Table of Contents

3  Message from the Chief Operating Officer
4  Executive Summary
6  What are occupational diseases and illnesses?
7  Why this Strategy?
8  Occupational disease and illness — the impact on Manitoba workers
10 Eliminating harmful exposures — New Flyer
12 Tactic 1: Monitor workers’ exposures to physical and chemical hazards
14 Tactic 2: Identify exposure levels and effective safety controls based on evidence from the monitoring
16 Tactic 3: Educate and build awareness among all Manitobans
18 Tactic 4: Strengthen relationships with safety partners
19 Summary

Message from the Chief Operating Officer

What do chemicals, gases and fumes, the sun, viruses and noise all have in common?

They are all hazards that thousands of Manitoba workers could encounter on the job every day.

Serious diseases or illnesses can result if a person is overexposed to these hazards. For example, hearing loss can be linked to excessive noise, skin cancer is primarily caused by UV radiation from the sun, mesothelioma is linked to asbestos inhalation, and diesel exhaust can cause irreversible damage to the lungs. When these health conditions occur because of overexposures in a workplace, we call them occupational diseases and illnesses.

These illnesses are among the most severe a worker can experience. Two hundred and twenty-four Manitobans died because of an occupational disease or illness from 2000 to 2015.

We already know that these substances are dangerous. But in many cases we do not have current data that shows how much workers are exposed to these hazards. Gathering evidence that shows when workers have a higher risk of overexposure — and which safety measures most effectively protect workers — will strengthen occupational disease and illness prevention in Manitoba.

As such, a process for monitoring hazards will be a key pillar of this strategy. We will capture workers’ exposure levels to physical and chemical hazards in a number of different industries, under a variety of work conditions and over an extended period of time. We will collaborate with safety partners, employers and workers to gather this data, and we will share this information with all stakeholders to support them in making evidence-based decisions towards preventing occupational disease and illness.

Our strategy is described in the pages that follow, along with a profile of a Manitoba employer with a strong safety culture, New Flyer, that has recently completed an upgrade to its welding shop to better protect its workers from welding fumes. We also spoke to Dr. Allen Kraut, who does clinical occupational medicine at the Occupational Health Centre and at the University of Manitoba, and to Dr. Denise Koh, the Chief Occupational Medical Officer at the Workplace Safety and Health Branch, for their perspective on the impact that occupational diseases and illnesses have on Manitoba’s workers.

It is often difficult to make the link between occupational diseases and illnesses and workplace hazards, because in many cases it can take years for an illness to present itself after an overexposure. However, we can work together now to further protect Manitoba workers from substances that we know are harmful. We are looking forward to diving into this strategy, with the support of our partners, to make our workplaces safer and healthier.

Jamie Hall
Chief Operating Officer
SAFE Work Manitoba
Executive Summary

Occupational diseases and illnesses are among the most severe illnesses a worker can experience, having caused 224 deaths in Manitoba from 2000-15. SAFE Work Manitoba’s five-year *Occupational Disease and Illness Prevention Strategy* will use four tactics to strengthen occupational disease and illness prevention in Manitoba workplaces:

1. **Monitor workers’ exposures to physical and chemical hazards**
2. **Identify exposure levels and effective safety controls based on evidence from the monitoring**
3. **Educate and build awareness among all Manitobans about occupational disease and illness prevention**
4. **Strengthen partnerships to prevent occupational disease and illness**

This strategy will be implemented as part of SAFE Work Manitoba’s overall strategic priority to strengthen injury reduction and illness prevention across all Manitoba workplaces.
How the strategy was developed

Research and consultation
SAFE Work Manitoba used data from the Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba (WCB Manitoba) to identify illness trends, and consulted with occupational safety and health agencies in Manitoba and across Canada to determine priorities and gaps in occupational disease and illness prevention.

