

Media Release

For Immediate Release

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WorkSafe Saskatchewan: Helping youth focus on safety

Prince Albert, Saskatchewan –WorkSafe Saskatchewan has partnered with SaskEnergy to educate students about safety and to also promote the Mission: Zero program, a safety initiative that encourages people to take safety precautions both in the workplace and at home.

SaskEnergy and WorkSafe Saskatchewan representatives delivered a safety presentation today at Carlton Comprehensive High School in Prince Albert, and provided a pair of sport-type safety glasses to the 500 students in attendance. Each student was given a second pair of safety glasses to take home along with a valuable safety message: the importance of eye protection and the right for every individual to know any potential hazards in the workplace.

Leslie Gosselin, Manager of Community Relations for SaskEnergy says, “SaskEnergy embraces a culture of safety in everything we do to protect customers, employees and their families. Joining efforts with WorkSafe to promote Mission: Zero is a perfect opportunity for today's youth to be safety leaders. At SaskEnergy we know using safety glasses is an easy first step in the right direction.”

Workers' Compensation Board CEO Peter Federko says, “We think this is a great opportunity to engage our youth in safety discussions and build community support. We believe attitudes and behaviours will not change if the home or community doesn't support what we teach our youth.”

Federko adds, “The program intends to educate and create an opportunity for youth and their communities to engage in safe activities. But a campaign like this would not succeed without corporate support. It was important for *WorkSafe Saskatchewan* to partner with companies committed to health and safety.”

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Background:

How did *WorkSafe Saskatchewan* envision the value of a safety glasses campaign?

In June 2010, *WorkSafe Saskatchewan* collaborated with Magna Electric Corporation (MEC) on a similar campaign. Kerry Heid, CEO of MEC, approached WCB CEO, Peter Federko with the idea. Heid realized that even though he and his staff wore safety equipment on the job, they didn't always have access to equipment at home. He planned to purchase safety glasses and have his staff use them and share them with neighbours and customers in communities throughout Saskatchewan. (See related article on worksafesask.ca.)

Quick facts:

- Every day, 200 Canadian workers sustain eye injuries on the job, often resulting in lost time and, in some cases, either temporary or permanent vision loss. Workers could have prevented 40 per cent of these eye injuries if only they had been wearing eye protection (source: CNIB).
- Canadians could have prevented 80 percent of all eye conditions causing blindness with proper education and precautionary steps (source: CNIB).
- During 2004 and 2005, eye injuries accounted for 1.45 per cent of all reported injuries (work and non-work) in Saskatchewan, and hospitalized approximately 2,000 people. (Source: *Saskatchewan Comprehensive Injury Surveillance Report, 1995-2005*).
- Saskatchewan has the second-highest workplace injury rate in Canada. Outside of work, Saskatchewan hospitalizes people at a rate that is twice the national average due to preventable injuries. We have only three per cent of Canada's population, but report seven per cent of its injuries. According to the Health Quality Council, on average, there are 1,800 hospitalizations each month because of injuries.
- Saskatchewan work-related injury statistics indicate that youth (aged 15-24) are 20 per cent to 30 per cent more likely to have an injury than workers of any other age. *WorkSafe Saskatchewan's* youth strategy is to educate and influence the health and safety beliefs and behaviours of youth to achieve a reduction in injuries.

WorkSafe Saskatchewan is an injury prevention and workplace safety partnership between the WCB and the Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety. Through the partnership, both agencies offer programs and support that help employers and workers develop workplace health and safety programs. You can reach **WorkSafe Saskatchewan** at 1-800-667-7590.



Mission: Zero is an initiative to eliminate all injuries in Saskatchewan. Launched in 2008, the **Mission: Zero** campaign and programs drive home the effects of injuries and the importance of safety and injury prevention at home, work and play. The intent behind **Mission: Zero** is to bring about a significant reduction in the provincial injury rate.