

reflections

MAGAZINE

mine rescue
present &
accounted
for

Reflections Retrospective 12

As we prepare to say goodbye to *Reflections*, we reflect on past issues and look to the future.

Mercury 20

It's not just a workplace concern; you can also find it at home.

reflecting on safe workplace practices across the north

winter 2012
WSCC

DO YOU DO-IT-YOURSELF WHEN IT COMES TO SAFETY?

DON'T GO IT ALONE.

We have the resources and tools you need to stay safe. Let us help.

Learn by taking part in our safety education courses; expand your safety knowledge with *Reflections*, or our e-newsletter, *Insight*; and find the publications, information, forms, or person you need to talk to by visiting our newly improved website.

Partner with us in your safety.

WSCC Workers' Safety & Compensation Commission
www.wscn.ca 1.800.661.0792
www.wscn.nu.ca 1.877.404.4407





Northerners get the opportunity to see mine rescue teams in action when they compete every year in Yellowknife at the Mine Rescue Competition in June. What they don't see is all the hard work that goes into preparing a team to handle any life-threatening situation that comes their way at a remote mine site.

reflections • MAGAZINE

WSCC Workers' Safety & Compensation Commission | ᐃᖅᑲᓇᐱᕐᕈᓂᓪ ᐸᓪᓴᓄᖅ
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Reflections
Retrospective | 12

Over the past five years, we published *Reflections* an average of twice a year, with each edition building on feedback we received from our readers. As we prepare to say goodbye to *Reflections*, we reflect on past issues and look to the future.



Mercury | 20

Today, Northerners know mercury is dangerous and requires respect and care when handling. It is not just a workplace concern; you can also find it at home. Learn how to recognize the hazards and keep yourself and your workplace safe.

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Hand Protection

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President's Letter



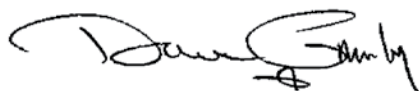
All good things must come to an end. As we look out our window and reflect on the summer that was, let's not forget safe work practices must remain all year. We spend the summer busily working on projects that need to happen while the ground is free of snow and ice. Safety messages are in abundance and we are keen to use our personal protective equipment. But, as the sunshine diminishes, we may get a little relaxed when it comes to safety. Safety is something none of us can ever take for granted.

The Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission (WSCC) commits to eliminating workplace diseases and injuries, but we can only do that with your help. You are our partners in workplace safety. Every day presents new challenges and opportunities. The key to success is preparedness; having a plan and the right tools in place to quickly deal with challenges before they become unmanageable and unsafe.

We hope *Reflections* magazine has become one of your go-to tools to help you, your colleagues and your workers stay safe on the job. That is our goal – to equip you with timely safety information, in an inviting format that is easy to read and share. And as the seasons transition, so too must *Reflections*. This is our last issue of *Reflections*. Writing and producing this magazine is a source of great pride for everyone at the WSCC, but we recognize it's time for something new. WSCC staff is busy creating an exciting new electronic publication to replace this printed magazine. It will provide the valuable information you expect from us, in a more environmentally and fiscally responsible format. We look forward to unveiling our newest creation in 2012.

This issue of *Reflections* highlights the important role mine rescue teams play in Northern safety cultures, the dangers of mercury, permanent medical impairment, a retrospective of *Reflections*, and much more.

We look forward to providing you with the tools and resources you need to stay safe at work. Together, we can eliminate needless loss and suffering and create a strong Northern safety culture.



Dave Grundy
President & CEO

Governance Council

Bill Aho

Chairperson

Bill Aho of Yellowknife was appointed as Chairperson of the Governance Council May 14, 2009, for a one-year term. Mr. Aho was reappointed for a three-year term March 26, 2010. Mr. Aho served as an employer representative since 2004. During this time, he held positions as Vice-Chairperson of the Council and Vice-Chairperson of the Audit Committee.

David Ritchie

Director, Worker Representative

David Ritchie of Yellowknife was appointed to the Governance Council as a Worker Representative effective June 11, 2011, for a three-year term.

John Vander Velde

Director, Worker Representative

John Vander Velde of Iqaluit was appointed to the Governance Council as a Worker Representative effective September 1, 2008, for a three-year term. Mr. Vander Velde was reappointed September 9, 2011, for a three-year term. He is the Vice Chairperson of the Governance Council.

Karin McDonald

Director, Employer Representative

Karin McDonald of Inuvik was appointed to the Governance Council as an Employer Representative October 15, 2004, for a three-year term. In October 2007, Ms. McDonald was reappointed for a two-year term and again for a one-year term October 15, 2009. She was reappointed for an additional three-year term on October 15, 2010.

Fred Koe

Director, Public Interest Representative

Fred Koe of Yellowknife was appointed to the Governance Council as a Public Interest Representative February 1, 2007, for a three-year term. Mr. Koe was reappointed February 1, 2010, for a three-year term. Mr. Koe is the Chairperson of the Audit Committee.

Doug Witty

Director, Employer Representative

Doug Witty of Yellowknife was appointed to the Governance Council as an Employer Representative September 1, 2009, for a three-year term. Mr. Witty is the Vice Chairperson of the Audit Committee.

Christopher Callahan

Director, Public Interest Representative

Christopher Callahan of Iqaluit was appointed to the Governance Council as a Public Interest Representative effective March 1, 2011, for a three-year term.

