

# **Process Safety Management for Small Businesses**

by

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# ***Lost-Time Claim rates (Alberta 1999)***

<b>Size of Employer</b>	<b>Number of Accounts</b>	<b>Lost Time Claims</b>	<b>Person Years</b>	<b>Lost Time Injury Frequency</b>
1<Pys<10	87,425	5,229	168,240	3.1
10<Pys<100	12,742	11,946	348,712	<b>3.4</b>
Pys>100	1,552	17,542	586,942	3.0
Invalid	5,695	723	0	N/A
<b>Total</b>	<b>107,414</b>	<b>35,440</b>	<b>1,103,894</b>	

# Lost-Time Claim rates (Alberta 2003)

Size of Employer	Number of Accounts	Lost Time Claims	Person Years	Lost Time Injury Frequency
1<Pys<10	106,125	4,986	188,257	2.6
10<Pys<100	13,673	11,604	370,752	3.3
Pys>100	1,770	19,665	704,103	2.8
Unspecified	2,860	320	0	N/A
<b>Total</b>	<b>124,328</b>	<b>36,575</b>	<b>1,263,113</b>	<b>2.9</b>

Essentially **NO** change over 4 years for small companies

# Some Findings

- Owner's perception of risk revealed a widespread "no problems here" response.
- A tendency to discount and normalize health hazards at work.
- Workplace Health and Safety inspections appeared more hit and miss, over these very numerous small companies.
- Fire-Marshall inspections taken much more seriously.
- Many owners felt they did not have the moral authority to intervene in certain areas of their employees health and safety:
  - The nature of the social relationship between owners and employees — their own "buddies".
  - Learn by the school of hard knocks — you are all expected to know how to be safe — it's natural.

# Some Characteristics of Small Businesses

- Ebb and flow business cycle causes the need to lay off and take on employees.
- Sub-contracting some parts of the work, almost "permanent" sub-contractors who work alongside regular employees. **Owners do not feel as responsible for them.**
- Family involvement - one half of the businesses studied had employees who were members of the owner's family - sometimes affecting how health and safety issues were dealt with.
- Multiple worksites - many small companies especially in the service and construction sectors, have their workers scattered in numerous sites. Does not allow for good influence and control.
- Workers tend to do all kinds of tasks, although they have special trades, etc. Small companies need to make flexible use of manpower. don't always understand the safety aspects of each of the different tasks.
- Over 50% of the owners perceived health and safety to be of limited significance. Very little to say when asked what they do to promote health and safety.

# Summary

Quite simply not enough attention is being paid to smaller sized businesses.

If we are to make a dent in Canada's PSLM performance we need to focus our resource on these businesses that make up roughly 95% of companies in Canada