Media Release

WSCC releases educational materials about impairment in the workplace

Yellowknife, NT (October 22, 2018) – Today, the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission (WSCC) released online educational materials aimed at employers and workers on impairment in the workplace, as cannabis becomes legal for recreational use.

The term impairment refers to a variety of conditions and/or substances that can impact a worker's ability to work safely. A worker who is impaired in the workplace – whether as a result of alcohol, drugs, prescribed or over-the-counter medication, or fatigue – may lead to unsafe work practices and have severe consequences for the worker, their co-workers, and the employer.

"The legalization of recreational cannabis provides a good opportunity for employers and workers to talk about impairment, to review policies, and to remind everyone about safe work practices," said Judy Kainz, Director of Prevention and Employer Services at the WSCC.

"Managing impairment in the workplace is a shared responsibility. Employers need to have workplace policies and procedures in place to address impairment. Workers must continue to ensure not only their own safety, but the safety of their fellow workers. No matter your position in the workplace, the bottom line is simple: are you fit to work today?"

The downloadable materials offer guidance on topics such as:

- The impact of impairment on workplace safety;
- Types of impairment and how to identify the signs of impairment;
- Workplace roles and responsibilities for employers, supervisors, and workers;
- Guidance on what employers can do if their workers are impaired; and
- A sample impairment policy employers can adapt for their own use.

The educational materials also include details of new legislative amendments employers and workers can reference for more direction. The new legislative amendments appear in the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations* and the *Mine Health and Safety Regulations* of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. These amendments are law: they were passed earlier this year in Nunavut on July 3, 2018, and in the Northwest Territories on September 12, 2018. The WSCC's safety bulletins on impairment are available in English, French, Inuktitut, and Inuinnaqtun, and can be accessed along with legislative amendments at <u>www.wscc.nt.ca/impairment</u> or <u>www.wscc.nu.ca/impairment</u>. Further resources on impairment – including the *Cannabis Code of Practice* – will be published on WSCC's impairment page as they become available.

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WSCC is an arm's length government agency responsible for administering the Workers' Compensation Acts, Safety Acts, Explosives Use Acts, the Mine Health and Safety Acts, and associated Regulations.

Together, with our partners, the WSCC provides services to almost 40,000 workers and 4,000 employers across the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. We process over 3,000 claims and conduct over 1,000 inspections annually to ensure the safety of Northern workplaces. The WSCC is unique in Canada as it is the only workers' compensation organization in the country to insure workers across more than one province or territory. We proudly offer services in the official languages of both territories.