

FISH PROCESSING INDUSTRY

SAFE&SECURE



Nova Scotia has one of the highest rates of workplace injury in Canada. Every day, more than two dozen Nova Scotians are injured and every two weeks, someone dies on the job. Last year, Nova Scotia's fish processing industry **lost** a total of 2000 person weeks due to workplace injury.

Bottom line, workplace injuries are costly. By focusing on workplace safety, you can reduce the number of injured employees. It is also in everyone's best interest to help an injured worker return to work as soon as safely possible.

As an employer, you have a key role to play in making Nova Scotia safer. Employers have a legal responsibility to create a safe work environment and ensure employees go home safe. By creating a workplace safety culture, you can reduce your workplace injury insurance premiums and more importantly, reduce the human toll that affects all of us.

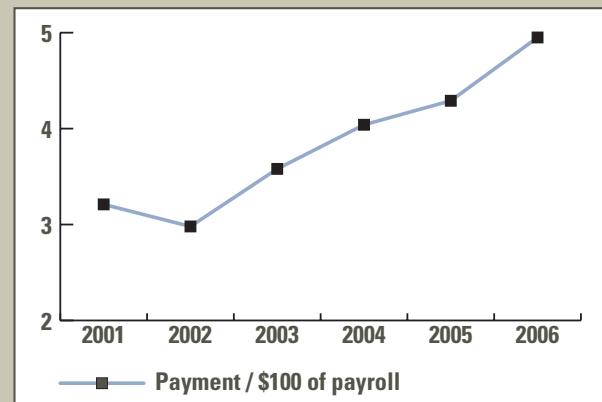
Industry Overview

In fish processing, the most common types of injuries are:

- strains & sprains to the back and upper body
- injuries from slips & falls
- being struck by or against something, and
- cuts and lacerations from sharp objects and knives.

Increasing injury rates over the past five years have resulted in increasing industry assessment rates. Take a look at your company's annual Experience Rating Statement and compare it to the industry assessment rate. Where does your firm sit?

Fish Processing Assessment Rates



Nova Scotia employers pay among the highest rates in Canada for their workplace injury insurance. This is a direct result of the frequency of workplace injuries and the length of time injured employees are off the job in our province. Employers' premiums are not going to change unless injury rates are reduced and injured employees return to work in a more timely manner.

Where to Start

To create a workplace safety culture, you need a plan. The plan could include training and orientation for all workers, establishing a health & safety committee or safety representative, and putting systems, practices and procedures into place that are regularly reviewed. Take a look at these suggestions for improving common hazards in the fish processing industry. They may help make your business safer.

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PHYSICAL HAZARDS

At your facility, do you have:

- Wet flooring and working surfaces?
- Machinery with moving parts?
- Sharp tools and knives?
- Elevated work surfaces and platforms?

Prevention:

- Proper maintenance and guarding of equipment
- Proper handling of materials and tools
- Proper personal protective equipment
- Housekeeping needs
- Clean up spills promptly
- Provide slip-resistant floor surfaces

ERGONOMIC HAZARDS

At your facility, are there:

- Repetitive work motions? (cutting and trimming of fillets)
- Forceful motions of shoulders, arms and hands?
- Working positions that are awkward for the neck and shoulders?
- Long periods of standing?
- Heavy and awkward loads to lift and transfer?
- Work lines that move at great speeds?
- Poorly organized workstations and lines?

Prevention:

- Keep knives sharp, to reduce force requirements
- Try to reduce pinch grip forces when processing fish
- Adjust the height of the individual's work area to promote neutral working postures
- When handling material, try to keep the load above the knees and below the shoulders
- If possible, provide anti-fatigue matting or shock absorbing shoe inserts
- Always involve workers in the design of work stations and processes

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

At your facility, do you have:

- Noise?
- Low temperatures and wet environments?
- Chemicals?
- Toxic gas?
- Biological irritants?
- The potential for mould and mildew?

Prevention:

- Measure temperature, air quality and humidity levels
- Identify noise zones and sign posting
- Wear hearing protective devices
- Wear adequate insulated clothing
- Limit duration of exposure in refrigerated areas
- Provide adequate rest periods in warm/dry areas
- Provide sufficient nutrition/warm beverages
- Ensure adequate airflow and local exhaust ventilation
- Where there is skin contact, provide appropriate gloves, sleeves and aprons



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