



Saskatchewan
Workers'
Compensation
Board

WorkSafe
SASKATCHEWAN
Safety • Health • Well-being



CANADIAN INSTITUTE
**SAFETY, WELLNESS
& PERFORMANCE**

Sask. Work initiative

Advancing workplace health, safety and injury prevention in Saskatchewan

Frequently asked questions

Disclaimer

The current document is intended to provide broad information and should not be considered clinical advice. The Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) and WorkSafe Saskatchewan provides the information herein, acknowledging the contribution of the Canadian Institute for Safety, Wellness, and Performance (CISWP) in creating safer workplaces through research, innovation and evidence-informed prevention, intended to better understand workplace exposures and demands and support evidence-based prevention strategies across the province.

Intended audience

This document is suitable for staff, employers, industry associations and other partners considering participation in the Sask. Work initiative.

Acknowledgements

The WCB and WorkSafe want to acknowledge and emphatically thank the CISWP for providing expertise in creating the current document content and their permission for us to share this expertise.

Contact information

If you have any additional questions, you may text or phone the WCB's prevention team at 1.800.667.7590, email mobileresearchlab@wcbsask.com or visit worksafesask.ca/resources/research/sask-work-initiative. Learn more about other CISWP initiatives at ciswp.ca/dose-initiative or ciswp.ca/mosaic-initiative.

Q: What is the Sask. Work initiative?

A: The Sask. Work initiative is a partnership between WorkSafe Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) and the Canadian Institute for Safety, Wellness, and Performance (CISWP).

Through the initiative, the Sask. Work initiative mobile research lab travels to Saskatchewan workplaces to conduct field-based research that measures workplace exposures and job demands. The initiative is fully funded and provided at no cost to participating employers.

Q: What is the purpose of the Sask. Work initiative?

A: Workplace injuries and occupational illnesses often occur because employers lack objective, workplace-specific information about the physical, cognitive and environmental demands workers experience while performing their jobs. While many organizations have identified hazards, they may not have access to the advanced measurement technology and research expertise needed to fully understand workplace exposures and demands.

The Sask. Work initiative helps address this gap by bringing research-grade assessment technology directly into Saskatchewan workplaces. Through applied research, the initiative collects objective data about real work performed by real workers under real working conditions, helping identify injury and illness risk factors and informing evidence-based prevention strategies that contribute to safer and healthier workplaces across Saskatchewan.

Q: What is a mobile research lab?

A: The mobile research lab is a fully equipped mobile research unit designed to bring advanced data collection capabilities directly to worksites across Saskatchewan. Each mobile lab houses a comprehensive suite of technologies for measuring exposure of workers to physical, cognitive and work environmental factors. CISWP mobile labs are capable of measuring anthropometric characteristics, strengths and other functional capabilities of workers, all in real working environments.

This unit allows CISWP researchers to collect high-resolution, ecologically valid data where work is actually performed. By meeting workers on their worksites, the mobile research labs capture the complexity, variability and demands of real occupational tasks that cannot be replicated in traditional lab settings.

Q: What are the benefits for participating employers?

A: Participating organizations have an opportunity to:

- Receive no-cost access to advanced workplace exposure and demand assessment technology.
- Gain objective insights into workplace injury and illness risk factors.
- Obtain practical, evidence-informed recommendations tailored to their workplace.
- Demonstrate a commitment to worker health, safety and well-being.
- Contribute to Saskatchewan-specific research that will help shape future prevention resources and best practices.
- Support safer, healthier and more productive workplaces across the province.

Q: Why are mobile research labs important?

A: Most work and health research lacks ecological validity. Conventional work and health research often rely on convenient samples, simulated tasks or controlled environments that do not reflect the unpredictability, dynamism and diversity of real jobs. Certain workplaces frequently have:

- Constantly changing locations.
- Flexible work arrangements and handling multiple jobs.
- Unpredictable environmental and physical conditions.
- Rapid task switching and complex interactions.

The Sask. Work initiative mobile lab overcomes these limitations by enabling field-applied research in real operational context, ensuring that findings and recommendations are grounded in actual work conditions.

