



Issue Update

Further Reform to WCB Announced

Answering a need to revise the appeals process for the workers' compensation system, the Ministry of Skills, Development and Labour has introduced Bill 63, the Workers Compensation Amendment Act (No.2).

Currently there are three different appeal levels and cases going through all three levels are averaging three years, and may take as long as seven years to complete. This creates a great deal of frustration and dissatisfaction for all parties involved.

According to a recent news release by Skills Development and Labour, the new piece of legislation reduces the levels of review and appeal of WCB decisions from three to two, creates a new internal review function to improve the quality of initial decision-making and establishes a new, independent appeal tribunal as the final level of appeal for workers' compensation matters.

Bill 63 will replace Bill 56, which was introduced last May. The new Bill is the result of consultation over the summer with both workers and employers. Labour Minister Graham Bruce advises that this is a second step towards creating a workers' compensation system that is straightforward, responsive, and which will now take less than half the time to reach a final and fair decision. For example, the maximum time frame for a decision will now be 15 months, whereas previously it could take up to 35 months.

The overall review of workers' compensation will continue. Still on the table is reform to occupational health, vocational rehabilitation, survivor benefits and rights of the estate.

More information on Bill 63 can be obtained at the Ministry of Skills Development and Labour website: www.gov.bc.ca/sdl/

LET'S GET BC BUILDING!