

2013

**WSIS**

Workplace Safety  
and Insurance System

## Year-End Report

April 2014

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# INTRODUCTION

Throughout the Workplace Safety and Insurance System there are increasing conversations about workplace safety, return to work, reducing litigiousness and improving outcomes for workers and employers.

Discussions amongst partner agencies, stakeholders, third party and aligned organizations, the OHS Advisory Council and hundreds of other Nova Scotians over the past year have all informed the continued implementation of the *Workplace Safety Strategy 2013-2017* (including significant revisions to the Administrative Penalties process), changes to the WCB's internal appeals process and the adoption of a new WCB policy on psychological injuries among many other initiatives. This level of discourse ensures the System is continuing to evolve balancing the interests of workers and employers – those whom the System serves.

Many challenges continue to face the System including an unfunded liability, lower benefits for workers and higher rates for employers compared to the rest of Canada. Through continued discussion we will face these challenges together, as a community. This 2013 Year-End Report provides highlights of the initiatives that were undertaken in the past year and summarizes the progress we are making. We hope you find it informative.



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Sandra McKenzie  
Deputy Minister  
Nova Scotia Labour and Advanced  
Education



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Elaine Sibson  
Chair  
Workers' Compensation Board of  
Nova Scotia

Coordinating Committee  
Workplace Safety and Insurance System

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There were significant accomplishments in 2013 including a continued decline in workplace injury which reached a new all-time low of 1.86 injuries per 100 workers. And the days of work lost due to injury declined by another 29,000 days.

In 2013, implementation of the *Workplace Safety Strategy for Nova Scotia 2013-2017* continued to be a focus including significant enhancements to the Administrative Penalties program, restructuring of the Department of Labour and Advanced Education's OHS Division, a Leadership Matters conference that brought together more than 175 safety leaders from across Nova Scotia to share best practice and develop collaborative relationships, two new assessment rate rebate programs that provide incentives for employers to invest in workplace safety, and a new social marketing campaign *What Matters Most* that is an emotional reminder that the most important reason for working safely isn't at work at all.

It was a year marked by progress, but also a year marked by tragedy. Unfortunately, there were 17 acute fatalities in Nova Scotia in 2013. Five people died at work due to a health condition, and a further 12 died due to occupational diseases stemming from work of the past. Nearly half of Nova Scotia's acute fatalities occurred in fishing. This prompted the creation of a collaborative plan to reduce fatalities in the fishing sector. The Fishing Action Plan involves federal and provincial partners working with industry to bring an end to fishing tragedies by enabling an industry and community group – the *Safe at Sea Alliance*.

Work to reduce the litigiousness of the workers' compensation appeal system continued as well, building on conversations with the Workers' Advisers Program and Workers' Compensation Appeals Tribunal and stakeholders that started in 2009. The WCB introduced a new role – Professional Practice Coaches who support case workers and help with their continued professional development; is making the appeal process more transparent and expediting the process where possible; and will introduce plain language decisions beginning in 2014, to make claim decisions easier for workers and employers to read and understand.

Government introduced changes to the *Workers' Compensation Act* in 2013 both to provide retroactive benefits for a group of surviving spouses who were seeking benefits for the period 1985 to 1999 and to protect benefits for coal miners assessed under the Automatic Assumption provisions to ensure their benefits are not reduced should their lung function improve.

At year-end, the WCB's liabilities total \$1.929 billion and assets total \$1.377 billion, with an unfunded liability of \$552.2 million. From the prior year, the WCB's funding percentage increased from 66.5 per cent to 71.4 per cent. Employer assessment rates remain stable at \$2.65/\$100 of payroll and are the highest in Canada.

# BACKGROUND

Workers and employers play an integral role in the Workplace Safety and Insurance System by providing valuable input into the System's collaborative areas of priority. The agencies, in turn, are responsible for considering stakeholder expectations and feedback in the context of operational realities – to determine what is possible and/or what is required to achieve improved outcomes. A Coordinating Committee provides oversight – ensuring that stakeholders and partners work together toward common goals. Our **mission** is to work together to help keep people healthy and safe at work, to insure against loss and to support workers' rehabilitation. We strive to be fair, open and responsible in everything we do.

Our shared **vision** is, "Safe, healthy workplaces for Nova Scotians, and sustainable safety and insurance services".

Our **goals**:

1. Improve outcomes for workers and employers,
2. Improve service delivery,
3. Ensure effective governance of the System, and
4. Ensure financial sustainability of the System.

A vision is the destination that we steer toward; goals are the guide posts that help us get there. This report examines our progress in 2013 along the path to that vision by evaluating progress on initiatives and System performance results.

More details on agency-specific performance reports can be obtained from the respective agencies:

- Occupational Health and Safety Division Annual Report
- Workers' Advisers Program Quarterly and Annual Reports
- Workers' Compensation Appeals Tribunal Annual Report
- Workers' Compensation Board Annual Report

# PROGRESS TO PLAN

Collaboration is a key focus area and the following are initiatives that best characterize this collaboration supporting continued progress towards System goals:

**Workplace Safety Strategy for Nova Scotians 2013 - 2017** - In the spring of 2013 Nova Scotians came together like never before to focus on workplace safety. The Workers' Compensation Board and Nova Scotia Labour and Advanced Education stood together with workers, employers, industry representatives, labour leaders and safety partners to officially introduce the *Workplace Safety Strategy for Nova Scotians 2013-2017*. Developed by the WCB and the Nova Scotia Department of Labour and Advanced Education and based on extensive stakeholder consultation, the Strategy establishes strong goals for health and safety and a long-term vision to make Nova Scotia the safest place to work in Canada.

Over the past year the WCB and Nova Scotia Labour and Advanced Education have been engaging Nova Scotia in the strategy's implementation. More details on the progress achieved in year one of the Strategy are available at [www.workplacesafetystrategy.ca](http://www.workplacesafetystrategy.ca).

