

September 2019

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2020 WSIB RATES ANNOUNCED

On September 24th, Minister of Labour, Monte McNaughton, announced that the surcharge that has been added to employers' WSIB premium rates for the past many years to retire the unfunded liability (sometimes referred to as the Past Claims Cost or PCC) will not be added to the rates for 2020.

Employer premium rates had included three components: the estimated cost of new injuries, administrative costs and the unfunded liability elimination surcharge (PCC). You may recall that the WSIB's unfunded liability was eliminated about a year ago but that the surcharge was included in the 2019 premium rates.

At its annual meeting on September 25th, the WSIB announced that the average premium rate for 2020 will be \$1.37, down 17% from \$1.65 in 2019. This will leave a total of \$607M in the hands of employers and it is hoped that they will invest these savings back in their businesses, investing in new equipment, hiring workers and investing in health and safety.

The WSIB maximum insurable earnings ceiling will increase according to a legislated formula from \$92,600 in 2019 to \$95,400 in 2020.

The WSIB also announced the announced class average rates for 2020. Those rates for the construction classes are as follows:

- G1 Building Construction \$2.30
- G2 Infrastructure Construction \$2.31
- G3 Foundation, Structure and Building Exterior Construction \$4.45
- G4 Building Equipment Construction \$1.84
- G5 Specialty Trades \$2.47

For the complete rate schedule and to log on to your company's individual rate go to <https://www.wsib.ca/en/2020premiumrates>

MTCU APPOINTS SKILLS ADVISORS TO REVIEW SKILLED TRADES & APPRENTICESHIP SYSTEM

The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities has appointed two Training and Skills Advisors to lead consultations with stakeholders and provide recommendations to the Minister to modernize the skilled trades and apprenticeship system.

The two individuals are:

1. Andrew Pariser

- Andrew is currently serving as vice president of the Residential Construction Council of Ontario (ResCon) where his main focus is labour relations but he is also responsible for health and safety and education; Andrew serves as a trustee for a number of industry trust funds
- Andrew earned a Masters of Industrial Relations degree at Queen's University in 2007 and prior to joining ResCon in September of 2014, worked at the Ministry of Labour for almost 7 years in positions of increasing seniority in the area of dispute resolution

2. Adam Melnick

- Adam currently serves as director of government and community relations with Local 95 of the Heat and Frost Insulators and Allied Workers Union where he has been employed since 2008
- Prior to his employment with Local 95, Adam taught at the Workers Health and Safety Centre and at Fleming College
- Adam earned a Certificate of Apprenticeship as a heat and frost insulator in 2007

It's our understanding that the two advisors are currently being briefed by ministry officials about the nature and scope of their assignment and will develop a consultation paper on which they will consult widely using a process similar to the Tony Dean Expert panel consultation model.

- Recognizing that the industry is complex and that the processes of residential, civil and ICI construction can be very different, two of the most challenging issues facing the advisors will be:
- Determining where portable skill sets can be used appropriately to improve the capacity and efficiency of the construction industry

Determining the activities should be restricted

COCA expects to be deeply engaged in this consultation .

MCNAUGHTON ANNOUNCES CONSTRUCTION ADVISORY PANEL

On September 26th Ontario's Minister of Labour, Monte McNaughton, announced that he will be creating a construction advisory panel to advise him on a wide range of workplace issues including labour relations, new technologies and processes, health and safety and prevention.

The composition of the panel, which will range in number between 8 and 12, will be:

- At least one employee or employer representative from the ICI sector
- At least two employee or employer representatives from the six other construction industry sectors
- At least two employee or employer representatives from industry labour groups, employer groups or associations

COCA had pressed our new Labour Minister for the creation of such an advisory committee, similar to the one that existed when the late David Caplan was Minister of Infrastructure but discontinued by his successor, George Smitherman, when he (Minister McNaughton) was Minister of Infrastructure.

We are thankful to Minister McNaughton for creating this panel.

EMPLOYERS CAN ACCESS THEIR OWN CLAIMS INFO ON WSIB'S EXPANDED COMPASS TOOL

The WSIB recently released its latest edition of Compass, a digital tool which has been expanded for businesses as part of the provincial compensation agency's online services.