For more information on our Governance Council please visit our website at wscc.nt.ca or wscc.nu.ca.

Hand Protection

**"It won't happen to me.
I've done this a thousand times."**

How many times have we heard this or even said it? We use our hands to perform the same tasks over and over again; using the same tools, procedures and personal protective equipment (PPE). When we are this confident on the job, we are more likely to take risks with our hands; two irreplaceable tools.

Hand injuries are the most reported work-related injury. They carry major financial and personal costs. Hand injuries are often difficult to repair because of the complex and fragile nature of our hands. The most common hand and finger injuries are:

Traumatic: cuts, fractures, punctures, and amputations;

Contact: skin diseases or burns; and

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome: nerve damage caused by prolonged repetitive work with the hands.

Serious hand injuries are often the result of:

- Lacking attention or human error;
- Using the wrong tool for the job;
- Working with faulty tools or broken equipment; and

- Doing a job without wearing proper gloves or removing gloves while completing the task.

At work, hands face exposure to four types of potential hazards:

Mechanical: machinery, equipment and tools;

Environmental: hot or cold elements, sparks and rough surfaces;

Chemical: paints and cleaners; and

Biological: bacteria, viruses and mould.

It is important to assess the hazards and carefully choose the right hand protection to perform tasks safely. While there are many types of protection, from pads to barrier creams, gloves are the most common form of PPE.

4. Is there an inspection and care program in place? PPE like gloves have a shelf life. While some gloves may need laundering, others are only good for one-time use. Employers must make sure they have a program that provides maintenance guidelines on the different gloves, inspecting and testing for defects, and replacing or disposing of them.

When choosing the type of glove protection for a task, consider the following:

1. What are the hazards? Each task and workplace has different hazards. The PPE must protect the worker from the hazards they face while working.
2. Do the gloves fit properly? Gloves must allow the worker to complete their tasks comfortably without removing them. They must also completely cover their skin to prevent exposure to the hazard.
3. What type of training do you need? Workers must know when and how to use a particular glove. Employers must make sure their workers receive training on the proper use and care of their hand protection.



It is the worker's responsibility to protect their hands and the employer's responsibility to see that they do. So the next time you go to do a job you have performed a thousand times before, be alert and don't rush. Ask yourself three questions:

1. What are the hazards?
2. Am I using the right PPE for the task?
3. Am I following safe work practices?

If you don't know the answer to these questions, talk to your supervisor. Unlike other tools in your toolbox, you can't run to the hardware store to replace your hands. Protect them.

For more information, contact WSCC Prevention Services at 1-800-661-0792 in Yellowknife, or 1-877-404-4407 in Iqaluit. [WSCC](#)

There are four main glove types that offer different protection:

Glove Type	Protects Against
1 Leather, canvas or metal mesh	Cuts, scratches, sparks and rough surfaces
2 Fabric and coated fabric	Scrapes, moderate heat and sharp edges
3 Chemical and liquid resistant gloves	Irritating substances, chemicals and biological agents
4 Insulating rubber gloves	Chemicals and electricity (often used under leather gloves)

WORKING ON elevated equipment or machinery

THE DETAILS: Working with elevated machinery or equipment is a regular part of a day's work for many industries. Things like scissor lifts, dump trucks, gooseneck trailers and front-end loaders all fall into this category. They allow workers to perform their tasks, but can also pose serious hazards. Recent incidents in the NWT, Nunavut and across the country show workers must follow proper safe work practices to avoid serious injury or death.

How can it go wrong?

A movable part of equipment in an elevated position can create a hazard for a worker working on or under it, if not properly secured. One example is a worker working under the bucket of a front-end loader. If they fail to block the bucket of the loader in the elevated position while working under it, they risk injury. Without blocking, the bucket could trap and crush the worker if it travels down from its elevated position.

Prevent it!

Employers must provide their workers with the right information, training and supervision to keep them safe when working around elevated equipment or machinery. This includes explaining all the hazards they will face when operating equipment or performing maintenance or repairs.

Employers should also provide safe work practices, including:

- Physically securing all elevated parts against movement before performing any work on or under it;
- Blocking elevated parts following the

manufacturer's recommendations;

- Providing lockout procedures for working on or under parts held up by pneumatic or hydraulic pressure;
- Never leaving any elevated equipment or equipment part unattended;
- Warning all workers nearby before you activate any controls to lift or lower equipment or equipment parts;
- Completing a walk-around inspection of the equipment before you start the controls;
- Identifying controls with clear labels to reduce the chances of an operator pressing the wrong control; and



- Ensuring that warning labels on equipment clearly identify all hazardous areas, including pinch points (any point where

it's possible for a person or their body parts to get caught between moving parts of a machine and stationary parts of the machine).

Workers must also follow the safe work practices their employers provide to support their own safety. In addition to the safe work practices, employers should install or design safeguards to prevent accidental movement of equipment parts. Most importantly, employers must train their employees on the safe operation of machinery and equipment before they use it.



Employers must provide their workers with the right information, training and supervision to keep them safe when working around elevated equipment or machinery.

For more information, contact WSCC Prevention Services at 1.800.661.0792 in Yellowknife, or 1.877.404.4407 in Iqaluit. [wscc](#)

Part of the Process

Permanent Medical Impairment

While many workers fully recover from the effects of their injuries, some suffer permanent medical impairments (PMI). This type of impairment happens when a worker has a permanent loss in their psychological, physiological or anatomical structure or function.

