wsib ONTARIO

Frequently asked questions about the join, develop, demonstrate and achieve steps

For Health and Safety Excellence program members

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In this document, you'll find answers to commonly asked questions about each of the four steps – join, develop, demonstrate and achieve – in the Health and Safety Excellence program. Speak to your provider or contact us at healthandsafetyexcellence@wsib.on.ca for additional support – we're here to help!

We recommend you log in to the digital tool to access the additional program resources linked in this document.

Step 1: Join

Getting started

What is my provider's role?

Your provider will guide you as you choose, develop and implement health and safety topics. They will also help you prepare your evidence package in the demonstrate step.

Can I change providers?

Yes. We recommend waiting until your action plan is closed before changing providers. However, if you have an action plan in progress and need to change providers before completing it, please email healthandsafetyexcellence@wsib.on.ca and let us know that you'd like to change providers. A WSIB representative will contact you to help you find a new provider.

Please note that the new provider you select may have additional fees.

I have an occupational health and safety management system in place. Can I still participate in the Health and Safety Excellence program?

Yes. If you have one of the following health and safety management systems, you may earn rebates for completing the following topics:

- A previously completed topic that is no longer effective due to a significant change in your workplace
- A previously completed topic that is no longer effective due to a significant gap

COR® 2015

- Change management and procurement
- Contractor management program
- Control of documents
- Control of hazards (basics)
- Control of hazards

- Control of records
- Corporate social responsibility
- Networking and peer learning
- Workplace health promotion

ISO 45001:2018, CSA Z45001-19, BS OHSAS 18001:2007, COR® 2020

- Control of hazards
- Corporate social responsibility
- Networking and peer learning
- Workplace health promotion
- These three additional topics are available for COR® 2020 certified businesses (who were not previously certified under COR® 2015):
    - Accommodation and return to work
    - Return to work program requirements
    - Return to work roles and responsibilities

> Important: businesses with an accredited occupational health and safety management system recognized through the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development’s Supporting Ontario's Safest Employers program are ineligible to participate in the Health and Safety Excellence program.

I am considering applying for accreditation through the provincial Supporting Ontario's Safe Employers program. Can I participate in the Health and Safety Excellence at the same time?

No. The Health and Safety Excellence program helps businesses work towards and achieve the level of excellence needed to be recognized under the Supporting Ontario's Safe Employers program. If you applied for accreditation but were denied, please email us at healthandsafetyexcellence@wsib.on.ca to discuss your participation in the Health and Safety Excellence program.

I have multiple account numbers. Can I register all of them under a primary account?

All WSIB account numbers have an organization identification number, and an organization identification number can have one account number or many account numbers associated with it. Businesses with more than one account number under the same organization identification number can choose to share one health and safety assessment and one action plan.

You may choose to have a single action plan at the organizational level if your employees perform similar activities, are exposed to the same health and safety risks and the accounts are at a relatively similar stage of developing their health and safety programs. Your provider can help you decide whether this approach makes sense for your business.

Can I receive badges for work I did before I enrolled in the program?

No. As a Health and Safety Excellence program member, you may only earn badges for work completed through the program. These badges can showcase your organization's commitment to health and safety.

How do I add a representative to the digital tool?

1. click **Edit** at the top of your screen on the digital tool dashboard
2. under the heading HSEp employer representation, click Add new employer representation
3. input the business name and WSIB account number, and click **Create the HSEp employer representation**
4. click **Save**
5. at the top of your screen, you will now see a **Switch Employer** box. Use the dropdown menu to switch between the businesses you represent

What notifications will I receive in the digital portal?

What you'll see	What it means
Action plan – Approved	You’ll see the date your provider approved your action plan. You now have 365 days to implement your topic and submit your evidence package for review. A link will direct you to log in to the digital tool to view your action plan.
Action plan – New comment	Someone has commented on your action plan.
Action plan – Expiry	The date your action plan will expire.
Action plan – Closure	When an action plan is closed, the business and provider will receive a notification
Submission – Topic status	A topic's status is updated.
Evidence – Additional evidence required	One or more of your topics requires additional evidence. You’ll see the date the evidence is required.
Employer Report Card – Available	Your achievement report is available to view.

Can I withdraw from the program once I've joined?

Yes. Your business can withdraw from the program at any time. However, if your business withdraws before submitting any topics for validation, you won't receive a rebate and your member badge will be removed from the digital tool and the WSIB’s Safety Check. You will need to discuss withdrawing from the program with your provider, who may or may not issue a refund.