We worked with an advisory panel made up of representatives from industry-based safety programs, labour, employers (including federal, provincial and city), WCB Manitoba and the Workplace Safety and Health Branch. Thank you to all who contributed: your support helped shape this strategy, and will ensure that the strategy meets the needs of all Manitobans. We will continue to rely on the panel’s knowledge and expertise as we carry out the Occupational Disease and Illness Prevention Strategy.

Strategic partnerships
Strong partnerships with all our stakeholders contribute to effective disease and illness prevention. SAFE Work Manitoba will work with the following partners to carry out this strategy:

- Industry-based safety programs
- Employers and workers
- The Workplace Safety and Health Branch, WCB Manitoba and other related agencies and organizations
- Safety educators and training partners
- All Manitobans

### Occupational diseases & illnesses

have caused the deaths of 224 Manitobans from 2000-15.¹

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disease</th>
<th>FATALITIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MESOTHELIOMA</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CANCER</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASBESTOSIS</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER DISEASE</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A severe form of lung cancer caused by asbestos exposure
Other cancers include colorectal, kidney, brain, and prostate cancer, and multiple myeloma
A lung disease caused by asbestos exposure
Includes lung diseases such as silicosis and pulmonary fibrosis

¹ Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba claims statistics, 2000-15.
What are occupational diseases and illnesses?

SAFE Work Manitoba defines occupational diseases and illnesses as health conditions that are caused when workers are overexposed to physical and chemical hazards. This covers a range of serious health conditions that include (but are not limited to) asbestosis, silicosis, organ failure, asthma, dermatitis, hearing loss, and various types of cancer, including mesothelioma.

This strategy will not address traumatic injuries, or diseases and illnesses resulting from musculoskeletal injuries (MSIs) and psychological injuries. SAFE Work Manitoba has separate strategies for MSIs and psychological injuries.

What are physical and chemical hazards?

Toxic chemicals, noise, biological agents, hot and cold stresses, and radiation are examples of hazards that can cause occupational diseases and illnesses.

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### Estimated number of Manitobans exposed to cancer-causing hazards at work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common cancer-causing hazards</th>
<th>Estimated number of Manitobans exposed at work</th>
<th>Top occupations exposed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Silica</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>Construction trades labourers, heavy equipment operators, plasterers and drywallers, and miners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UV radiation from the sun</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>Farmers and farm managers, construction trades helpers, landscaping and ground maintenance labourers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood dust</td>
<td>11,000</td>
<td>Carpenters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asbestos</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>Construction-related jobs, as well as electricians, plumbers, plaster and drywall installers, and auto mechanics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diesel engine exhaust</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td>Truck drivers, heavy equipment operators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benzene (often via motor vehicle exhaust)</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>Automotive service technicians and mechanics, firefighters, truck drivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nickel</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>Welders, machining tool operators, construction millwrights and industrial mechanics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Why this strategy?

We need to know more about workers’ exposures to physical and chemical hazards in the workplace so that we can strengthen occupational disease and illness prevention.

Thousands of Manitoba workers come into close contact with hazards that can cause occupational diseases and illnesses. However, we lack current information that tells us specifically how much workers are being exposed to these physical and chemical hazards. This lack of information can make it difficult to identify where exposure levels are dangerous, and to prevent any overexposures that are happening.

Current illness statistics also suggest that we don’t have a full picture of the workplace exposure problem. For example, the World Health Organization estimates that up to 19 per cent of all cancers worldwide are caused by workplace or environmental exposures, and the Canadian Cancer Society estimates that 18 cases of cancer will be diagnosed every day in Manitoba in 2017. In one year, that’s over 6,000 cancer cases in Manitoba alone. However, only 150 cancer cases in Manitoba were linked to workplace exposures in the six-year span of 2010-15.

It can be challenging to link workplace hazards to illnesses, because many illnesses do not present themselves until years after an overexposure occurred.