The WSCC may provide assistance if a PMI affects a worker's ability to return to their pre-incident work. We provide pensions to workers identified as permanently and partially disabled because of their impairment. To make sure the pension accurately reflects the level of permanent impairment, the WSCC follows a process. We may rely on the cooperation of other Compensation Boards across Canada to help an injured worker.





Here is an example of how the PMI assessment process works:

1. A worker, Tom, amputates his pinkie finger while working at a mine site in the Northwest Territories.
2. Approximately one year later, Tom's doctors determine he is at the end of his maximum recovery period (his injury healed as much as it ever will).
3. As Winnipeg is Tom's permanent residence, the WSCC requests the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) of Manitoba's Medical Department to arrange Tom's PMI assessment.
4. The WCB of Manitoba contacts Tom with an appointment time. They forward the report from his assessment to the WSCC Medical Advisor for review.
5. The WSCC Medical Advisor determines if Tom has a permanent impairment resulting from his amputation. They use the *NWT and Nunavut Permanent Impairment Rating Guide* and the WCB Manitoba assessment report to make this decision.
6. The Advisor also recommends the rate of Tom's PMI. They calculate it as a percentage of permanent impairment of Tom's whole body.
7. The Advisor provides the rate to Tom's WSCC Pensions Specialist.
8. The Specialist uses this rate to determine Tom's pension amount.

The PMI rate is the main source of information WSCC Pensions Specialists use to determine the percentage of a worker's permanent partial disability or the measure of the decrease in their abilities. The rate the WSCC Medical Advisor provides is only a recommendation. Ultimately, the Specialist decides the percentage of the worker's pension award. This determines the value of the worker's pension.

Once the Specialist finalizes the pension amount, they contact the worker to let them know their options. Depending on the amount,

the worker may receive the pension in a one-time lump-sum payment or a monthly lifetime pension. The WSCC asks the worker's preference. For higher pension amounts, the worker's only option is a monthly pension.

While the WSCC considers a worker's pension to effectively compensate them for the degree of permanent impairment or disability their injury has left them with, the WSCC may reconsider the amount. We can do this at any time if we receive medical evidence that indicates a change in the worker's permanent impairment. The WSCC is also responsible for

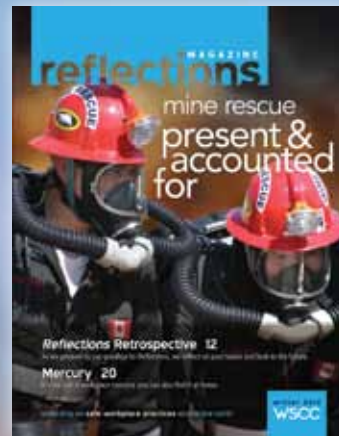
the ongoing medical treatment the worker requires for their permanent injury. Even though a worker may choose a lump-sum payment, it does not prevent them from receiving treatment for their injury in the future. If a worker feels they need additional medical treatment, they just need to contact their Pensions Specialist to ask about their options.

For more information on permanent medical impairment, contact the WSCC Claim Services at 1-800-661-0792. [wsc.ca](http://www.wsc.ca)

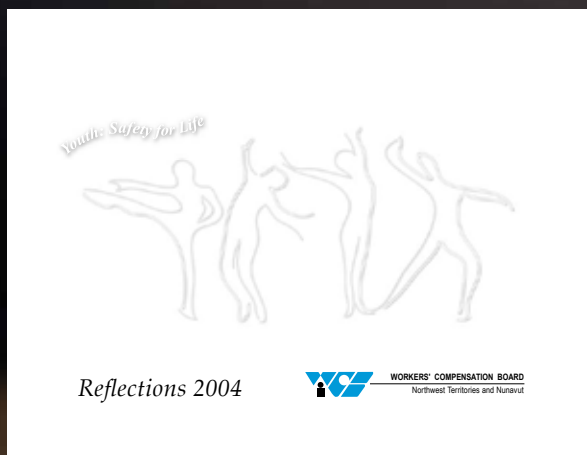
Looking Back Reflections Retrospective

Did you ever have a pair of shoes that you loved and just could not let go of? They served you well over the years, but as time went by, they got a little scuffed up and started to look a little dated. Deciding to make the decision to go with a new pair and bid farewell to the old ones was a decision you made because you knew it was time. For us, that's the tough decision we had to make with *Reflections*.

2012



2004 - Reflections was written as an editorial in that year's annual report.





2008 - This was a special issue for us. Jamie's story is very personal to many members of our WSCC family. It also formed part of the *Don't Be a Number* youth campaign launch.



In 2003, we were looking for a way to speed up the process to finalize our 2002 Annual Report and to celebrate our 25 years in operation. We came up with the idea to replace the front-end of the report with information that looked back on our past 25 years with an editorial approach. We hoped this would allow us to table the report sooner in the Legislative Assemblies and showcase our past achievements.

We liked the approach so much, we repeated it with our 2003 and 2004 Annual Reports. Each report reflected on the previous year. We dubbed this portion of our Annual Report *Reflections*.

In 2005, we stopped this approach and *Reflections* took a one-year break, re-launching in 2006 as a standalone publication. With no other external

publication, *Reflections* was a natural fit. The magazine allowed us to provide our stakeholders with information on our operations, prevention and safety awareness, and gave us a new way to foster a safety culture in Northern workplaces.