Could my WSIB premiums increase if I don't complete validation or withdraw from the program?

Your premiums will not be impacted if you can’t complete topic validation or choose to withdraw from the program. Any changes to your premiums are calculated by the WSIB through our usual rate-setting process.

Selecting your topics

Where can I find a list of all the Health and Safety Excellence program topics?

You can find descriptions of the Health and Safety Excellence program's 39 topics in the Health and Safety Topics Guide in the digital tool.

Can I work on more than one topic at a time?

Yes. You can choose up to five topics for each action plan cycle.

Can I change topics after my action plan has been approved?

No. Your selection is final once your provider has approved your action plan topics. If you can't complete your topics before your action plan expires, please reach out to your provider to discuss your options.

Why is continuously improving a topic ineligible for selection?

The Health and Safety Excellence program helps businesses build their occupational health and safety management systems. Continuous improvement is an ongoing effort to review and improve a policy, procedure or process that has been fully implemented. Although assessing and continually improving your existing health and safety initiatives is important, that work does not qualify for earning a rebate.

How do I create one action plan for multiple accounts?

Follow these steps:

1. When you click **select action plan topics** from the primary account, a list of all accounts (regardless of whether or not an account is registered in the digital tool) with the same organization identification number are listed in the **Participating employers** table.
2. If the primary account member wants one action plan applied across multiple WSIB accounts, the primary account member must "opt-in" those accounts by checking the box beside the employer name and account number. Once the accounts are selected, click the **Save** button at the bottom of the screen.
3. Once the primary account member opts in a secondary account to their action plan, the progress of the secondary account stops. The secondary account representatives can now only view the action plan for the primary account.

Can I select topics from different levels at the same time?

Yes. However, you may want to work through one level at a time to build a strong foundation for your business's health and safety program. Speak to your provider to select the most suitable topics for your business.

Can I choose topics that I've started to work on (e.g., developing a work plan or drafting a policy) but haven't implemented in my workplace?

Yes. You can select it as a topic as long as the topic has not been fully implemented (i.e., you haven't followed an implementation model) in your workplace.

My company completed an external audit ten years ago, but we have not had one since. Can I choose the external audit topic?

Yes. You can select the external audit topic if there are gaps in the effectiveness of your current external audit program (and there would be gaps if you don't have an active audit process that is monitored and maintained).

During a review of our return-to-work program, we identified the need to add information to our policy. Can we select the return-to-work, forms and tools topic to improve our return-to-work program?

No. Updating existing documentation is part of your continuous improvement cycle and is not eligible for topic selection. Please reach out to your provider to discuss your situation.

Can the Health and Safety Excellence program topics be repeated?

Yes. You can repeat a topic if a significant change in your workplace has resulted in hazards and risks no longer being controlled and your provider approves. You may also repeat a topic if you have an existing health and safety initiative with a significant effectiveness gap.

If you select a topic you've implemented before, you will need to explain why. Please refer to our Step 1 Join: Getting Started in Health and Safety Excellence program guide in the digital tool for specific details about topic selection categories and rationale requirements.

Control of hazards topic

What is the difference between the control of hazards basics and the control of hazards topics?

The control of hazards basics topic helps you develop a foundational procedure for determining how best to control a workplace hazard. This topic will allow you to develop the skills and knowledge needed to apply the hierarchy of controls and evaluate controls to ensure the risk of identified hazards is eliminated or reduced as much as possible.

You can then use the control of hazards topic to apply that procedure to develop and implement controls for the hazards in your workplace.

Why are hazard identification and risk assessment topics identified as prerequisites for the control of hazards topic?

These topics are recommended as prerequisites because completing them first will help ensure that you are aware of the hazards in your workplace and the risks they pose to your people and operations. With this information, you can prioritize controlling the hazards that pose the highest risk. Having a good understanding of the hazards and the risks they pose will help you implement controls that eliminate the risk or reduce the risk of an incident or someone being hurt or becoming sick.

Can I choose the control of hazards topic multiple times?

Yes. You can repeat the control of hazards topic for hazards not previously controlled and where new control measures will be implemented. You can select a maximum of five control of hazard topics per action plan cycle.

What are the requirements for selecting the control of hazards topic?

You can select the control of hazards topic for hazards that have not been controlled and where new control measures will be implemented. You'll have to consider which control measures may be needed by applying the hierarchy of controls when selecting this topic. You can find examples of common workplace hazards and control programs in the topic guide. Your provider can provide guidance if the hazard control program or specific hazard you'd like to work on is not listed in the topic guide.

