did not have a worker injured on the job in the last year.
- Non-registered employers who were most aware of WorkSafeNB programs and services were those “very familiar” with WorkSafeNB

programs and services, “very familiar” with the *OHS Act*, who had received information from and had contact with someone from WorkSafeNB in the last year, located in the Southeast region of the province. Conversely, non-registered employers located in the Northwest region of the province and those “not at all” familiar with WorkSafeNB programs and services were least aware.

- Injured workers who rated their overall service experience as “exceeding expectations” shared the following characteristics – they had received services in either the Southwest or Southeast regions of the province; and, they were long-term disability (on disability) or regular loss of earnings claimants. Conversely, those injured workers who rated their overall service experience as “failing to meet” expectations were long-term disability claimants (on disability and not working), and had appealed WorkSafeNB decision.
- Registered employers who rated the overall experience as “exceeding expectations” were “very familiar” with the *OHS Act*, their workplace had received some training from WorkSafeNB, had a worker who suffered a workplace injury in the past year, believe WorkSafeNB is “helping a great deal” with injured workers’ recover from their workplace injuries, and also believe WorkSafeNB is “very helpful” in enabling them to meet their legislative obligations. Most of these large employers are located in the Northwest or Southwest regions of the province.

*DEVELOP GENERAL INFORMATION PIECES ON WHAT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES EMPLOYERS AND WORKERS CAN EXPECT TO RECEIVE IN THE EVENT OF A WORKPLACE INJURY.*

As outlined in WorkSafeNB’s strategic plan, the initiative of partnering to educate workers, employers and the public on rights and responsibilities and return-to-work is recognized as critical to delivery of good client service.

Before filing their most recent claim, 37% of injured workers had been provided information on WorkSafeNB programs and services by their employer, up 2% from 2007, but at almost the same level as in 2000 (36%). From 2002 onward, the percentage of injured workers claiming they had received information on WorkSafeNB programs and services increased steadily from 2007.

- This finding suggests the majority of workers experience difficulty receiving basic WorkSafeNB information before an injury happens. And, despite the fact that WorkSafeNB programs and services are in place to inform workers before an injury occurs, workers often

learn about their rights and health and safety responsibilities post-injury.

In the past year, 33% of general workers had been provided information on WorkSafeNB programs and services by their employer. This figure represents an increase of 3% from 2007, and 9% when compared with the percentage of general workers who had received information in 2000.

- The research also showed the likelihood of general workers receiving WorkSafeNB information on programs and services also varied considerably by the region in which they reside. To illustrate, workers located in the Northeast region of the province were more likely to receive WorkSafeNB information from their employer than workers residing in the Southwest or Southeast regions of the province (39% versus 29% respectively).
- And, the older worker has a greater likelihood of receiving information from their employer than their younger counterparts. For example, 45% of workers 55 years of age or older had received WorkSafeNB information from their employer versus only 26% of workers 18-34 years of age.

*CONTINUE TO FOCUS ATTENTION ON SERVICE ATTRIBUTES MOST IMPORTANT TO SPECIFIC CLIENT SEGMENTS*

The findings suggest that providing injured workers with appropriate amount of benefits; understanding their needs; effectively handling their problems; handling their claim in an effective manner; and, providing them with prompt service, are critically important elements of service provided by WorkSafeNB to this population. On the employer side, greatest importance was placed on effective handling of company compensation issues or concerns; prompt service; accuracy of compensation related information; and staff competence.

Moreover, as stated in WorkSafeNB's strategic plan, a focus on recognizing the special and unique service delivery needs of long-term clients is a critical component in maintaining adequate levels of satisfaction within this population (remember this client population was the most dissatisfied of all the populations surveyed).

Therefore, it is suggested more research (qualitative) be undertaken to explore and better understand why the needs of this population are currently not being adequately addressed.