Over the past five years, we published *Reflections* an average of twice a year, with each edition building on the feedback we received from our readers. Articles covered a variety of topics, ranging from personal success stories of injured workers to the latest health and safety trends. To keep the information relevant, the editorial team made sure all the articles took a Northern approach to the topics covered.

As we developed and evolved *Reflections*, the magazine outgrew its original approach of reflecting back and started taking a proactive look at safety.



2007



2008



2008



2009



2010



2011



This was a fundamental shift and directly aligns with our core belief that prevention is the key to a safe workplace. At the same time, our stakeholders told us they liked the information *Reflections* provided, but felt we could present it in a more cost-effective and environmentally-friendly way. Early 2011, we made the decision to retire *Reflections* in its present form and replace it with a new magazine in 2012.

We strive to make sure the services we provide to our stakeholders meet their needs and provide value. As we develop our new publication, we will make sure we build on the feedback we received from our readers. This will allow us to create an effective final product that shares our safety message and provides the information our stakeholders want. While we say goodbye to a publication that served us well, we look forward

to what lies ahead for Northern safety as we break in our new shoes in 2012.

For more information on available safety resources, contact the WSCC at 1.800.661.0792 or checkout our website at wscc.nt.ca or wscc.nu.ca.

WSCC



NAOSH WEEK

awareness, prevention, safety

The best way to prevent incidents and injuries on the job is to create a whole culture around safety, so everyone thinks about it before they start working.

With the 1997 launch of the North American Occupational Safety and Health (NAOSH) Week initiative, the Canadian Society of Safety Engineering (CSSE) continues to work towards that goal.

Originally marked by an agreement between Canada, the United States and Mexico, NAOSH Week evolved into an annual event that touches all aspects of work and community. From the largest multinational employer to the individual businessman to community organizations, everyone celebrates NAOSH Week.

The Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission (WSCC) is proud of our long history celebrating NAOSH Week. In 1998, the Honourable John Todd, the

Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board, proclaimed May 18 – 24, 1997, as Occupational Safety and Health Week.

While everyone was getting used to the idea of a North American initiative for safety and health, we celebrated with radio contests, employer recognition awards, safety fairs, demonstrations and awareness booths in high traffic areas across the Territories.

With the federal legislation of Occupational Health and Safety programs across all industries, safety is an integral aspect of business. We incorporate safety into everything we do, from safety education to workplace inspections.

An annual event like NAOSH Week gives us the opportunity to promote prevention and awareness with unique and fun approaches for participating stakeholders.

Since NAOSH Week began, we have escalated our celebrations to widespread activities and events that include workplaces and communities across the Northwest Territories (NWT) and Nunavut. Some of our more recent events include the Trail Map to Safety; R U the Safest Link?; Employer's Toolkit for Safety;





Ready, Set, GO SAFE! Challenge;
and Spot Safe T. Sam.

In 2010, we introduced Safety Street, a virtual street that represents a street in any town in the NWT and Nunavut, and includes services available in most communities, represented as houses on the street. For 2011, we had a Safety Street circuit highlighting personal protective equipment, hazard identification and timed tasks

that focused our competitors' attention on the importance of safety and preventing injuries.

We look forward to NAOSH Week each year and try to bring a fresh approach to prevention and awareness; if you have any ideas on how to spread the word on the importance of safety, email us at naosh@wscc.nt.ca or naosh@wscc.nu.ca. [wscc](#)

LINKS:

csse.org
naosh.org
wscc.nt.ca/naosh
wscc.nu.ca/naosh

For a provincial and territorial chart on mandatory OHS committees:

<http://ccohs.ca/oshanswers/hsprograms/hscommittees/whatisa.html>



DontBeANumber.ca

A Refreshing Approach to Young Worker Safety



Fun new colours. Attention-grabbing graphics.

Social media. A new online game. That's how the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission (WSCC) took a refreshing approach to our *Don't Be a Number* youth safety campaign. Who says learning can't be fun?

Every year, hundreds of young workers, age 13-25, get hurt in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. In addition to costing employers money in time lost from the job and increasing assessment rates, workplace injuries can destroy lives. This is unacceptable. We commit to providing young workers with the tools and resources they need to work safely.

To help keep young workers safe, our *Don't Be A Number* campaign underwent a major refresh. When the campaign launched in 2008, the two main tools were the dontbeanumber.ca website and a series of TV commercials. The website allows young workers to ask us questions, share their stories, and learn about workplace safety, while the TV commercials profile young workers from the North who survived workplace injuries.

In 2010, we began the process of refreshing *Don't Be A Number*. It was important for us to know how youth get and share information and in what format they want it. So we talked to Northern youth to get their preferences first-hand.

After compiling the information we collected, we quickly realized using online tools is very important for communicating with young workers. We created a new online game, *One Life Logan*. The game takes place on a construction site, but the lessons learned apply to any workplace. To stay safe at work, players must identify the hazards and navigate them using personal protective equipment. Each game ends with a safety message.

To encourage young workers to keep playing *One Life Logan* and

continue visiting dontbeanumber.ca to learn about their safety rights and responsibilities, the game is also a contest. Players compete every month for the highest score. Winners receive great prizes and serious bragging rights.