**Internal Appeals Review** - Building on work started in 2012 to identify opportunities to resolve issues earlier in the appeal process, in continued consultation with the Workers' Advisers Program, Workers' Compensation Appeals Tribunal and stakeholders, significant progress was made toward implementing the recommendations. In 2013 a new role was introduced at the WCB – Professional Practice Coaches who support case workers and help with their continued professional development. Collaborative and proactive approaches were developed for resolving appeal issues, making the appeal process more transparent, and expediting the appeal process where possible. Training was introduced in the preparation of plain language decisions, an approach that will make WCB decisions easier to read and understand. Although at an initial stage, as these changes take hold they will improve the overall service experience for injured workers and employers, and particularly those engaged in the first-level appeal process.

**Centralized Surgical Services Program** - In partnership with Annapolis Valley Health (AVH), the WCB is leading a new approach to managing and delivering surgical services. Together in 2013 the Centralized Surgical Services Program (CSSP) moved closer to implementation. The centralized approach to surgery supports a safe and timely return to productive work, and will help to ensure injured workers receive quality care, faster. Once the program is in place, workers, physicians and the WCB will work together to confirm the need for a surgical approach, and the CSSP makes arrangements for the appropriate surgical service to be delivered. With a straightforward process that provides timely access to necessary surgical services, injured workers are better supported in their recovery and return-to-work efforts.

**WCB Program Policy Changes-** In 2013, the WCB Board of Directors consulted with stakeholders on a number of program policy items:

- revisions to policies 2.1.1R10 *Workers' Travel Expenses for Health Care* and *Workers' Travel Expenses* and 4.2.4R11 *Workers' Travel Expenses for Vocational Rehabilitation* to reflect a change to injured workers' travel rates paid;
- revisions to contractor policies that codify the WCB's traditional interpretation of the terms 'contractor' and 'subcontractor' and ensure the application of the contractor provisions in the legislation and program policy remain the same;
- Stage 1 Policy Consultation on Policy 1.2.5AR *Occupational Hearing Loss Injuries on or after January 1, 2000*;
- Two proposed policies regarding the issue of compensation for psychological injuries for workers covered by the *Workers' Compensation Act* and workers covered by the *Government Employees Compensation Act*.

**2013 Mainstay Awards** - The Mainstay Awards were created in 2008 – a partnership of the Workers' Compensation Board and Nova Scotia Labour and Advanced Education.

The Mainstay Awards recognize Nova Scotians as leaders in promoting a culture of safety. Under the program, effective injury prevention and return-to-work management programs or initiatives are publically recognized, resulting in positive company morale and corporate reputation, and a higher profile for workplace safety as a business imperative.

In keeping with the spirit and intent of the Workplace Safety Strategy which seeks to build on the success of existing programs like the Mainstay Awards, enhancements were made to the program in 2013, and the timeline was adjusted. In particular, the awards will be presented at a gala event during NAOSH week in May 2014, a new category for health and safety education/ educators has been added, two Occupational Health and Safety Advisory Council members will serve as program judges, and the program website was updated to be more accessible.

# System Performance

System performance is monitored on an on-going basis. The results are used by stakeholders and agencies to gauge the health of the System and measure the progress towards achievement of the System's goals and objectives.

Table 1 depicts the System Scorecard, and measures within each quadrant. For more information on 2013 performance results, refer to Appendix A.

Table 1: System Scorecard– 2013

Measure	2013	2012
<b>OUTCOMES</b>		
Composite Duration	99	99
% Labour Force Covered	72%	71%
% Return To Employability	96%	96%
Injury Rate	1.86	1.96
* Injury Rate, Claims > 26 Weeks	10.28%	9.96%
<b>SERVICE DELIVERY</b>		
Injured Worker Satisfaction Index for WCB	73%	73%
Employer Satisfaction Index for WCB	79%	77%
Workers' Advisers Program Client Satisfaction	93%	87%
Injured Worker Satisfaction, claims > 26 weeks	69%	70%
Stakeholder Awareness of Importance of Workplace Health & Safety	90%	87%
Decisions allowed or allowed in part (WCAT)	47%	45%
<b>EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE</b>		
** WSIS Stakeholder Engagement Index	n/a	57%
<b>FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY</b>		
Benefits Comparison	See Table on Page 23	
% Funded	71%	66%
Average Assessment Rate (Actual)	\$2.66	\$2.65

*\*The proportion of workers with a lost-time injury who received short-term disability benefits exceeding 26 weeks.*

*\*\*Please note the Stakeholder Engagement Index has been discontinued. The survey was last administered in 2012.*

# ALIGNED AND THIRD PARTY ORGANIZATIONS

Aligned and Third Party Organizations are collaborative partners in achieving the System's goals and objectives.

An Aligned Organization is funded directly by a System agency. A Third Party Organization is not directly funded by an agency but shares elements of goals and objectives of the System.

The following submissions received are from the Aligned and Third Party Organizations directly.

## Aligned Organizations

### **Office of the Employer Advisor and Office of the Worker Counsellor**

Both the Office of the Employer Advisor and the Office of the Worker Counsellor developed year-end reports in 2013. These reports are available on the WSIS website at [www.wsis.ns.ca](http://www.wsis.ns.ca) and provide details of the organizations' achievements in the past year.

### **Pictou County Injured Workers Association**

The mandate of Pictou County Injured Workers Association is to provide assistance, advocacy and support for injured workers and their families who experience the devastating effects of workplace injuries. The long-term goal of our association is to facilitate sufficient change to the workers' compensation system to allow our association to devote 100 per cent of our focus on our founding principle: To be a support group for injured workers and their families.

Our organization contributes to the overall goals of the workers' compensation system as follows:

Our association's active participation in attending the Annual General Meeting, serving on workers' compensation system working groups and committees, and making submissions to the policy consultation process contribute to the system goals of improving outcomes for workers and employers, improving service delivery and ensuring effective governance of the system. Throughout the year our association representatives have participated in numerous meetings and discussions with the Workers' Advisers Program, Workers' Compensation Appeals Tribunal, Workers' Compensation Board, Department of Labour and Advanced Education, and other government and elected officials.

Our consistent and interactive communications with our members through monthly meetings and individual discussions increases workers satisfaction and provides a meaningful opportunity for workers to have input on the policy development process and the corporate decisions of WSIS.

In November 2013, our vice president accepted the invitation to be a guest panelist at the “**No Half Measures, Workers’ Compensation 100 Years After Sir William Meredith**” Conference in Toronto, Ontario from October 31 to November 2, 2013. This conference clearly identified the current workers’ compensation system in Canada is operating in a manner which is completely inconsistent with the founding principles as identified by Chief Justice of Ontario, Sir William Meredith, in 1913.