However, by monitoring workers’ hazard exposure levels, we can provide evidence that shows where overexposure risks exist. This will help target SAFE Work Manitoba’s and our partners’ prevention initiatives where they are needed most. Research and consultation has also confirmed that we need to increase public awareness about occupational disease and illness, foster leadership in employers to prevent hazard overexposures, and strengthen partnerships with prevention stakeholders.

5. Some content on silica provided by © WorkSafeBC (Workers’ Compensation Board); used with permission.
What kind of impact do occupational diseases and illnesses have on Manitoba workers?

To help answer that question, we reached out to Dr. Allen Kraut, who does clinical occupational medicine at the Occupational Health Centre in Winnipeg and at the University of Manitoba, and to Dr. Denise Koh, the Chief Occupational Medical Officer at the Workplace Safety and Health Branch.

What are some common diseases and illnesses affecting Manitoba workers?

Respiratory issues are among the most common workplace-related illnesses, say both Dr. Kraut and Dr. Koh.

For example, Dr. Kraut has consulted with woodworkers overexposed to wood dust, auto body workers who’ve been overexposed to isocyanates in paint, and hairdressers, all who have developed occupational asthma because of substances they’ve come into contact with on the job.

Anyone who may have been in contact with asbestos, including construction workers, asbestos abatement workers and firefighters, are at a higher risk of developing mesothelioma and other severe, asbestos-related diseases. From 2000-16, there has been an average of nine deaths per year in Manitoba because of mesothelioma and asbestos-related diseases.

Dermatitis and other skin disorders are also common and can occur in any occupation where solvents or corrosive materials could be handled improperly. For example, cement workers could develop skin rashes from contact with concrete, or healthcare workers from contact with the chemicals in some disinfectants.

Noise-induced hearing loss is another serious, commonly encountered condition that can be clearly linked to exposures at work.

What challenges do workers with occupational diseases and illnesses face?

Coping with the symptoms of an occupational disease or illness is difficult enough. The question of what a person should do to improve their health condition is sometimes just as challenging.

In some cases, working with the employer to minimize the harmful exposure is enough. In other, more severe cases, leaving the job that is making a worker sick and retraining for a different type of position will reduce or eliminate the symptoms of their illness. However, that transition could also negatively affect their income.

“It’s easy to say ‘stop doing the work,’” but the worker needs to support himself or herself,” says Dr. Kraut.

Because of this, workers might stay with their work, even if it is affecting their health. For example, an older worker may not want to change careers after decades in one field.

Psychological issues are another important factor in occupational diseases. “A worker’s sense of self and fulfillment in life often come from their work. If you can’t do your job anymore, it can affect you mentally as well,” says Dr. Kraut.

“These workers may face a number of challenges in addition to the physical, mental and financial strains of the disease — from delays in diagnosis, to working through the claims process, to finding the proper supports during a difficult time in their lives,” says Dr. Koh.

Some severe and often fatal diseases, such as mesothelioma, are often only discovered years after an exposure has occurred, and afflicted workers have limited treatment options left.
What can workers do to prevent occupational disease and illness?

To better protect the physical, financial and psychological health of workers, it is much more preferable to prevent occupational diseases and illnesses in the first place.

Dr. Kraut and Dr. Koh agree that exposure control and worker education are critical to prevention.

Some substances that are found in workplaces can easily be linked to illnesses, and with proper training, workers know what they should do to protect themselves. But there are many other substances for which we still don’t know “how low is low enough” when it comes to exposure levels, says Dr. Kraut.

However, employers and workers should not wait to protect themselves from potentially dangerous exposures until they know more about them. “The problem is sometimes that people aren’t doing things safely because they feel they are not at risk, and then they get exposed,” says Dr. Kraut.

Occupational diseases are more difficult for people to grasp, because much of the time they involve damage to organs that you can’t see, not like workplace injuries where you can often immediately connect the injury to the jobsite, says Dr. Koh.

“But once the damage is done, you can’t really fix it, and some illnesses are really difficult to manage as well.

“Reducing exposures in general is always a win,” says Dr. Koh.