Facebook also plays an important part of the campaign. Young workers can interact with Logan and their peers on Facebook. They can post their *One Life Logan* game scores and encourage their friends to play the game and learn about workplace safety.

Despite the fun and games, our *Don't Be A Number* campaign is all about teaching Northern young workers to take control of their safety and be safe in the workplace. We invite Northern employers to visit dontbeanumber.ca, play *One Life Logan*, and encourage young workers to do the same.

MERCURY

WHAT IT MEANS FOR SAFETY IN THE NORTH



Mercury, or quicksilver, that shiny liquid kids used to play with in chemistry class, is a naturally occurring element found in the earth's crust. It is liquid metal and exists in the air, water, soil and in our homes and workplaces.

You can find historic evidence of the use and fascination with mercury in civilizations across the globe. Archaeologists discovered it in ancient Egyptian tombs dating back as far as 1500 BC. Ancient Greeks used mercury in ornaments, and ancient Romans and Egyptians used it in cosmetics. Ironically, the early Chinese and Tibetans used mercury to prolong life, heal fractures and maintain good health.



MERCURY: WHAT IT MEANS FOR SAFETY IN THE NORTH

We now know mercury is dangerous and requires respect and care when handling. It is a toxin that can cause us great harm. Even today, it is in a wide range of products we all use. Mercury is not just a workplace hazard; you can also find it at home.

Inhalation is the most common way workers expose themselves to mercury. They can also absorb it through their skin, hair follicles and sweat glands. When exposed, symptoms appear quickly.

Exposure to high levels of mercury can cause:

- Skin irritation (rashes or lesions);
- Numbness in the tongue and around the mouth;
- Muscle tremors;
- Behavioural changes;
- Memory loss;
- Kidney, heart and lung damage; and
- Immune system problems.

Mercury is found in many workplaces. It still exists in common objects, where we would not normally expect to find hazards. This increases the associated danger for workers, because they may not immediately recognize the need for caution.

Today, mercury exists in workplaces in:

- Thermostats (these are still available for sale, although with declining availability);
- Fluorescent light bulbs;
- Switches in mechanical rooms (although not used in new construction, many still exist);
- Pressure gauges;
- Older thermometers, barometers, blood pressure meters and switches; and
- Dental amalgam (in old, silver-coloured fillings.)

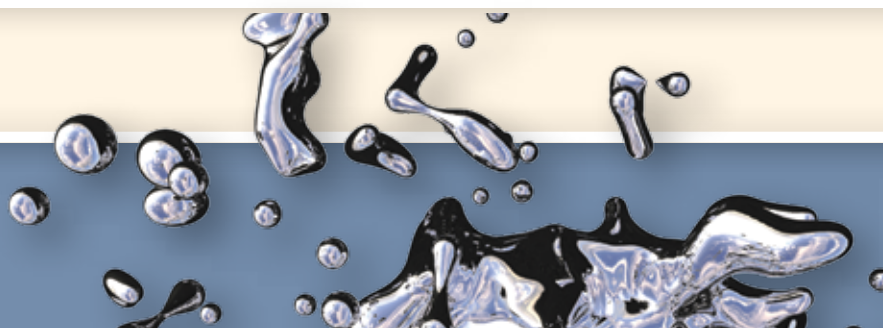
It is important to recognize where to find mercury, the danger it presents to workers and workplaces, and how to avoid spills.

The easiest way to prevent a mercury spill is to rid your workplace of all items containing it. Replace them with new, mercury-free technologies. When getting rid of old items, remember to do so safely to prevent contaminating the environment. Improper mercury disposal can affect the water and land, and contaminate Northern fish and animals. Contact the Government of the Northwest Territories, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, or the Government of Nunavut, Department of Environment, to learn how to safely dispose of mercury products.

Another way to prevent spills includes performing careful site inspections to identify sources of mercury. Look



Muscle tremors and memory loss are just two of the many symptoms related to exposure to high levels of mercury.



MERCURY: WHAT IT MEANS FOR SAFETY IN THE NORTH

for a silvery liquid. Know where it exists and inform and educate your workers on proper handling. One of the biggest problems is a lack of understanding of proper cleaning and disposal procedures. You can unintentionally spread the contamination to other parts of the site.

If you do have a mercury spill, you need to report it to the 24-hour Spill Report Line at (867) 920-8130 (they accept collect calls) to make sure an investigation is undertaken by the appropriate government authority. You must report a spill regardless of the amount.

Mercury spills are uncommon. This means the North has yet to acquire

the expertise and equipment to deal with a spill. You must contact a crew outside the territories to perform the clean-up. This presents a significant challenge for Northern organizations, because it can take days for a professional to arrive on the scene. This results in expensive site closures until the clean-up is complete, as well as the cost to bring in assistance. Mercury and mercury-containing products must go to a registered hazardous waste receiving facility.

While waiting for a professional clean-up crew, there are steps you can take to prevent the spread and further contamination of mercury at your workplace:

- Evacuate the area surrounding the spill. Post warning signs to inform others.
- Remove contaminated clothing and shoes, and leave them in the spill area. If possible, place in a doubled plastic bag for disposal.
- Thoroughly wash all contaminated skin with soap and water.
- Open exterior doors and windows for ventilation.
- Seal off the room to prevent the mercury vapour from travelling throughout the rest of the building.
- Turn off the heat in the room. Lowering the temperature helps prevent the mercury from vapourizing.