Our active participation in case conferencing during the return to work process, our interaction and discussions with WCB decision makers and our support of early resolution initiatives promotes accountability in decision-making. One of our goals is to reduce the unnecessary appeals and we strive to ensure the right decision is being made at the right time.

Our commitment to fully complying with the terms and conditions of our funding agreement and our determination to ensure all funding agencies and funded organizations maintain full compliance helps to ensure the financial accountability and stability of the system.

The following statistics highlight the increasing activities of our office services and the needs of injured workers involved in the workers’ compensation system:

Client Activities from January 1, 2013 to December 31, 2013

Incoming Telephone calls -	4332
Outgoing Telephone calls -	3324
In Office Appointments -	1896
Walk ins (no appointment) -	1464

The increased complexity and more lengthy adjudication of claims have significantly increased our time commitment to claims management issues. Our workload has increased dramatically while our funding has remained unchanged since 2009.

Our key priorities and initiatives for the upcoming year include maintaining our commitment to full participation and involvement in all workers’ compensation system stakeholder functions, consultations and committees. We will continue our advocacy and support services to individual clients and to the entire system. The accountability of the Workers’ Compensation Board in implementing true and effective prevention of injury initiatives and our support of the United Steelworkers campaign, “**Stop the Killing. Enforce the Law**” are high priorities for our association in 2014.

# Third Party Organizations

## **Nova Scotia Construction Safety Association**

Starting in 1994, the Nova Scotia Construction Safety Association (NSCSA) was assigned a full mandate to address the occupational health and safety (OHS) needs of the construction industry. From a WSIS perspective, the NSCSA was established as a third-party agency, an equal and productive industry partner. From a governance perspective, the NSCSA's Board of Directors is comprised of representatives of our founding members. Our Board of directors is unique in its make-up and it includes:

### **Representing Organized Labour and Employers:**

Cape Breton Building Trades  
Mainland Building Trades  
Nova Scotia Power

### **Representing Industry Organizations:**

Atlantic Concrete Association  
Construction Associations of Nova Scotia  
Nova Scotia Homebuilders Association  
Nova Scotia Road Builders Association

### **Representing Provincial Government:**

Nova Scotia Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal

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Since our formation in 1994 the industry has recorded continually improving health and safety outcomes. In 2013, the construction industry recorded only 604 time-loss claims. This represents a 10.4% decrease over 2012 (674) and a quick perusal of the public record shows that 604 time-loss claims are the fewest recorded in the industry since 1958. With outcomes like that, the NSCSA is confident that we are on the right track to reduce time-loss construction claims to a number fewer than 500 by the end of 2015.

## **NSCSA Strategic Direction**

This year the NSCSA will celebrate our 20th anniversary. It is an exciting time for the NSCSA as we look to build upon our past achievements with a new plan for the future, *'Toward Zero: the 2014-2020 NSCSA Strategic Plan'*. If you would like to review *Toward Zero* please visit [www.nscsa.org](http://www.nscsa.org) . For your information, our operational principles are shown below:

- 
- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ User-driven services and products</li><li>➤ Fiscal responsibility</li><li>➤ Fostering shared values for safe work</li><li>➤ Supporting young construction workers</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Quality and efficient service delivery</li><li>➤ Evidence based decision making</li><li>➤ Focused on improving outcomes</li></ul> |
|---|---|
-

## **NSCSA Activity and WSIS Goals**

The NSCSA is a third-party agency, and a partner, in the Workplace Safety and Insurance System (WSIS). Often, there is some alignment with our initiatives, day-to-day activities, and the goals of the WSIS. The following paragraphs show this alignment.

They indicate where NSCSA activities and initiatives contribute to the overall improvement of health and safety outcomes through the pursuit of the WSIS goals. They are intended to provide the reader with further information and a broader picture of WSIS activity.

Please note: This submission does not provide an all-encompassing year-end report for our 2013 activity. If you would like to know more about the NSCSA: our goals, accountabilities, or our 2013 activities please visit our [website](#) or [contact us](#).

### **WSIS Goal 1: Improve outcomes for workers and employers**

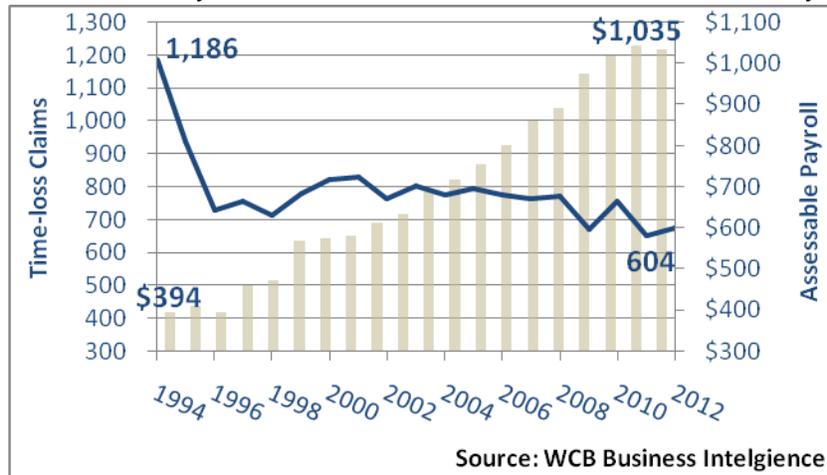
The NSCSA is focused on improving outcomes for construction workers and employers. Our programs, products and training make a difference in construction and they have helped to position our industry for significant improvements in health and safety. Since our formation the NSCSA has evaluated and COR-certified nearly 3,000 firms and taken nearly 267,000 training registrations. Since 1994, the number of time-loss claims experienced by our industry has dropped from 1,224 to 604, a 51% decrease (1993 to 2014). This achievement is even more impressive when you factor in our industry payroll. The number of time-loss claims recorded per every million dollars of assessable payroll in construction has decreased from 3.01 to 0.58, an 81% decrease. See the graph below for a depiction.