Q: Where do the mobile research labs go?

A: The mobile research labs can travel anywhere within Saskatchewan. The mobile research lab has a home base in Saskatoon, Sask.

Q: What industries and occupations are being prioritized?

A: The initial focus is on employers operating within these industries:

- construction
- transportation
- health care

Priority occupations include:

- tradespeople
- labourers
- truck drivers
- care providers

The Sask. Work initiative may also consider organizations outside these sectors if there is a strong opportunity to advance occupational illness and injury prevention.

Q: What does the mobile research lab measure?

A: Depending on the workplace, tasks and research objectives, the research technicians may measure:

- Physical demands and risk factors such as:
 - posture and movement patterns
 - repetition
 - force exertion
 - muscle activity
 - physical effort
 - fatigue
 - whole-body vibration
 - hand-arm vibration
- Cognitive demands and risk factors such as:
 - heart rate and heart rate variability
 - physiological strain
 - mental fatigue
 - attentional demands
 - situational awareness indicators
- Environmental exposures such as:
 - heat, cold and noise
 - selected chemical exposures

Q: What outcomes can employers expect from participating in a mobile lab?

A: Following data collection and analysis, participating organizations receive a Sask. Work report that includes:

- job-specific exposure and demand findings
- identified workplace risk factors
- practical, evidence-informed recommendations
- opportunities to improve worker health and safety
- insights to support prevention planning and continuous improvement

The intent is to help employers better understand workplace risks and make informed decisions regarding prevention strategies.

Q: How much time is required from employers participating in the mobile lab?

A: The time commitment is relatively modest.

Participating employers are asked to:

- identify a workplace contact person
- participate in an initial planning discussion
- help identify job roles or tasks of interest
- support voluntary worker recruitment
- provide site access and any required site orientation

Researchers work around normal operations to minimize disruption. Wearable sensor application typically takes approximately 15 minutes at the start of a shift and about five minutes at the end of the shift. Research observations may occur over one or more workdays, depending on the scope of the project.

Q: How is the Sask. Work initiative protecting worker and employer privacy?

A: Protecting privacy and confidentiality is a foundational principle of the initiative. Key safeguards include:

- Worker participation is entirely voluntary.
- All participants complete an informed consent process.
- Data is anonymized before analysis.
- Researchers never share individual worker data with employers.
- Researchers handle personal information confidentially.
- The Sask. Work reports include data at the job-task level rather than the individual worker level.
- The initiative does not identify participating organizations in publications or presentations without consent.
- The initiative securely stores and manages data in accordance with established research and privacy standards.
- The purpose of the initiative is research and prevention, not worker evaluation or performance management.

Q: Do employers have to implement the recommendations from the Sask. Work report?

A: No. The recommendations provided within the Sask. Work report are intended to support informed decision-making and continuous improvement. Participating organizations maintain full discretion regarding which recommendations they choose to pursue, how they prioritize them and the timeline for implementation.

Q: Are there any consequences if an employer chooses not to implement recommendations?

A: No. The Sask. Work initiative is a research and prevention program, not a compliance, inspection or enforcement activity. Recommendations are provided to help organizations better understand workplace demands, exposures and risks and to support prevention efforts.

There are no regulatory penalties, enforcement actions or consequences associated with choosing not to implement recommendations arising from participation in the initiative.

Q: Will participation result in regulatory inspections or enforcement activity?

A: No. The initiative is conducted for applied research and prevention purposes. The objective is to generate evidence-informed insights that help employers and workers better understand workplace demands and exposures. It is not intended to evaluate compliance or support enforcement activities.

Q: Is worker participation mandatory?

A: No. Worker participation is completely voluntary. Every participant receives information about the study and provides informed consent before taking part. Participants may decline participation or withdraw from the study at any time.

Q: How can an employer get involved with the Sask. Work initiative?

A: Interested employers can work with their WorkSafe contact to complete the Sask. Work initiative intake form. Submit completed forms to mobileresearchlab@wcbsask.com.

WorkSafe encourages early participation as initial project capacity is limited and WorkSafe will give priority placement to organizations that align with the initiative's research priorities and prevention objectives.