Mercury exists in unsuspecting areas including **fluorescent light bulbs**, older thermostats and **thermometers**.



MERCURY: WHAT IT MEANS FOR SAFETY IN THE NORTH



Inhalation is the most common way workers expose themselves to mercury. **It can absorb through skin, hair follicles and sweat glands.**



When attempting to clean a mercury spill at your workplace, never:

- ▶ Heat it. This will cause it to vapourize and become airborne. Vapourized mercury is harder to clean than liquid droplets.
- ▶ Clean it with a vacuum or broom. A vacuum will vapourize the mercury. The bristles of the broom will break it down into smaller particles and spread it further.
- ▶ Pour it down a drain. The mercury will contaminate the environment and our Northern food and water supply.
- ▶ Wash contaminated articles in your washing machine. It will contaminate the machine, and get into the water system.



Mercury use is on the decline in the North and around the world. However, you can still find it in many workplaces. While mercury contamination presents great human danger, with education and training, we can prevent those dangers. If you have any questions about mercury and your safety, contact the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission, or your local government's environment department.

For more information, contact WSCC Prevention Services at 1-800-661-0792 in Yellowknife, or 1-877-404-4407 in Iqaluit. [wscc](#)

Improper mercury disposal can affect the water and land, and contaminate Northern fish and animals.



2012 Assessment Rates

We all want to know about the bottom line; how does this affect my business, who can I talk to, and what's this going to cost me.



When we set assessment rates each year, we keep this top of mind.

Each year, our Governance Council sets the provisional and individual assessment rates. With advice from an independent actuary, the Governance Council bases the rates on the last five years' claims experience. So, the lower the claims cost or experience, the more stable the rates.

During the fall, we inform all employers registered in the NWT and Nunavut of their specific assessment rates. We place a series of ads in local and regional papers, and mail assessment rate guides.

In December, we mail employers their Employer's Payroll Statement package. This package includes:

- Personal Optional Coverage application (due December 31);
- Employer's Payroll Statement (due February 28);
- Payment Authorization form; and
- Guide for Completing your Employer's Payroll Statement.

We also update our website's Employers section at that time with the new forms and guides.

For questions on assessment rates or other employer services we provide, please contact us:

(867) 920-3834 or
toll free 1-800-661-0792

Or visit our website at
wscc.nt.ca or
wscc.nu.ca



In December, we mail employers their Employer's Payroll Statement package.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Regulations and Codes of Practice

The Northwest Territories and Nunavut General Safety Regulations are undergoing change.

This is a project of the Safety Advisory Committee, a committee appointed by the Northwest Territories and Nunavut Ministers responsible, and external to the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission (WSCC). The WSCC enforces the *Regulations*, and helps employers and workers stay safe. We believe changes to the *Regulations* will create safer workplaces.

The Committee released a draft version of the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations* to the public in September 2010 for review and feedback. In total, 48 stakeholders responded, providing approximately 750 comments. The Committee read and considered all comments. Their responses are in a summary document that categorizes them by common theme. All participants received a copy of the summary in September 2011, and it is available on the WSCC website.

As part of the WSCC's responsibility to support you in following and understanding the *Acts and Regulations* and creating safe workplaces, we use Codes of Practice. Codes are clearly written guidelines that provide information and advice on requirements for worker protection and safety. While they are not law,

you should follow them unless there is another means of achieving the same or better level of safety. Use them in conjunction with the *Acts and Regulations* to provide greater clarity for you and your workers. The WSCC is drafting new Codes of Practice to support the proposed *Regulations*.

The proposed *Regulations* are still a work in progress. The Committee continues to work with the public to create a carefully constructed document to help employers and workers across the North remain safe. The final decision for any change to the *Regulations* is that of the Ministers responsible.

For more information on the revisions to the Northwest Territories and Nunavut General Safety Regulations, visit our website at wscc.nt.ca or wscc.nu.ca, or contact our Chief Safety Officer at 1-800-661-0792. WSCC

PRESENT AND ACCOUNTED FOR: MINE RESCUE IN THE NORTH

UNDERGROUND. The word evokes all kinds of imagery: deep, dark places with tons of dirt and rock overhead, tunnels, huge earth moving machinery, the clink of tools, and the sounds of voices echoing deep in the ground.





► **NOW**, imagine working in that environment, where, when something goes wrong, you depend on a highly trained team of people to know exactly where you are and exactly what to do.

ENTER MINE RESCUE

Every mine has one, a group of trained and experienced mine employees that become a rescue team in times of crisis. Ideally, there are 60 to 80 employees trained at each mine, with a minimum of 30 team members on site at all times.

These volunteer members come from all walks of life; paramedics, cooks, clerks, supervisors, miners, mechanics, etcetera. Upon making a commitment to the training and the team, they become a big part of an essential safety component at their mine.

Mine rescue training is standard across the mining industry. Responses, actions and timing are all similar. All Northwest Territories and Nunavut mine rescue trainers receive certification through standards set by the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission (WSCC), based on the British Columbia Mine Rescue Manuals. And, in times of crisis, where an accident at a mine is too overwhelming

for the teams on shift, a mine can call in other rescue teams, confident the training and response techniques align with their own.

When the mine rescue team receives the call to address an issue or problem, they respond with three teams of at least five members each, depending on the scope of the incident. One team goes to the accident site in the mine, another team remains on the surface, or fresh air base, as the stand-by team in case the first team requires assistance. A third team stands in reserve. "These team members are a well-oiled machine," says Peter Bengts, Chief Inspector of Mines for WSCC. "Each member knows exactly what their role is."