In 2013, the NSCSA continued to expand our capacity for strategic service delivery with the establishment of NSCSA Strategic Services. Our Strategic Services division creates short term interventions to assist segments of the industry recording persistently negative outcomes. The following denote some of these activities:

- Member outreach program
- Member engagement and compliance programs
- Partnerships (WSIS partners, construction industry groups, Nova Scotia Community College),
- Leadership Training, and
- Youth Awareness.

The NSCSA is also a leader in youth training. Since 2002 the NSCSA has chosen to focus on youth training; endeavouring to build health and safety awareness among future generations of workers. To date, the association has provided over 17,000 WHMIS and Safety Orientation courses to highschoolers across Nova Scotia.

Figure 1: Construction Industry Outcomes – Time-loss Claims and Assessable Payroll



**WSIS Goal 2: Improve service delivery**

The NSCSA provides user-driven programs, services, and products to support construction safety. We are an organization dedicated to continual improvement and are always looking for ways to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our activities. Accordingly, we see ourselves as fluid and responsive; we are dedicated to communicating and collaborating with workers and employers in a proactive way to assure an appropriate mix of safety services and products.

As discussed, the NSCSA completed a new strategic plan in December 2013, ‘*Toward Zero: the 2014-2020 NSCSA Strategic Plan*’. To finalize our plan, we consulted our entire membership to assure our industry supported our new strategic direction. The plan received almost 93% agreement from our membership and unanimous support from our Board of Directors.

In general, the feedback we collect from participants in our programs and training comes back positive and supportive. For 2014, more than 95% of NSCSA students were either satisfied or very satisfied with their training experience. Similarly, just over 90% of COR participants were satisfied or very satisfied with their experience.

**WSIS Goal 3: Ensure effective governance of the System**

As a board-governed and not-for-profit association, the NSCSA has a responsibility to service the safety needs of the Nova Scotia construction industry, including nearly 6,000 employers and almost \$1,000,000,000.00 in assessable payroll.

The Association’s Board of Directors is responsible for approval of annual operational plans and budgets. We continue to provide our membership with audited financial statements and public Annual General Meetings. Our Board of Directors recently approved ‘*Toward Zero: the 2014-2020 NSCSA Strategic Plan*’, as well as our 2014 Operational Plan and Budget (February 12, 2014). Our 2014 Annual General Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 15, 2014 at the Best Western Dartmouth Plus in Burnside.

#### **WSIS Goal 4: Ensure financial sustainability of the System**

The NSCSA is partially funded by a self-imposed industry levy that is tied to the Accident Fund. As such, our programming successes pose their own unique set of challenges and opportunities. Indeed, if we should ever achieve our mission of zero time-loss injury claims then no funds would be available to us from this source; a true catch-22 situation. And for that reason, financial sustainability is never too far from top-of-mind at the NSCSA.

Upon our inception in 1994, the mandated levy contribution of construction firms to the NSCSA was 3.5%. With hard work and an eye to cost-recovery, the NSCSA Board of Directors has chosen to reduce that contribution to 2.6% all the while maintaining dedication to quality, accessible, and affordable services.

#### **NSCSA and other WSIS Activities**

As an industry-governed and mandated association, it cannot be reiterated enough that the pursuit of our own strategic goals are our priority. However, when appropriate and where there is potential value for the industry and the WSIS, the NSCSA is happy to participate in specific WSIS initiatives. In 2013, the NSCSA participated in these WSIS initiatives:

- WCB /Safety Association Group: Host and attend ongoing meetings of all WSIS Industry Safety Associations and the WCB
- NSLAE Fall Protection Regulation Workshops: Hosted a series of fall protection training workshops to facilitate the transition to the provinces' new Fall Protection regime.

#### **Conclusion**

The NSCSA will be successful when the Nova Scotia construction industry is the safest in Canada. That is the vision of success our Board of Directors has set before us. And we believe we will realize this vision. In the end, we all have our own roles and responsibilities to play within the WSIS. However there are many times when we can and should all work together to make Nova Scotia a safer place to work. We recognize value in sharing information, discussing common concerns, and seeking out opportunities for cooperative efforts. We share strategic goals and objectives with our WSIS partners and often our activities and initiatives also contribute to the fulfillment of these goals and objectives, in general.

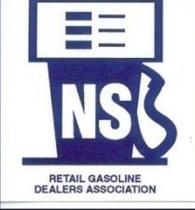
#### **Fisheries Safety Association of Nova Scotia**

The Fisheries Safety Association of Nova Scotia provided the Association's 2013 Annual Report and it is posted on the WSIS website at [www.wsis.ns.ca](http://www.wsis.ns.ca)

#### **NS Automotive Dealers Safety Association**

The Nova Scotia Automobile Dealers Safety Association provided the Association's 2013 Annual Report and it is posted on the WSIS website at [www.wsis.ns.ca](http://www.wsis.ns.ca)

# Retail Gasoline Dealers Association of Nova Scotia



## Retailer Report

**Retail Gasoline Dealers Association of Nova Scotia**

192 Wyse Road, Suite 8 Dartmouth Nova Scotia B3A 1M9 1.877.860.3805  
ataatlantic@eastlink.ca

March 2014

*Welcome* TO THE **27<sup>th</sup>** EDITION OF THE RETAILER REPORT!

**Safety Training Paying Off**

The RGDA Safety Training Program continues to make positive change within the Industry work places. This past year (2013) has seen fewer reported accidents since 2000 when the RGDA first began posting records. This very positive result for the year means the Industry experienced less employee personal hardship, lower WCB premiums and reduced business impact upon employers in the workplace.

