

2008-05

May 21, 2008

By E-mail: 3 pages plus attachments

In this issue:

- WorkSafeBC Teleclaim
- Revised Working Alone Guidelines

WorkSafeBC Teleclaim

As of January 1, 2008, WorkSafeBC's Teleclaim was available across British Columbia.

WorkSafeBC provides the following description of Teleclaim on its website:

Workers who are injured at work and miss work time as a result should report their injuries to WorkSafeBC by calling our Teleclaim Contact Centre. Through Teleclaim, callers are connected with a WorkSafeBC representative, who completes an injury report on their behalf, explains the claims process, and helps obtain services to assist with recovery and return to work.

There is one glaring omission — no indication or suggestion that a worker must report their injury to their employer.

Better Communication with Employers

BCPSEA has entered into discussions with WorkSafeBC to work on methods of improving communication with employers with respect to Teleclaim. WorkSafeBC has indicated that within 24 hours of a worker filing a claim using Teleclaim, the employer will receive a call if no Form 7 is found on file. Often the contact information provided by the worker, or the contact information WorkSafeBC has on file, does not accurately reflect the contacts in school districts. As a first step, WorkSafeBC has suggested that a list of contacts would be of great benefit. To facilitate improved communication with WorkSafeBC, we would like to suggest the following:

Please forward to Mark Grabas, via email (markg@bcpsea.bc.ca), the contact information for the person(s) responsible for completing and submitting the Form 7 to WorkSafeBC. Please include the full name(s) and telephone contact number(s) and any extensions if applicable. Once compiled, this information will be shared with WorkSafeBC.

A Question of Questions

When a worker calls Teleclaim they are connected to a WorkSafeBC representative. That representative asks the worker a series of pre-determined questions and records the information. The information recorded is placed on the worker's claim.

One of the concerns often expressed by employers is an uncertainty about exactly what questions are being asked of the worker. BCPSEA expressed the same concerns to WorkSafeBC. As a result, we have been provided with a copy of the form and questions used by WorkSafeBC. This form is attached as Appendix A.

Should you have any questions about the form or Teleclaim, please do not hesitate to contact Mark Grabas at 604.730.4509 or markg@bcpsea.bc.ca.

Working Alone – Guideline Revisions

In April, WorkSafeBC revised the guidelines for procedures for checking the well-being of workers. The revised guidelines reflect an expansion of the acceptable methods of checking the well-being of workers.

The guidelines now include reference to the following systems:

- **Call-in systems:** Workers call into the system at scheduled intervals during their shift and enter a code to confirm their safety. If a worker fails to phone in by his or her scheduled interval, a predetermined protocol to make contact with the worker will be initiated and then emergency assistance will be dispatched if there is no response.
- **Externally or internally monitored panic alarm devices:** Workers can carry the device with them, eliminating the need for access to a phone. Panic alarm devices can be programmed to require a worker to confirm his or her safety at scheduled intervals. Some devices also offer a "person down" feature, which will send a signal when a worker does not move for a given period of time.

In remote areas where land-based telephone lines and security services may not be available, WorkSafeBC suggests the following:

- Wireless satellite hand-held alerting and tracking devices
- Satellite phones
- Radio transmitters
- Crew contact: Where a crew is working in a remote location but the work involves working alone, it may be possible to arrange work so that the crew will meet periodically during the work day, or have another means of alerting one another.

The full text of the revised guideline is attached as Appendix B.

Applying the Working Alone Principles

A worker will be considered to be working alone if assistance is not readily available to that worker if required. Assistance will be considered readily available if others are in the vicinity of the worker, others are aware of the worker, others are willing to assist the worker if needed and assistance will be rendered in a timely manner.

Examples

- A groundsperson working at a school between the bells

The worker checks in with the school office upon arrival and informs them of what he is doing. In this case, the worker is not working alone. Between the bells others are in the vicinity, they are aware of the worker's presence on site, and they will offer assistance in a timely manner if required.

- Two or more people working in the building on the weekend or at night

These people are not working alone. However, they should check in with each other when leaving the building to ensure someone knows they have left and the last person in the building knows who they are.

- A tradesperson performing some work at the school

Check in at the school office, and communicate the length of time you expect your work to last. Check out at the school office. If the worker has not checked out by the expected time or is expected to be working all day, check in with the worker.

The keys to success are having a written procedure that is easy to follow and remember, ensuring staff receive training on the procedure, and ensuring all staff are reminded of the procedure.

Questions

If you:

- wish to suggest any topics you would like discussed in an *OH&S Issues* bulletin, or
- have any questions on the information provided in this bulletin or on any other occupational health, safety and wellness issue

please contact Mark Grabas at 604.730.4509 or markg@bcpsea.bc.ca.

Attachments: Appendix A – Teleclaim Form
Appendix B – Revised Working Alone Guidelines