Northerners get the opportunity to see mine rescue teams when they compete every year in Yellowknife at the Mine Rescue Competition in June. But, competition is not the target for their training. "Mine rescue is a serious and important foundation for any safety program at a mine," says Peter. "When something goes wrong in a mine, you need to know

there is a group of people so well trained they can deal with any crisis situation that comes up. Competition is just a bonus on top of that."

This past June saw all three territories competing in the Territorial Mine Rescue Competition for the first time, with two young teams that had never been in competition. This was the first year Capstone's Minto Mine from the Yukon Territory and Agnico-Eagle's Meadowbank Mine from Nunavut ever competed. This was also the first time the Competition had representation from the Yukon Territory.

Agnico-Eagle's Meadowbank Mine attended the Competition for the first time, with coach Andre Rouleau. "We were doing our regular training, making sure we were current and confident, when we found out mine management wanted us to attend the competition in Yellowknife," he said. "This gave us two months to prepare and make ourselves competition ready."

Andre's background is as a Deputy Fire Chief and a firefighter for more



than 30 years, so he has a breadth of experience in fire prevention and rescue techniques. "Right now, the Meadowbank site is a surface mine, so the majority of our incidents are fires and general safety incidents," he said. "When we go underground in the near future, it will give us the opportunity to put our training into practice."

The team consists of volunteers from every department at the site. They are given a medical exam to make sure they're healthy enough to manage in a crisis situation, then receive first aid training if they need it, mine rescue training, and Firefighting 1 and 2. This means the team is ready for anything at their site.

To stay current and trained, they practice each Sunday, focusing on practical and theoretical training. All mine rescue teams must do eight hours of training every two months, as laid out in the *Mine Health and Safety Acts and Regulations*. These teams do much more than that.

It paid off. At their first competition, the *54th Territorial Mine Rescue Competition*, the Meadowbank team won two trophies: Practical

Bench – Surface (sponsored by BHP Billiton) and Smoke – Surface (sponsored by Draegar Canada). "We had a great time," said Andre. "Just the opportunity to compete to see how we measure against other teams and their techniques was a great opportunity. It allowed us to see what we need to work on and what we're already doing well. It gave us a great boost before we go to the *National Western Regional Mine Rescue Competition* in Fernie, British Columbia."

The Yukon team had a similar experience. Capstone's Minto Mine, another first time competitor, was led by coach Mark Goebel.

Mark has a strong background in safety and prevention. With experience as an industrial firefighter, paramedic, hazmat technician, first aid instructor, and ski patrol, he is well versed in rescue and first aid techniques. He is also a certified mine rescue instructor for underground and surface through the WSCC. "I believe in being prepared," he said. "There are so many variables at a mine site; you have to be ready for anything."

The Minto Mine is still a new mine, and the rescue team consists of only 20 members, two shifts of 10. Currently, all operations are on the surface, with plans to expand underground.

All their team members are also volunteers, from all departments across the mine site, including contractors. They look for people with some background in emergency response or first aid, but they will train someone who is willing to make a strong commitment to the team. Each team member and their supervisor sign commitment agreements. Mine administration is very supportive of the commitment and time it takes to train both the individual and the team to work as a unit.

"All members of our mine rescue team are highly committed," said Mark. "They don't just show up for the practices; there is a lot of self study and practice outside regularly scheduled training sessions."

Their training schedule is thorough. They meet every Wednesday to check their gear and go through the schedule for each Sunday's four-hour



training session. They have brought in outside instructors to provide new approaches and techniques to their schedule. Last year, they invited Canada Rescue technicians to provide training in rope rescue and confined space rescue. With the industry advancing so quickly with new techniques and practices, they commit to sourcing instruction to keep themselves current.

That approach paid off at last year's *Mine Rescue Competition*. The Minto Mine team went home with the trophy for Rope Rescue (sponsored by Nuna Logistics), but their overall experience with an unexpected award was the overwhelming prize.

"When we arrived in Yellowknife, we had no equipment," said Mark. "The Yellowknife Fire Department came to our rescue and gave us a bay and any equipment we needed; just full unconditional support. What they couldn't give us, Medic North stepped in and provided. We owe a big part of our success to them and their generosity."

And, the big surprise of the event for this team was the Mine Rescue Certifications they received from

Peter Bengts. "To see the team receive those certifications after all their hard work was the best trophy of the event," said Mark. The Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board is just implementing their certification program, so none of the team members were officially certified.

"At the end of the day, the more tools you have in your toolbox, the better you can get the job done," stated Mark. "As long as you maintain the safety of your team, your patient's care, and meet your objectives, you should be able to manage in any crisis situation."

Mine rescue has come a long way since the early days; with communications technology, advanced techniques, training and equipment, and highly specialized instructors and team members. And with teams like Mark's and Andre's present and accounted for at the mines, underground isn't such a scary word after all.

For more information, contact WSCC Mine Safety at 1-800-661-0792 in Yellowknife, or at 1-877-404-4407 in Iqaluit. wsc.ca

MINE RESCUE

Competition Events

SURFACE AND UNDERGROUND WRITTEN TEST

While in lock-up, teams write an exam. The exam covers mine rescue procedures, respiratory protective equipment, fire fighting procedures, and first aid.