**Automotive Trades Association of Atlantic Canada** Nova Scotia Automotive Industry  
W. C. B. Accident Report—2013

	Number of Claims				Paid Weeks				Benefits Paid			
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2010	2011	2012	2013	2010	2011	2012	2013
Auto Body	22	18	29	19	38	14	54	4	27,042	9,690	35,007	4,991
Recyclers	12	14	12	13	42	55	79	17	25,509	21,908	56,217	10,566
Repair Shops	151	160	129	149	207	199	137	272	170,634	160,801	121,856	233,089
<b>Retail Gas</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>167,030</b>	<b>171,025</b>	<b>91,281</b>	<b>97,552</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>508</b>	<b>576</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>476</b>	<b>390,215</b>	<b>363,424</b>	<b>304,361</b>	<b>346,198</b>

Note: 2013 @ 476 paid weeks = 9.1 years lost productivity

**Automotive Trades Association of Atlantic Canada** Nova Scotia Automotive Industry  
W.C.B. Accident Reported Claims

	5911 Recyclers	6311 Auto Dealers	6331 Retail Gas	6351 Repair Shops	6352 Auto Body	Totals
2000	10	437	174	268	58	947
2001	9	475	186	223	33	926
2002	13	424	168	241	26	872
2003	14	432	149	234	25	854
2004	22	392	115	260	30	819
2005	20	297	112	193	31	653
2006	12	293	105	160	36	606
2007	12	319	85	171	24	611
2008	14	279	99	179	21	592
2009	10	270	87	154	26	547
2010	12	225	81	151	22	491
2011	14	269	76	160	18	537
2012	12	240	90	129	24	495
2013	13	212	73	149	19	466

Source: WCB Statistics



## Automotive Industry Awards Evening

The 2014 Industry Awards Evening was held at Casino Nova Scotia and once again the Automotive Sector Council made it a great event. Excellent attendance, sponsors, awards, participation and Industry networking were the order of the evening. Retail Gasoline Dealers Association Graham Conrad was pleased to be seated with Mr. Terry Buchanan and Roger Murdock from XTR Energy. XTR is Nova Scotia's largest independent gasoline retailer and were generous sponsors of the event.



**Breaking News... Stay Tuned!**

Major Changes are underway to improve Industry input and management of the Apprenticeship Training Program. For more details, contact [Judy@AutomotiveSectorCouncil.ca](mailto:Judy@AutomotiveSectorCouncil.ca)

**Thank You Sponsors!**





# WHERE TO FROM HERE – PATH FORWARD FOR 2014

As of year-end 2013, considerable progress was made towards achieving the goals and objectives of the System. The System's collaborative initiatives and partnerships are examples of this progress.

In 2014, consultation with stakeholders will continue to be a key area of focus. Several important initiatives involving strategic alignment between the partner agencies are planned for this year including:

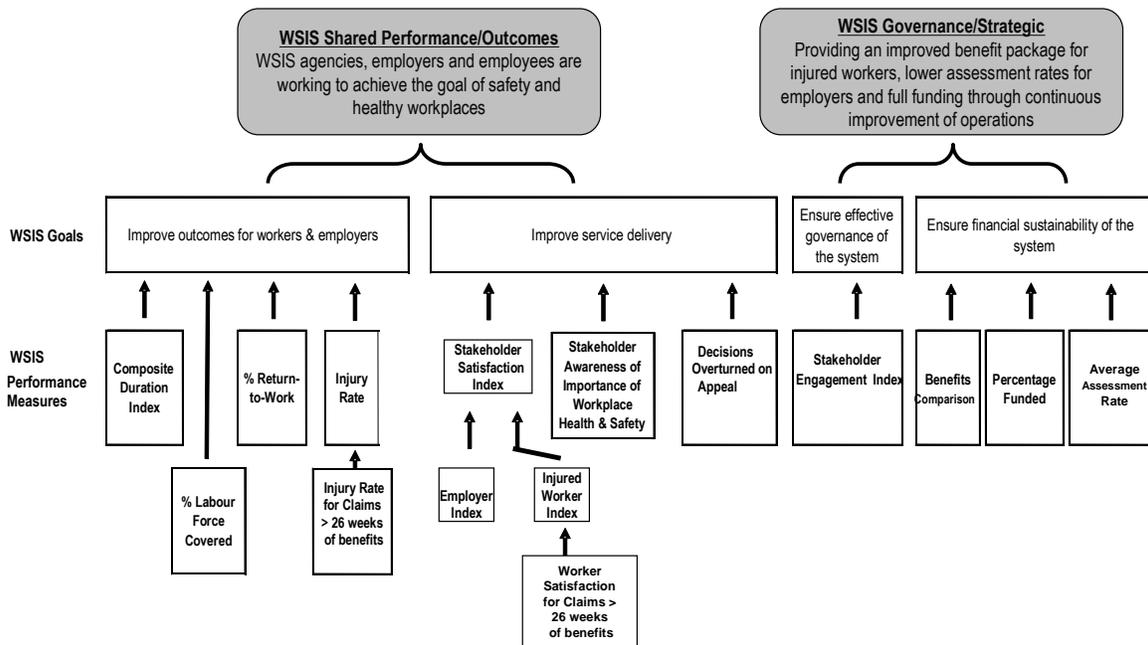
1. Collaboration between the WCB/LAE and stakeholders to continue implementation of the *2013-2017 Workplace Safety Strategy for Nova Scotia*;
2. Continued discussions with stakeholders and partner agencies to ensure the internal appeals process is less litigious and through the implementation of plain language, claim decisions will be easier to understand;
3. Stakeholder consultation on the WCB's Policy on *Occupational Hearing Loss - Injuries on or after January 1, 2000*. The WCB is proposing changes to clarify the approach to compensating for noise induced hearing loss, support consistency of adjudication, and reduce the burden of these claims on the appeal system; and
4. Stakeholder consultation on Phase 3 of the Workplace Health and Safety Regulations.

These initiatives, plus the ongoing collaboration amongst agency partners and stakeholders, will continue to define the success of the Workplace Safety and Insurance System going forward.

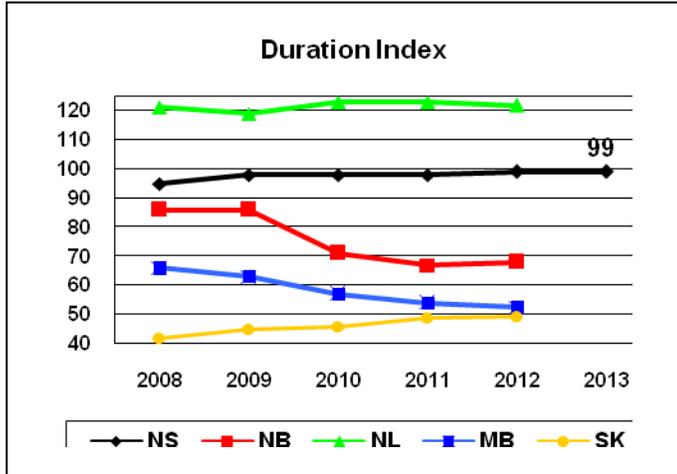
APPENDIX A:  
WORKPLACE SAFETY AND INSURANCE  
SYSTEM – PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT  
RESULTS 2013