Here's what it means for employers:

- exclusive insights into their own detailed claims, costs, premiums and rates
- the ability to access and analyze their own key health and safety statistics
- access to their 2020 premium rates

Businesses can securely log into Compass through the WSIB's online services at wsib.ca/onlineservices. Once you are signed in, select analyze rates and past claim costs from the menu to use Compass.

If you do not already have a WSIB account online, follow the prompts to set one up in order to access exclusive insights for your business.

MINISTER ANNOUNCES WSIB RATE FREEZE FOR NOT-FOR-PROFITS

On September 25th Minister of Labour Monte McNaughton announced that not-for-profit employers that participate in Ontario's workers' compensation scheme will be given a five-year WSIB premium rate freeze starting January 1, 2020.

The premium rates assessed many not-for-profit organizations such as Canadian Legion branches and Children's Aid Societies by the WSIB for 2020 would have increased quite significantly as a result of their reclassification. This reclassification is the result of the introduction by the WSIB of a new more modern employer classification system on January 1, 2020.

The five-year rate freeze for not-for-profit employers will be followed by a five-year phase-in period in which those not-for-profit employers' rates transition to their target rates (the rates they would normally be assessed based on their individual experience).

The freeze affects approximately 2,700 not-for-profit employers whose rates, absent the freeze, would have increased. Another 1,600 not-for-profit employers will enjoy rate reductions with the introduction of the new classification system.

We believe (based on the principles of the Rate Framework but yet to be confirmed) the cost of the freeze will be born by the other employers in the class in which these not-for-profit organizations will be placed in the new NAICS-based classification system and not subsidized by the entire system.

On January 1, 2020 the WSIB will be implementing its long-planned Rate Framework initiative. Rate Framework includes the contemporary NAICS-based classification system, an employer centric rate setting process and a single new prospective experience rating program.

PILOT PROJECT INCREASES SPEED LIMITS

In a pilot project, the Ontario government has raised the speed limit from 100 km/hr to 110 km/hr on stretches of three major highways in the province starting Thursday, September 26th. The highways affected are sections of:

- Highway 402 between London and Sarnia
- The Queen Elizabeth Way between St Catharines and Hamilton
- Highway 417 between Ottawa and the Quebec border

[en/2019/09/ontario-launches-speed-limit-pilots-on-sections-of-three-highways-in-southern-ontario.html](https://news.ontario.ca/mto/en/2019/09/ontario-launches-speed-limit-pilots-on-sections-of-three-highways-in-southern-ontario.html)

Up until 1975 the speed limit on some Ontario highways was at a similar rate, 70 miles per hour. Many other Canadian jurisdictions have highways with the 110 km/hr limit.

The public can complete an online survey about the impact of these speed limit changes until November 23. You can access the survey at <https://www.ontario.ca/form/survey-raising-speed-limit-ontario-highways>

For more details go to <https://news.ontario.ca/mto/>

PCS INCHING AHEAD IN RECENT POLL

A survey of 957 Ontarians conducted between September 3rd and September 5th by Campaign Research revealed the following results:

- If an election had been held at the time the poll was conducted, 32% of respondents would vote PC, 28% would vote Liberal, 27% would vote NDP and 11% would vote Green
- Since the time of the June 2018 Ontario general election, the poll reflects that the PC vote is down by 8%, the NDP down 6.5%, the Libs up 8.5% and the Greens up 6.5%
- The PCs are strong in eastern Ontario outside Ottawa, Halton, Peel, York, Simcoe and Durham Regions
- The NDP remain strong in northern Ontario, Hamilton and Niagara
- The Libs have regained strength in Toronto
- The City of Ottawa and southwestern Ontario are a three-way toss-up
- Premier Ford's net approval rating has improved from a low of -49 around the time of his government's "reset" in June of this year to -38 at the time of the poll; this is not a good number but it's an improvement; it would seem the Ford government's "reset" had a positive impact and perhaps staying under the radar and out of the news is the Premier's best strategy for re-election
- NDP leader Andrea Horwath's net approval rating is +15, Liberal interim leader John Fraser's +3 and Green leader Mike Schreiner +11
- The poll concludes that Premier Ford and his government are much less of a drag on the election chances of their federal cousins in the upcoming federal election today than they were three months ago

The poll has a margin of error of + or - 3.17% 19 times out of 20