SURFACE PRACTICAL BENCH

This is task-specific and the task changes year-to-year. The task involves specific skills to challenge individual team members. It may involve respiratory protective equipment, gases and gas testing, knots, rope rigging, oxygen therapy, and general mine rescue knowledge.

UNDERGROUND PRACTICAL BENCH/FIELD TEST

This is equipment specific. Team members carefully check out (field test) their BG4 breathing apparatus and equipment for proper functioning and air tightness as they would in a real incident. The team may also answer questions on the BG4 equipment and mine rescue procedures.

FIRST AID

A five to six person team demonstrates its proficiency in first aid in a potential mining site incident. St. John Ambulance (NWT, Manitoba, Nunavut) prepares and judges the simulated incident.

FIRE FIGHTING

A six-person team reloads fire extinguishers and uses them to extinguish various live fires.

ROPE RESCUE

A six-person team performs a task that involves a rope rescue apparatus, such as lowering or lifting a person or rappelling.

SURFACE AND UNDERGROUND SMOKE

A five to six person team dons respiratory protective equipment and searches for and rescues victims in a smoke-filled room or simulated conditions.

SURFACE OBSTACLE/EXTRICATION

Up to a six-person team competes in this task. The teams use rescue devices common to mine rescue, such as pulley systems, come-alongs, air bags, etc., to extricate a person.

UNDERGROUND OBSTACLE/EXTRICATION

Using a mock mine to represent the tunnels and workings of an underground mine, judges set-up mine rescue problems the team must solve. The problem may involve finding and rescuing trapped mine workers, locating and extinguishing fires, and rehabilitating the mine. A five-person team wearing apparatus travels underground, where it receives direction from a Coordinator/Director of Operations, who is a member of the team.



WSCC in the Community

These days, the bottom line for corporations doesn't just reflect expenses and revenues. Business owners and operators now include community giving in their measurement of success. In the business world, the exceptions are those that do not give back.

The Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission (WSCC) consistently recognizes its communities in the NWT and Nunavut. Whether it's a territorial or local initiative, WSCC employees understand the importance of

being a part of the community. Especially in the North, where community is so important.

So every year, a team of WSCC employees target initiatives for giving back to the community

and the employees hit the ground running. "I think at heart, everyone is a little competitive here," said Theresa Wolfe, long involved in WSCC fundraising activities. "We always set a competition between divisions to see which

one raises the most money, and everyone always steps up. Senior Management has always supported our initiatives. All of the money we've fundraised comes directly from WSCC employees."

From the early days of the organization, WSCC employees have always gathered to give back. In the 90s, most of the charitable activities focused on participating in the Terry Fox Run for cancer research and sponsoring the Salvation Army Christmas Families initiative. These were consistent activities for a number of years, until the early 2000s.

In addition to the Terry Fox Run and Christmas Families, the WSCC fundraising team began to participate in the Relay for Life. Initially using pledge sheets, the group brainstormed and started holding bake sales; Valentines, Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas gift baskets; and silent auctions.

Throughout the 2000s, WSCC fundraising became an inherent part of the organization. Most years, the WSCC donates \$10,000 to \$15,000 to various charities and initiatives, and often more, with \$30,000 in 2008 and \$23,000 in 2009.

The Iqaluit office also provides support and involvement across Nunavut. Long-time supporters of the Humane Society, Run for the Cure and food drives for the Food Bank, this past year they took it a step further. Employees cleaned their closets and donated all of the clothes to the two women's shelters. They also found out how many children were at the shelters and their ages. Each employee chose a child from the shelters to sponsor for Christmas. They gave clothing and gifts to help make each child's Christmas special.

"Whether it's buying a ticket for a holiday basket or participating in an event like the Relay for Life,

this organization is amazing," says Dave Grundy, President and CEO. "There's an opportunity to give back every month, and our fundraisers keep us front and centre and a big part of the community." [WSCC](#)

Each year seems to bring another opportunity for community involvement. Currently, the WSCC participates in:

- Salvation Army Christmas Families
- Run for the Cure
- Relay for Life
- Terry Fox Run (winning the 2005 Terry Fox Run Award for the most money raised per capita in the corporate team category)
- Crisis response (Tsunami Relief, Slave Lake, AB fires)
- Kids Help Phone
- Daffodils for Cancer
- Yellowknife Womens' Shelter
- Food Bank donations
- Children's Wish Foundation
- Providing prizes for various groups for activities and celebrations.



RESOURCES

Websites to help you get the information you need.

Partners in Safety

- ▶ Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety
ccohs.ca
- ▶ Canadian Standards Association
csa.ca
- ▶ Canadian Society of Safety Engineering
csse.org
- ▶ Northern Territories Federation of Labour
ntfl.yk.com
- ▶ Northern Safety Association
nsa-nt.ca
- ▶ St. John Ambulance Canada
sja.ca

Workers' Compensation

- ▶ Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut
wscn.nt.ca
wscn.nu.ca
dontbeanumber.ca
- ▶ Workers' Advisor Office: Northwest Territories and Nunavut
waonwtnu.ca
- ▶ Association of Workers' Compensation Boards of Canada
awcbc.org

Article Resources

Mercury

- ▶ **enr.gov.nt.ca/_live/documents/content/NT-NU_Interactive_Spill_Form.pdf** (Spill Report Form)