# WSIS Performance Measures

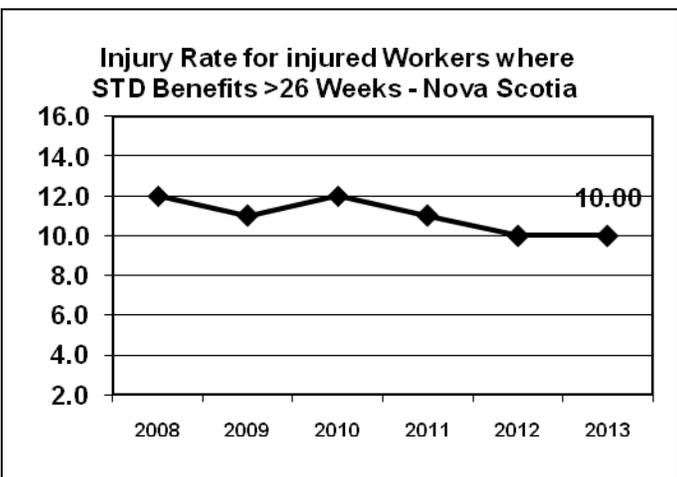
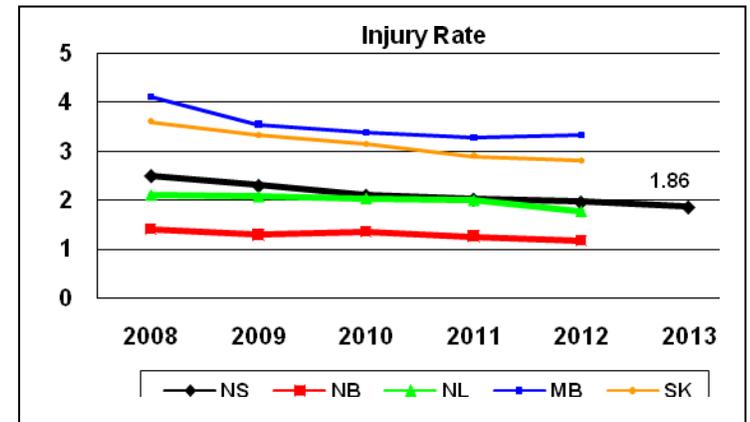
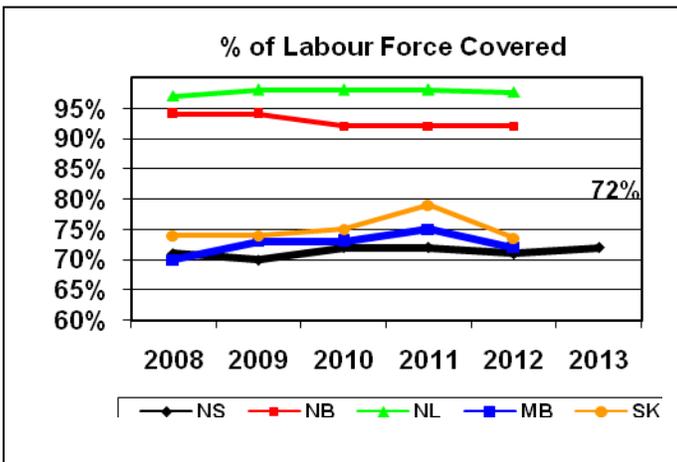
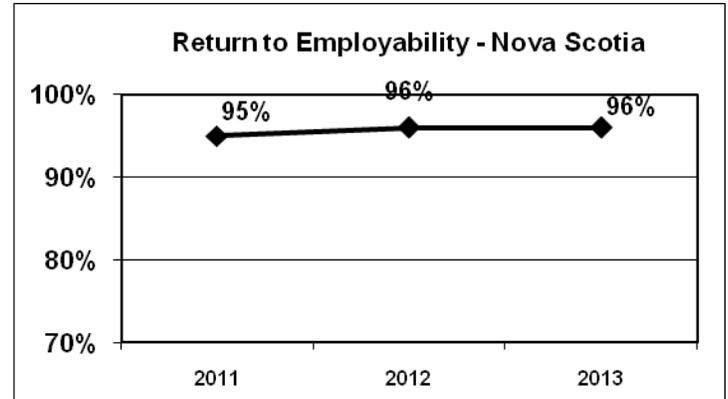
When agency partners and stakeholders first came together in 2005 to officially form the WSIS, there was a desire to create a basket of performance measures that could be used to measure the outcomes of the System. For the most part the measures were already in existence and collected by individual agencies. In the spirit of WSIS, agencies and stakeholders grouped the measures that correspond to the System's goals. The chart below depicts the groupings that existed at that time.



## Goal #1 - Improve Outcomes for Workers and Employers



Improving outcomes for workers and employers is the System's first goal.



\*Return to Employability is a new measure as of 2011.  
% Return to Work is no longer measured.

In 2013 Nova Scotia's injury rate – the number of workers who suffer a time-loss injury per 100 of those covered – dropped to its lowest recorded level at 1.86. This result makes a favourable contribution to momentum that has been building for the past nine years, culminating in a 30 percent decline in time-loss claims since 2005.

While the number of workers who go on to receive long term benefits has declined significantly over the past several years, and continued to decline this year, it did not decline as much as anticipated.

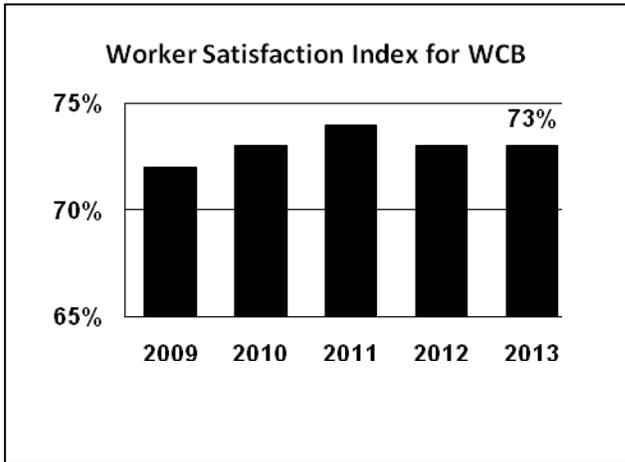
Nova Scotia still lags behind other jurisdictions on some of our key performance measures. Injury rates in other provinces range from a high of 3.37 to a low of 1.15. We are doing better, but still remain in the middle of the pack when compared to other jurisdictions.