Five tips for preventing dangerous exposures at work

Dr. Denise Koh offers these tips for workers on reducing and preventing harmful exposures:

1. Know your rights and responsibilities as a worker, and those of your employer.
2. Ask questions about all the substances you work with so that you understand how to work with them safely.
3. Be a part of the safety and health solution at your workplace. Make sure you are properly trained, and that you follow safe work practices appropriate for your tasks.
5. If you do have concerns about or symptoms of an illness, see your healthcare provider. Make sure you mention any exposures you suspect are linked to your condition.

As well, the Occupational Health Centre has physicians specializing in occupational medicine who don’t require a referral. Call to arrange an appointment if your condition is related to your work experiences, especially if you are considering a Workers Compensation Board claim or require a detailed doctor’s note for your employer.

Did you know?

Men make up the majority of workers who are exposed to carcinogens on the job.

Eliminating harmful exposures — New Flyer

Welding is an important part of many manufacturing projects. However, fusing metal together at high temperatures puts welders at risk of being exposed to ultraviolet radiation, and inhaling hazardous gases and toxic metal fumes. Overexposure to these gases and fumes can cause serious illnesses. For example, long term exposure to manganese can cause an irreversible illness similar to Parkinson’s disease called manganism, whose symptoms include tremors, slowed movement and body rigidity. Employers have a responsibility to implement control measures for airborne hazardous substances to eliminate any risk to the safety or health of a worker.

New Flyer’s culture of safety

New Flyer manufactures transit buses and intercity coaches, and is one example of a Manitoba employer who makes safety a priority for all staff. Janice Harper, New Flyer’s Executive Vice President of Human Resources, says New Flyer believes the tone from the top is critical to the success of its safety program. The executive group is actively involved in supporting and resourcing the needs of their team. “Our Operational Excellence Program is committed to creating world-class product in world-class facilities, and a cornerstone of that commitment is worker safety.”

A Notice of Intended Change, published in the 2010 American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists (ACGIH) guideline, proposed that the level of manganese exposure allowed in workplaces be lowered. Based on the proposed limit, New Flyer identified a situation where the 100 welders on their Winnipeg transit bus manufacturing team could be overexposed to manganese. The plant’s air quality was tested, and results indicated that the air in the weld shop and in work areas near the weld shop were over the proposed manganese limit.

“Based on the preliminary testing, New Flyer immediately began planning action to protect their employees,” says Kent Davis, Director of Safety, Environment and Compliance at New Flyer. “It is a substantial undertaking to reach these air quality levels, but an absolute requirement that we are in regulatory compliance.”
Protecting welders from manganese exposure

The first priority was to protect welders from direct exposure to fumes. Supplied air respirators and powered air purifying respirators, although more expensive, were chosen for New Flyer’s welders because they are reliable, comfortable, provide better protection and allow welders to maintain their production levels, says Eric St. Pierre, Environment, Health & Safety Team Lead.

The respirators’ health benefits can be seen daily: for example, New Flyer welders don’t have the respiratory tract irritation that’s common among welders who don’t use respirators.

“The majority of the welders agree that these changes are for their health,” says St. Pierre. “They can’t believe how much better it is.”

New Flyer’s second priority was to use engineering controls to reduce exposure to fumes.

They sealed off the weld shop from the rest of the plant and gave the shop its own heating and ventilation system. This protects the rest of the staff from toxic gases and fumes, and improves the ambient air inside the shop so much that staff who spend shorter periods of time in there, including quality assurance inspectors and materials handlers, often don’t need to wear respirators.

“Our safety teams across the company co-ordinate with production leaders, manufacturing engineers and welders to develop and test solutions,” says Davis. “From area ventilation and local extraction equipment, to rotational fixtures, custom weld guns and pulse welding, potential improvements are constantly under evaluation.”

Safety choices are about more than meeting regulations

The weld shop upgrades are about more than regulatory compliance: they’re about protecting all New Flyer staff.

