

DISCUSSION

The City of Surrey has been a member of the BCMSA since 1998, and currently sits on the executive. At this point, all activities of the Association are conducted by volunteers, who are Municipal or Regional District employees with safety responsibilities.

Surrey has benefited from programs developed by the Association such as development of municipal industry specific safety awareness videos, training systems and comprehensive health and safety programs.

In order to take on the added responsibility of acting as a Certifying Partner for the Partners Program, BCMSA is requesting that a full time coordinator position be created that would:

- Work with municipalities to help them implement, evaluate and maintain industry-specific health and safety programs;
- Research and develop programs aimed at improving worker safety and reducing injury costs (return to work programs, Partners in Injury Reduction programs, etc.);
- Offer and/or coordinate accessible, standardized and cost-effective industry-specific training to municipal employers, managers, supervisors, and workers on a wide variety of workplace health and safety topics;
- Create a library of videos and printed materials available for members' use;
- Act as an industry liaison between WorkSafe BC representatives and industry members;
- Be available to research and answer any health and safety questions or concerns, and
- Assist employers when required to meet compliance after orders have been written on the municipality by WorkSafe BC.

It is proposed that WorkSafe BC will administer a levy of a one-cent per \$100 of assessable payroll to support this initiative. This is estimated to generate approximately \$150,000 per year, which would be used to cover salary, and administrative expenses, as well as the costs to facilitate programs on behalf of municipalities. The budget would be administered by the Board, of which Surrey is a member. Activities undertaken for specific municipalities would be on a cost-recovery basis.

In order to proceed, support is needed from 50% of the assessable payroll in the municipal classification unit. WorkSafe BC has suggested UBCM as the appropriate body to approach employers about their interest in supporting this initiative.

Earlier this year, the UBCM Executive endorsed, in principal, a one-cent levy through WorkSafe BC, to fund a full time coordinator for the BC Municipal Safety Association. The UBCM Executive is seeking endorsement from its members for support of a funded safety coordinator for the BCMSA. Currently, ~~over 50~~44% have already endorsed the initiative.

Based on 2005 payroll and assessment figures offered by WorkSafe BC specifically for the City of Surrey a levy of one-cent per \$100 of assessable payroll would cost approximately \$8,400 per year. This can be managed within current funding allocations. Successful completion of the COR program could result in a refund of WorkSafe Assessment of up to \$170,000. It is therefore recommended that the City of Surrey support this initiative.

CONCLUSION

The BC Municipal Safety Association requires a full time coordinator/administrator in order to move forward on projects aimed at improving the health and safety of workers within the Local Government Classification Unit, including administration of the Certificate of Recognition program. One cent per one hundred dollars of assessable payroll within the municipal classification unit would provide sufficient operating funds for this purpose. Return on investment could be realized through cost savings in assessment rates, as a result of reduced injuries, reduced absence duration, and through a refund of assessment through participation in the Certificate of Recognition Program.

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