

# Mandate the Worker's Compensation Board to Ensure Compliance

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## Issue

The Worker's Compensation Board does not currently have a mandate to ensure employers comply with registering for WCB Insurance. This leaves unaware businesses vulnerable to the back payment of premiums, administration fees, and penalties.

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## Background

Workers' compensation is the name of legislation designed to provide benefits, medical care and rehabilitation services to individuals who suffer workplace injuries or contract occupational diseases. Workers' compensation Acts now exist in all Canadian jurisdictions and provide medical rehabilitation services as well as financial benefits.

Legislation has stipulated that WCB Insurance is mandatory, however there is a list of exempt industries. Currently the only means that WCB uses to provide information to employers is a letter that goes out to the registered office after registration with provincial registries. Failing to register within 15 days of the first employee being hired leaves an employer liable for penalties effective that day.

As with any form of communication, there is a variety of reasons why an employer may not receive the appropriate information and be genuinely unaware of their responsibility to WCB. WCB's position that they simply trust employers to comply leaves uninformed businesses liable for all past premiums dues, hefty fines, plus administration fees. As WCB is a federally mandated insurance program their mandate should be to ensure compliance not to wait and punish unexpecting employers later on. If WCB has the information required to contact the business after corporate registration they should be able to follow up with non compliant businesses within a reasonable time frame.

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## The Alberta Chambers of Commerce recommends the Government of Alberta:

1. Provide businesses with an initial notification letter including a specified timeframe of no less than 60 days for compliance and payment of existing premiums with non-compliance addressed after that timeframe through a secondary notification to the directors of the company together with their registered office if applicable setting out potential penalties and fees due.
2. Direct the Worker's Compensation Board to improve engagement with the business community with an intent to improve education and transparency related to employer obligations.