For example, a number of the improvements developed in Winnipeg will be incorporated into a new weld shop being built in Alabama, even though higher manganese levels are allowed in workplaces in the United States.

And, New Flyer employees were involved in the whole process: a key part of a strong workplace safety culture.

“When the company was faced with significant changes to exposure regulations, they changed the whole environment to develop a solution that worked for all of the employees,” says Derrick Geurts, New Flyer’s Worker Co-Chair for their workplace safety and health committee.

UNIFOR Local 3003 Chairperson Mike Deley agrees. “The union and safety committee were fully on board with the changes as they enhanced the working conditions of all the area employees. Working together from start to finish made the process almost seamless. I give kudos to New Flyer for their commitment to this project and their employees, as well as keeping the safety committee and the union fully involved.”
TACTIC 1:
Monitor workers’ exposures to physical and chemical hazards

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Many Manitobans come into close contact with physical and chemical hazards when they are at work.

Workers can develop serious and sometimes fatal diseases and illnesses if they are overexposed to these hazards.

However, little data exists that shows hazard exposure levels in a variety of workplaces and industries over an extended period of time.

By collecting data on worker exposure levels, we can better identify:

• when workers are most at risk of overexposure to physical and chemical hazards
• which safety controls are the most effective at preventing overexposure, under a variety of conditions.

Our advisory panel has indicated that collecting exposure data over the long term in a variety of workplaces will fill a significant gap in the information we need to improve occupational disease and illness prevention in Manitoba. This information will tell us where intervention is needed most.

WHAT WE WILL DO

SAFE Work Manitoba will work with our safety partners to measure physical and chemical hazard exposures in Manitoba workplaces. The data collected will help us identify workers’ exposure levels, and provide evidence-based information on safety controls that effectively reduce overexposures to physical and chemical hazards.

We will work with industry-based safety programs, employers and other stakeholders to:

• identify high-risk and high-priority physical and chemical hazards in a number of different industries and workplaces
• identify workplaces where these hazards are present
• collect exposure readings from workers who work near these hazards
• observe which safety controls are used in workplaces to prevent overexposures.

The monitoring will occur over an extended period of time to account for changes in production schedules, weather and other conditions that can affect workers’ exposure levels.
**HAZARD ALERT**

**WOOD DUST**

Did you know that wood dust is carcinogenic?

Exposure to wood dust has been linked to cancers of the nasal cavities, paranasal sinuses, and nasopharyngeal cancer, and can cause severe allergic reactions such as asthma and dermatitis. An estimated 93 per cent of people exposed to wood dust at work are men.\(^8\)

Workers in construction, forestry and wood product manufacturing are at higher risk.

**Protect yourself:** Use exhaust ventilation systems and respirators to reduce wood dust exposure.

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**HAZARD ALERT**

**DIESEL ENGINE EXHAUST**

Running vehicles can expose you to dangerous levels of nitrogen oxide and nitrogen dioxide.

Inhaling these gases can damage your lungs and create breathing problems. Diesel engine exhaust has also been found to increase the risk for bladder cancer.\(^9\) Truck drivers, heavy equipment operators and other construction workers have a higher risk of exposure.

These gases can also be emitted from gas appliances, including gas stoves, water heaters, furnaces and generators. An estimated ninety-one per cent of workers exposed to diesel engine exhaust are male.\(^10\)

**Protect yourself:** Avoid idling vehicles in closed spaces, and make sure gases from appliances are properly ventilated.\(^11\)

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Tactic 2:
Identify exposure levels and effective safety controls based on evidence from the monitoring

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

By carrying out Tactic 1, we will have gathered information that measures workers’ exposures to hazards in a number of different workplaces over an extended period of time.

This data collection is unique because it will account for:

• a number of high-risk physical and chemical hazards
• several different workplace environments and industries
• a variety of job tasks
• conditions that change over time, including the weather and production schedules.

All these factors can affect a worker’s exposure to physical and chemical hazards.

