



November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020  
Media Release  
For Immediate Release

## **NL Federation of Labour Outraged at WorkplaceNL Discount Announcement - Injured Workers Lose Out Again**

The Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour (NLFL) is outraged at the WorkplaceNL announcement that takes money from the workers' compensation injury fund to benefit employers.

Each year, at this time, WorkplaceNL announces the upcoming workers' compensation employer assessment rate for the following year. According to the WorkplaceNL announcement, a 21 cent discount will continue for the "next few years", until the surplus is gone.

"This is an outrageous announcement," stated NLFL President Mary Shortall. "This is Injury Fund money. Money that is intended to assist and support injured workers and their families who are trying to recover from work-related injuries or illnesses."

What makes this announcement more infuriating is that it comes in the midst of the Statutory Review of Workers' Compensation, which Shortall believes seriously undermines the Review Committee's work. "Every five years the public and stakeholders are provided the opportunity to make recommendations on improvements to the workers' compensation system," Shortall explained. "The process ensures injured workers are treated with dignity and respect and provided the necessary supports to adjust to a work-related injury or illness. If there is a surplus in the injury fund, it should benefit injured workers first and foremost." The Review Committee are currently in the process of writing their final report and recommendations to government based on what they heard.

The WorkplaceNL announcement actually highlights that there are more serious workplace injuries and longer claims duration. The NLFL believes that the only way to reduce assessment rates is to ensure work sites are healthy and safe. Over the past years, on average there have been 25 work-related fatalities each year, equivalent to one every two weeks. In 2019, WorkplaceNL accepted 5,397 new injury claims – this is equivalent to 15 claims each and every day. In addition, Newfoundland & Labrador (NL) has one of the lowest income replacement rates for injured workers across Canada. Six jurisdictions support injured workers at 90%, while the NL rate stands at 85%. This means injured worker are penalized at a rate of 15% for a work-related injury in a "no fault" system.



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Shortall is calling on the Minister of Labour to intervene, to reverse this announcement, and to let the Workers' Compensation Statutory Review complete their important work.

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For further information, please contact:

Mary Shortall  
President, Newfoundland & Labrador Federation of Labour  
Cell: (709) 699-3112  
Office: (709) 754-1660

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Unifor 597*