Can we use the different approaches within the control of hazards topic to address the same hazards and earn additional rebates?

No. Members can't use the control of hazards topic multiple times to address the same hazards in different ways. Each time the control of hazards topic is selected, new control measures must be developed and implemented to address new hazards that haven't been controlled yet.

Do we have to control the hazard everywhere it exists in our business?

When developing control measures, ensure that you are implementing them in all areas of your business using the approach you've picked.

- If you're developing a hazard control program, it must be implemented in all areas of your business where the hazard exists.
- If you're developing control measures for a specific hazard in your workplace, they must be implemented in all areas of your business where that specific hazard exists.
- If you're developing controls for all hazards from a specific process, task or piece of equipment, the same control measures must be implemented everywhere that same process, task or piece of equipment exists in your business.

Scoping

What is scoping?

Scoping means implementing health and safety topics in less than 100 per cent of your lines of business, locations or sites. If you choose to scope, you must scope all of the topics in your action plan.

Who is eligible for scoping?

Any member with multiple locations, sites or lines of business can scope their action plan as long as their provider approves. Members who choose to scope must explain why they're prevented from implementing topics at all of their locations, sites or lines of business within the action plan period.

Example 1– Single WSIB account number with multiple lines of business

A rapidly-growing construction company with an established health and safety program acquires a new line of business for warehousing construction equipment. This new line of business does not have a health and safety program. Therefore, the construction company will scope their action plan to the warehouse line of business only.

Example 2 – Single WSIB account number with multiple locations

An Ontario regional hospital with one WSIB account number has five operational sites. The hospital can only implement the action plan in three locations because of resource constraints.

How do I implement my scoped action plan?

You will implement your action plan with the employees in the locations, sites or lines of business that you've included in the scope of your action plan.

Do I submit evidence for only the areas that I identified for scoping?

Yes. The evidence you submit for validation must represent all locations, sites or lines of business included in the scope of your action plan. You must agree to provide access to all locations, sites or lines of business where the action plan was scoped if your topics are selected for onsite validation.

Can I still receive level badges if I have scoped my action plan?

No. You can only receive level badges for completing a level in the program if you've implemented all of the topics in 100 per cent of your business.

Step 2: Develop

How long does it take to implement a health and safety topic?

It takes six months to a year on average to fully implement a topic. However, we suggest you speak with your provider to discuss time requirements specifically for your business.

What happens if I can't implement a topic before my action plan expires?

You have options if you can't implement a topic within your action plan cycle. Discuss your situation with your provider to determine your business's best option.

My business has multiple accounts participating in the Health and Safety Excellence program under one action plan. How do I know which account is the primary account?

Your primary account is the account with the lowest WSIB numerical account number under your organization identification number. Please discuss it with your provider if you want to change your primary account.

In the digital tool, the primary account is identified by a symbol of a person in a circle, and it is visible at the top of every screen under the primary account.

A symbol of a group of people identifies secondary accounts and is visible at the top of every screen under secondary accounts.

What is the difference between action plan status and topic status?

An action plan status will be assigned once you create an action plan. You'll see this status change on the dashboard of the digital tool as you progress through the different stages. You can find a description of each action plan status in the glossary of terms.

The status of your chosen program topics will also change periodically based on your activities in the program. You'll see the status of each topic beside the topic name in your action plan. You can find a description of each topic status in the glossary of terms.

Step 3: Demonstrate

Does the WSIB validate all topics?

No. The WSIB determines the number of topics selected for validation. However, you'll need to submit evidence packages for all topics in your action plan.

Is onsite validation mandatory?

No. You may decline to participate for any reason if your business is selected for an onsite validation. However, your topic(s) will be deemed incomplete if you choose not to participate.

How will I know if I've been selected for an onsite validation?

The WSIB will contact you within 60 calendar days of your last topic validation if you've been selected for an onsite validation. If you're not contacted by the WSIB and your action plan status changes from "pending closure" to "closed," you've not been selected for an onsite validation. The results of the desk validation are considered final.

My topic was validated as "additional evidence required." What happens next?

You'll be given 60 calendar days to provide us with additional information (including the time it takes for your provider to review) if the WSIB determines that additional evidence is required. You can discuss validation results with the validator at any time.

My topic was validated as “incomplete.” What happens next?