We need to analyze this data and share information that employers can use to make decisions and investments towards occupational disease and illness prevention.

WHAT WE WILL DO

SAFE Work Manitoba will work with our safety partners to develop prevention information that will:

• give employers data that shows to what degree their workers could be exposed to physical and chemical hazards
• help employers and workers better understand the health and safety risks caused by physical and chemical hazards in their workplaces
• allow employers to compare safety control measures and use evidence to decide which are the most effective at preventing exposure to physical and chemical hazards.

These industry-specific resources will be a practical, accessible resource for employers that will also celebrate innovative prevention solutions within particular industries. We will share the resources with other Canadian jurisdictions as a way to improve safety in the industries as a whole.
HAZARD ALERT
SUN & ULTRAVIOLET (UV) RADIATION

Did you know that skin cancer is the most common cancer in Canada?¹³

Rates continue to rise. The lifetime probability of developing melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer, is 1 in 56 for men and 1 in 74 for women.¹⁴

Workers can be exposed to UV radiation both outdoors and indoors. Jobs with an increased risk include construction, farming, landscaping, gardening, road maintenance, UV air and UV water filtration repair and maintenance, tanning (salons), welding, metalworking (foundries), and healthcare in clinics and hospitals.¹⁵

Protect yourself: When working in the sun, wear sunscreen with a 30 SPF or higher, sunglasses, a hat, and light-coloured, long-sleeved clothing. Schedule outdoor work before 11 a.m. and after 4 p.m. when possible. Stick to the shade.

Did you know?
The Canadian prairies, which includes much of southern Manitoba, is the sunniest place in Canada, receiving about 2,400 hours of bright sunshine per year.¹²

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¹⁵Some content on sun & UV radiation provided by © WorkSafeBC (Workers’ Compensation Board); used with permission.
Tactic 3: Educate and build awareness among all Manitobans

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Occupational disease and illness prevention is challenging because many employers and workers don’t fully understand the risks they face when they work in close proximity to physical and chemical hazards.

**Lack of information:** There is currently little information about long term exposure levels in workplaces. Much of the information that does exist is very technical, which makes it less accessible to those who don’t have advanced training in the topic.

**False sense of security:** It is often difficult to identify diseases and illnesses as being due to workplace exposures, because many illnesses do not present themselves until years after an overexposure has occurred. An unclear relationship between exposures and disease can give workers and employers a false sense of security, which makes it less likely they will work safely around physical and chemical hazards at all times.

Our advisory panel has indicated that a lack of public awareness about occupational disease and illness prevention is a significant concern. We need to build awareness among Manitobans about their risk for occupational disease and illness.

WHAT WE WILL DO

SAFE Work Manitoba, in partnership with its safety partners and stakeholders, will work to build awareness among the general public about occupational disease and illness.

Any new educational and awareness-building initiatives will take into account the exposure data gathered and analyzed through Tactic 1 and Tactic 2 of this strategy.

We will use the newly updated safemanitoba.com and other communications platforms to:

- promote new and existing prevention resources and initiatives
- provide practical, easy-to-understand information for industries about the physical and chemical hazards present in those industries
- provide information on the occupational diseases and illnesses a worker could develop if they are exposed to these hazards
- promote and/or support training and safety controls that have been shown to effectively prevent overexposures.

We will also work with our safety partners to develop and provide training and e-learning that will provide effective, industry-specific education about occupational disease and illness prevention.
HAZARD ALERT

ASBESTOS

Asbestos is the single largest killer of workers in Manitoba. Most of those who died worked in construction.

People are exposed to asbestos by inhaling its fibres and dust. Did you know that asbestos is found in over 3,000 different kinds of building materials? They include shingles, building insulation, cement and plaster, and vinyl and linoleum flooring. Asbestos can also be found in brake pads and clutches. Every workplace must have an asbestos inventory.

Protect yourself: A competent contractor must be hired to remove asbestos from a worksite.
For more information, please visit safemanitoba.com.