While our progress is encouraging we know there is still much work to do. There were 34 fatalities in 2013: 17 were acute fatalities and the direct result of a workplace injury, 12 were due to occupational diseases stemming from exposures of the past, and five were deaths that occurred at work due to health issues which may or may not be related to the work being done.

We are making good progress when it comes to helping injured workers make a safe return to productive work. Ninety-six per cent of injured workers are able to return to their pre-injury employment following a workplace injury.

The days lost to injury in Nova Scotia continued to decline in 2013. This measure of the total amount of working time lost due to injury declined by a further 29,000 days – the equivalent of 79 person years of work.

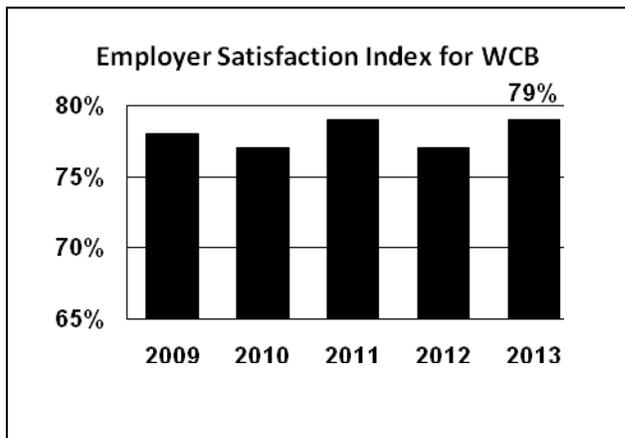
## Goal # 2 - Improve Service Delivery



The Stakeholder Satisfaction Indices provide an overall rating of satisfaction with services provided by System agencies.

This multiple measure approach provides a more comprehensive reporting of overall stakeholder satisfaction.

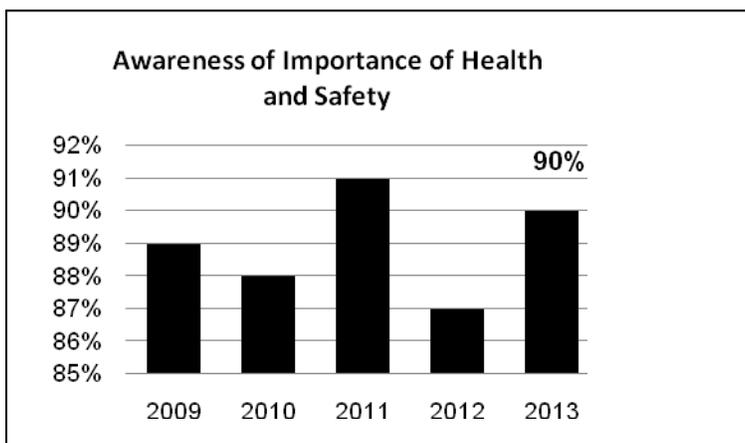
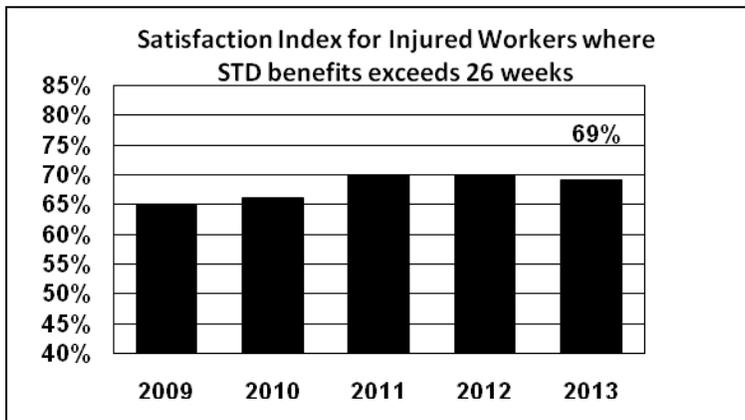
Both injured worker and employer satisfaction with WCB service remains high with both indices above target in 2013.



Satisfaction with services provided by the Workers' Advisers Program is also very favourable with 92.7% of clients indicating they are satisfied with WAPs services.

<b>Occupational Health and Safety Division Client Satisfaction</b>		
<b>Question</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>
How would you rate the site navigation?	n/a	n/a
How would you rate the site's visual appeal	n/a	n/a
How would you rate the ability to find what you want quickly?	n/a	n/a
How would you rate the site's search abilities?	n/a	n/a
How would you rate the site's overall usefulness?	n/a	n/a

During 2012, the response rate for the OHS survey was low and not statistically valid; therefore no conclusions regarding service in 2012 can be drawn from the data. It was determined during 2013 to discontinue the survey.



Awareness of the importance of health and safety in workplaces is a measure that reflects the important work agencies and stakeholders alike undertake to promote awareness of health and safety as an important issue. In 2013, 90% of survey respondents indicated that health and safety is critically important or important.

Year	WCB - Claims		WCB – Internal Appeals			WCAT			NS Court of Appeal
	Received	Timeloss	Received	Decisions	Allowed/ Allowed in part	Received	Decisions	Allowed/ Allowed in part	
<b>2013</b>	25,050	6,034	1,670	1,392	309 (22%)	774	655	308 (47%)	9
<b>2012</b>	26,422	6,341	1,937	1,536	405 (26%)	777	710	321 (45%)	15
<b>2011</b>	27,786	6,616	1,926	1,784	390 (22%)	827	670	285 (42%)	15
<b>2010</b>	28,002	6,921	1,852	1,452	470 (32%)	809	653	275 (42%)	13
<b>2009</b>	28,089	7,206	1,864	1,712	624 (32%)	903	776	347 (45%)	15

The number of appeals received at the WCB Internal Appeals decreased by 14% in 2013 and the number of appeals allowed or allowed in part decreased by 4% from 2012.