Your topic will not be eligible for a rebate and it won’t contribute towards completing a level or earning a level badge if the WSIB determines that it’s incomplete. However, you can re-select the topic in a future year action plan and complete it if it meets the topic selection criteria. You can discuss validation results with the validator at any time.

How do topics get validated across multiple WSIB accounts?

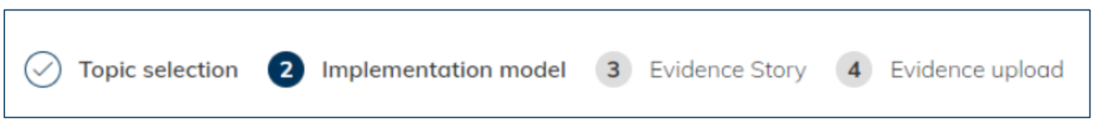
If your action plan is for multiple WSIB accounts under one organization identification number, the primary account's evidence story and files must represent at least 20 per cent of selected accounts.

How do I save my evidence package in the digital tool if I began topic selection on or after September 1, 2022?

Please consult the Step 3: Demonstrate guide for information about how to save your evidence package in the digital tool.

How do I save my evidence package in the digital tool if I began my topic selection before September 1, 2022?

If you see the image below, please refer to the options below:

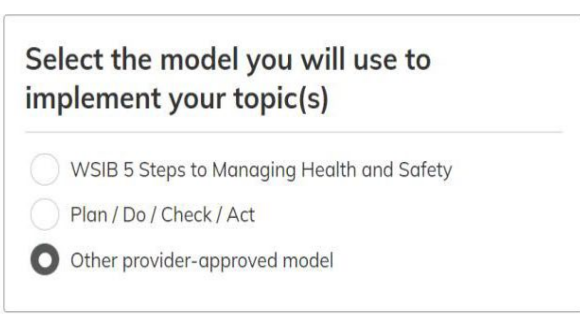


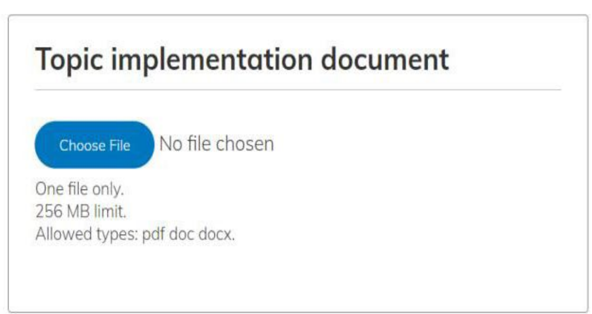
Uploading your evidence story

There are three different ways to send us your evidence story using the digital tool.

Option 1: upload one evidence story that includes all your topics

From the implementation model page (located beside topic selection), click the Choose File button and provide a document description so that your provider and the WSIB know what they’re reviewing. Select the Save and continue button at the bottom of the screen.

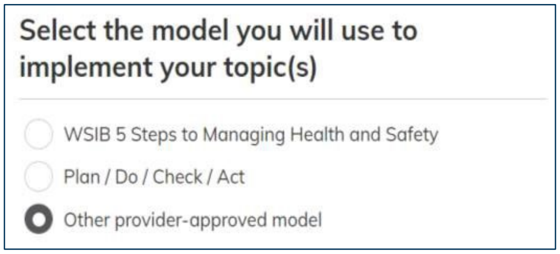




Option 2: enter the evidence story for each implementation step

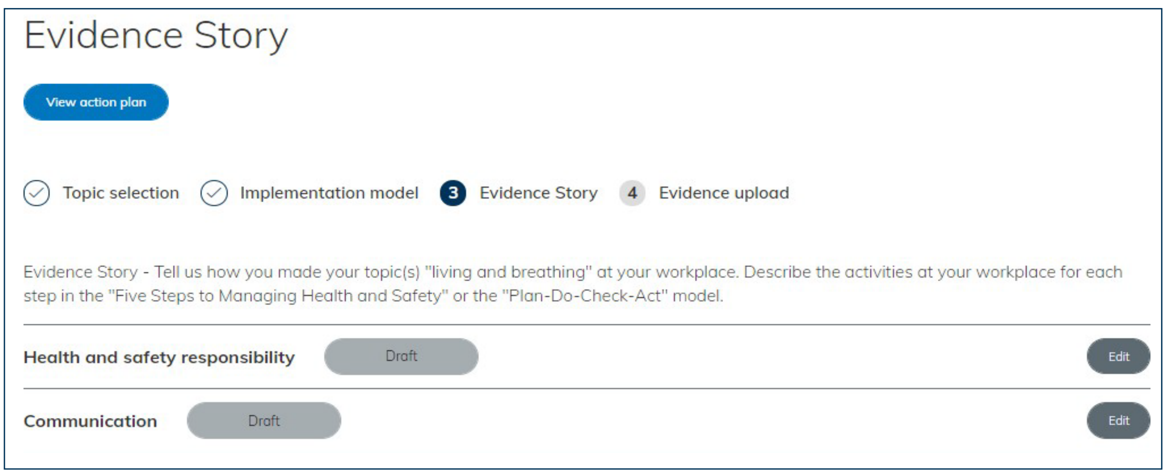
If you choose to input your evidence story for each step of your implementation model directly into the digital tool, follow these instructions:

1. Click the button next to the implementation model you're using.



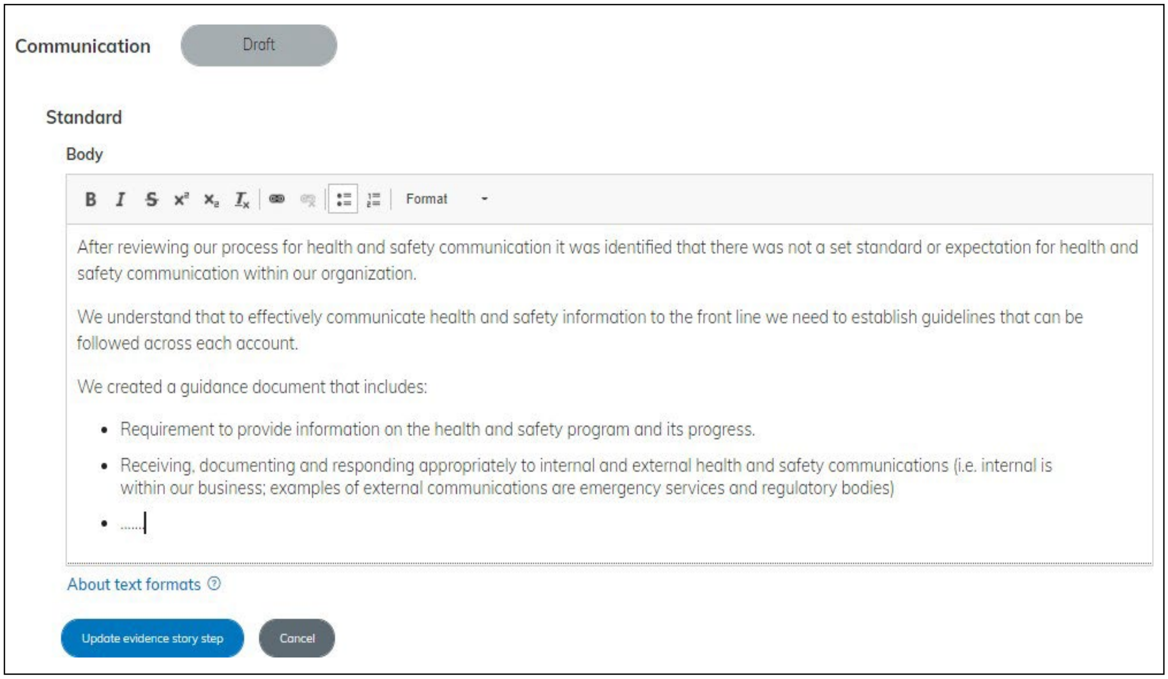
Note: if you select **Other provider-approved model** as your implementation model, you can't use Option 2 to submit your story. Please use Option 1 or Option 3.

2. After selecting your implementation model, click the **Evidence story** button. Click the **Edit** button beside the topic you want to make changes to.



3. This section will auto-populate the steps of the implementation model you selected (the WSIB's five steps or the Plan-Do-Check-Act models). Click the **Edit** button beside the step in which you want to enter information.

4. Enter your evidence story for that step, click the **Update evidence story step** button, and continue the same process for each step.



5. When you're finished entering the evidence story for each step, click the **Update evidence story** button.

6. Continue the same process (numbers 1-5) for **each topic**.

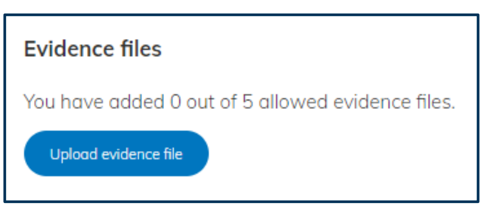
7. When you're done, click the **Save and continue** button at the bottom of the screen.