HAZARD ALERT

CARBON MONOXIDE

Carbon monoxide is the most common cause of gas poisoning leading to death in the workplace.

Low levels can cause headaches, dizziness and nausea, while high exposures can kill.

All gasoline-powered vehicles and equipment emit carbon monoxide, including gas appliances and fireplaces, pressure washers, natural gas space heaters and welding equipment.

Protect yourself: Use equipment outside or in properly ventilated areas, and measure carbon monoxide emissions to make sure that levels don’t become dangerous.
Tactic 4:
Strengthen relationships with safety partners

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT
Partnerships help to increase awareness of occupational disease and illness in Manitoba. SAFE Work Manitoba’s partners include industry-based safety programs, who are authorities on safety in their industries. Their support is crucial towards developing and delivering prevention information that is specific to their members.

Our other partners include organizations and agencies with expertise in illness prevention, who have effective initiatives in place to build awareness about occupational disease and illness.

WHAT WE WILL DO
SAFE Work Manitoba will explore new partnerships and strengthen existing relationships to help improve occupational disease and illness prevention in Manitoba and across Canada.

These partnerships allow us to:
• share information
• spread prevention messages more widely
• work together on existing or new prevention initiatives
• be more efficient in our efforts.

This will include scheduling regular meetings with Workplace Safety and Health Branch (WSH) to ensure that SAFE Work Manitoba and WSH continue to work cohesively on occupational disease and illness prevention.

Did you know?
As a separate arm of the Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba (WCB), SAFE Work Manitoba is the public agency dedicated to the prevention of workplace injury and illness. Working with our partners in the safety community, we provide prevention education, safety programming, consulting and strategic direction to create a genuine culture of safety for all Manitobans. SAFE Work Manitoba is responsible for implementing the Occupational Disease and Illness Prevention Strategy.

The Workplace Safety and Health Branch (WSH) of the Province of Manitoba enforces The Workplace Safety and Health Act and its associated regulations, in order to protect the safety and health of workers in Manitoba. The WSH’s inspection and investigation activity focuses on improving legislative compliance in order to eliminate workplace fatalities, injuries and illnesses.
Summary

**Tactic 1: Monitor workers’ exposures to physical and chemical hazards**
Collaborate with industry-based safety programs, employers, workers and other stakeholders to:
- identify high-risk and high-priority physical and chemical hazards in a number of different industries and workplaces
- identify workplaces where these hazards are present
- collect exposure readings from workers who work near these hazards
- observe which safety controls are used in workplaces to prevent overexposures.

**Tactic 2: Identify exposure levels and effective safety controls based on evidence from the monitoring**
Develop prevention information, in partnership with our stakeholders, that will:
- give employers data that shows to what degree their workers could be exposed to physical and chemical hazards
- help employers and workers better understand the health and safety risks caused by physical and chemical hazards in their workplaces
- allow employers to compare safety control measures and use evidence to decide which are the most effective at preventing exposure to physical and chemical hazards.

**Tactic 3: Educate and build awareness among all Manitobans**
Promote educational and awareness-building initiatives on safemanitoba.com and other communications platforms. We will:
- share new and existing prevention resources and initiatives
- provide practical, easy-to-understand information about physical and chemical hazards and effective exposure prevention in various industries
- provide information on the occupational diseases and illnesses a worker could develop if they are exposed to these hazards
- develop training to show how to effectively prevent overexposures.

**Tactic 4: Strengthen partnerships to prevent occupational disease and illness**
Explore new partnerships and strengthen existing relationships with stakeholders to help improve occupational disease and illness prevention in Manitoba and across Canada. Partnerships allow us to:
- share information
- spread prevention messages more widely
- work together on existing or new prevention initiatives
- be more efficient in our efforts.

**Reporting progress**
SAFE Work Manitoba will report on the strategy’s progress annually. This will include tactics completed each year and data related to occupational diseases and illnesses. This information will be made available at safemanitoba.com.