In 2013, appeals at WCAT were consistent with 2012. Overturn rates (appeals allowed (219) or allowed in part (89)) increased slightly to 47%.

Appeals at the Nova Scotia Court of Appeal have decreased in 2013 with only 9 cases before the Court.

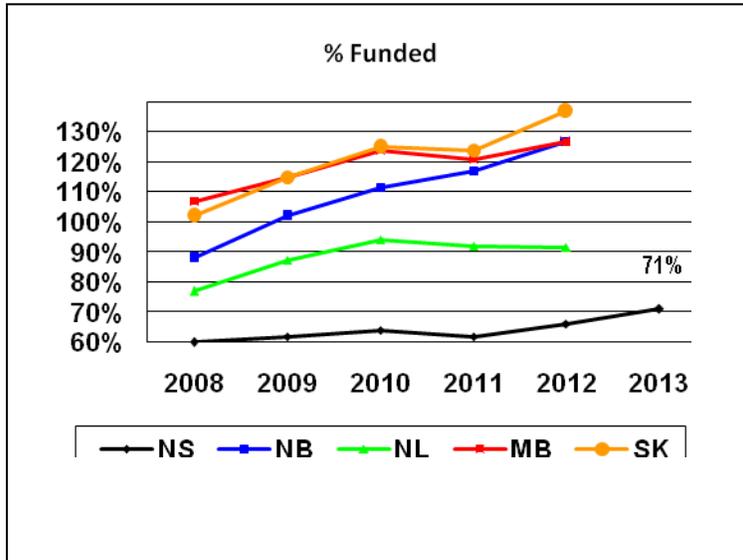
### **Goal #3 - Ensure Effective Governance of the WSIS**

The Workplace Safety and Insurance System is designed to serve the needs of the employers and workers. The concept of governance, as it applies to the System, refers to the structure, processes and accountability mechanisms in place to ensure that the System effectively fulfills its mandate.

The System Coordinating Committee, which is the Deputy Minister, Labour and Advanced Education and the Chair, Workers' Compensation Board, meet six times per year, three of which include meeting with the Heads of Agencies Committee, comprised of the administrative heads of the agencies (WAP, WCAT, WCB, OH&S). These committees oversee the day-to-day implementation of the System plan.

Good governance requires the System to consider the views of the many stakeholders represented, so that the chosen path forward serves all workers and employers. The System has embraced the need for and has fully engrained Stakeholder consultation into its operations.

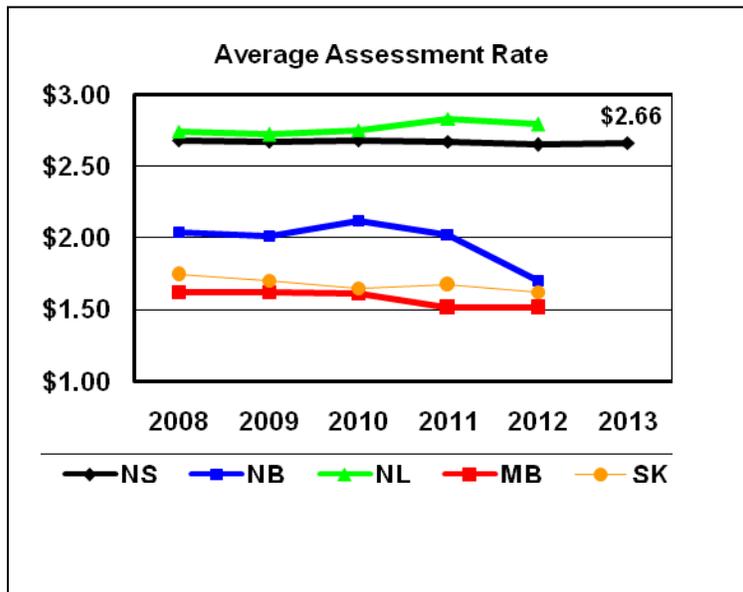
## Goal #4- Ensure Financial Sustainability of the System



Financial stability of the System is linked to a number of factors – the number of people who get hurt on the job, how long they are off the job and in receipt of benefits, and investment returns.

The System has much more direct influence on some of these factors than others.

Like many organizations, with improvements in global financial markets, investment returns were more favourable in 2013.



The WCB's liabilities total \$1.929 billion and assets total \$1.377 billion with an unfunded liability of \$552.2 million at the end of 2013.

The System's funded percentage increased from 66.4% to 71.4% in 2013.

In 2013, the average assessment rate remained relatively stable at \$2.66 per \$100 of payroll.

When contrasted to other jurisdictions, Nova Scotia's benefits remain comparable to other jurisdictions (see table on page 29).

## Comparison of Compensation Benefits

Index Area	NS	NB	NL	MB	SK
Component	Description	Description	Description	Description	Description
Waiting period	2/5ths	3/5ths	No	No	No
CPP offset for earnings loss benefit	Yes, 50% is offset	Yes, 50% is offset	Yes, 75% of net CPP benefits is offset	Yes, 100% offset	Yes, after 12 months of loss of earnings capacity, 50%
Percentage of earnings covered: Long-term	85% of net	85% loss of earnings	80% of net	90% of net	90% of net
Fatal benefits other than pensions - immediate lump sum	\$15,000 at date of death	An amount equal to 50% of the New Brunswick Industrial Aggregate Earnings 2013: \$19,832	\$15,000 or 26 times the worker's average weekly net earnings at time of injury, whichever is greater	\$73,300	None
Maximum Earnings Covered (2013)	\$54,400	\$59,500	\$54,155	\$111,000	\$55,000
Average New Impairment Award (2012)	8.7%	8.8%	17.0%	5.2%	8.9%
Annuity	Yes, 5% extended earnings replacement benefit	Yes, 10% extended earnings replacement benefit	Worker paid a pension replacement benefit at age 65 if loss of a pension benefit due to compensable injury can be proven.	Yes, 10% extended earnings replacement benefit	Yes, 5% extended earnings replacement benefit
CPI Index or AIW Index	Yes, 1/2 of CPI	Yes, 100% of CPI	Yes, 100% of CPI	Yes, AIW	Yes, 100% of CPI
Supplementary Benefits	Yes	No	No	No	No