

The Operating Engineers of Manitoba Local 987 represent a diverse group of people from many different sectors.

With a membership of 2100 men and women working in occupations such as crane operators, heavy equipment operators, individuals working in the pipeline sector, maintenance and trades workers in most of the Winnipeg Hospitals, and Health Care support workers just to name a few.

Some of the most common injuries that we see in our members are strains, sprains, hernias, and other repetitive types injuries.

We hear regularly from members that the system is hard to navigate. They are not sure the filing requirements are and get frustrated by employers who interfere with the claim process and/or suggest that they stay on 'light duty' until the condition improves without filing with the WCB.

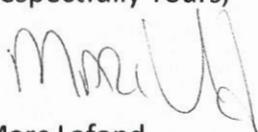
To assist the WCB with its prevention mandate, I believe that gifts/awards for 'no time loss' be discouraged. Although the intention of these programs was well indented, the reality of what is happening is completely different. In many instances, workers suggest (and put a lot of pressure) to their injured co-worker not to claim certain accidents since the gift they were to receive from the employer would be taken away because of a time loss injury report. The underreporting of accident claims is the undue consequence of this practice. I've personally seen this when I was an active construction worker, and now I hear of this through our members (although they appreciate the gifts).

I do not believe that there should be caps on insurable earnings. Many of the men and women that we represent do very well for themselves and their families because they work hard and for work very long hours in industries that are predominantly more apt to injuries. If there would be insurable earnings cap put into place, and an accident occurs, my prediction is that many of the workers we represent would return to work prematurely before they are medically fit to do so in order to keep to their pre-accident income. Potentially they might not even fill in the WCB claim form altogether in fear of losing a substantial portion of their income. It's also a matter of fairness – these workers work hard and take pride in their work making money not only for themselves but for the employer too. I'm sure many employers would like to know and want their staff not to worry about their finances in a time that they should be thinking about getting better, and getting back to being a productive member of their staff.

I shudder at the thought of the establishment of an Employer's Advisor Office. In the current system, there is already an economic advantage to appealing since their future assessment is dependent on their current claims. In many instances, they have the financial ability to appeal already. The establishment of these offices will probably increase the number of frivolous requests to the Review Office and the Appeals Commission since they would have to spend less resources (financial and human) in order to appeal. They would have nothing to lose and everything to win.

Although we are not submitting a 'formal' submission, I've had a chance to read the Manitoba Federation of Labour's (MFL) WCB Act review 2016 – 2017 submission and explicitly endorses it and echo what they have submitted!

Respectfully Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marc Lafond', written in a cursive style.

Marc Lafond  
Business Manager  
OE 987 of Manitoba