Option 3: including the evidence story as one of your supporting materials

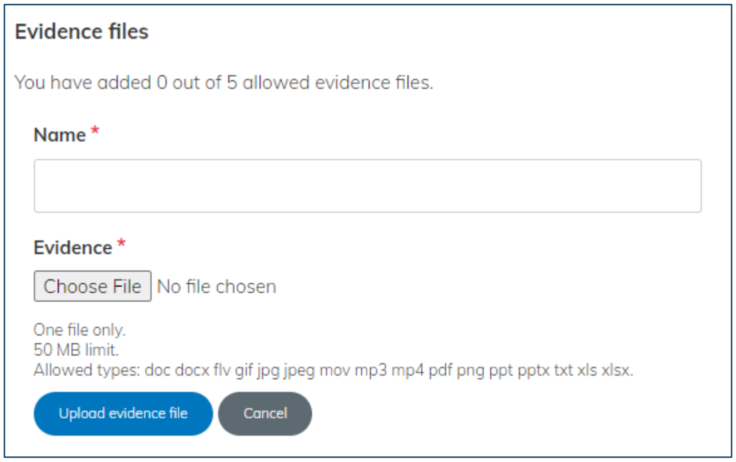
From the **Evidence upload** page, follow these instructions:

1. Click the **Edit** button to the right of the topic name. This will expand the topic.

2. Click the Upload Evidence File button under Evidence files.



3. Click the **Choose File** button to find and select the evidence file you want to upload from your computer, mobile device or tablet.



Tip: you can edit the file name or description by clicking the **Edit** button beside the evidence file name. You can also remove evidence files by clicking the **Remove** button beside the evidence file name.

4. Close the topic by clicking the **Update topic evidence** button. Scroll to the bottom of the page below all your topics and click the **Save** button.

Uploading your supporting materials

Use the steps in Option 3 to upload your supporting materials.

Step 4: Achieve

Is there a minimum or maximum rebate?

The minimum rebate is $1,000 per topic and the maximum rebate is $50,000 per topic for each completed action plan. However, the total rebate for all completed topics is capped at 100 per cent of your total reported premiums from the year before. For instance, if you paid $1,000 in premiums, the maximum rebate you could receive is $1,000.

Businesses with 1 to 99 full-time employees who complete topics before December 31, 2024 are eligible for double rebates. Speak to your program provider to learn more.

When will I receive my rebate?

In most cases, rebates are paid once a year to members who qualify. Rarely, members might receive multiple rebates in the same year. We release rebates on a quarterly payment cycle. We'll process your rebate once the last topic in your action plan is marked as complete and the action plan is closed. If you'd like more specific information on the timing of your rebate, please speak to your provider.

I have several accounts enrolled under one action plan. Which account gets the rebate?

We'll issue your total rebate to your primary account. The rebate calculation will be based on the sum of the premiums of the individual accounts enrolled under the one action, up to a maxium of $50,000 per action plan topic.

I am a new business and haven't reported my premiums. How do I calculate my rebate?

Your rebate will be 1.4 per cent per topic, subject to the minimum and maximum rebate amounts, using an annualized estimated premium amount.

Once we receive your actual reported premiums and your business's predictability percentage has been established, we'll use these to calculate your rebates in the future. Your business's predictability is a measure of how much we can rely on your past claims experience and insurable earnings to predict future outcomes.

My business has a multi-predictability rating. How does that affect my rebate?

We'll calculate a single weighted predictability percentage in your rebate calculation if you're a business with more than one premium rate (multi-rated).

There was a work-related traumatic fatality at my business. What happens now?

If your business experiences an approved claim for a work-related traumatic fatality, you'll be disqualified from earning a rebate in the year the fatality occurred. A business waiting on a decision regarding a workplace fatality is ineligible for any rebate until a decision regarding the fatality is determined. Rebates already issued to members may also be reversed. The WSIB reserves the right to remove, disqualify, reverse or alter a member's rebate for any reason it deems necessary.

My business was convicted under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act*. What happens now?

To comply with the *Limitations Act of Ontario*, a business charged under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act* will be disqualified from earning any financial or non-financial rewards for two years following conviction.

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