

Aging Manitoba Workforce

a health and safety initiative



Research Report

January, 2022

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Executive Summary

Manitoba's population has grown significantly in the past ten years and continues to grow. In addition to growing, Manitoba and Canada's population is also aging. This trend is consistent nationally and internationally. The number of aging workers, (45+) will continue to increase as the population ages and life expectancy increases with people who are working longer out of necessity or by choice.

As a key component of Manitoba's workforce, older workers are an integral part of Manitoba's future. While these workers are injured less often, they require more time away from work when injured. Workers Compensation Board data indicates that 20% of all injuries occur in the 45–54 age group and 21% in the 55+ age group. Together they account for over 40% of all injuries. There is a compelling need to prevent injuries in this group by developing programming and training resources.

The Aging Manitoba Workforce (AMW) project has explored, through comprehensive secondary and primary research, the trends and issues affecting the workplace health and safety of older workers.

Secondary research was conducted at international, national, and provincial levels. Manitoba reflects the same issues of an aging workforce as the other countries researched. Due to a lack of programming and resources in Manitoba, the AMW project explored international programs and resources related to older worker health and safety. The EU, which consists of 27 countries, has created awareness campaigns and resources for their aging workforce and employers. Australia and New Zealand have also examined the needs and have developed resources for older workers, their employers, and other stakeholders. Work done by these countries can assist in developing resources for Manitoba's aging workforce.

These countries have identified that older workers are valued in the workforce for their experience, knowledge, dependability, work ethic, and loyalty. Despite this, it was consistently identified that there are challenges and issues related to perception and attitude toward older workers. Some of these challenges include obtaining suitable employment, retirement options, maintaining current employability skills, and ageism and age discrimination.

Primary research included focus groups, interviews, and an electronic survey. This research was conducted with workers, employers, health and safety practitioners, human resources professionals, worker safety and health representatives and committees, industry-based safety associations, and unions. There was a high congruency among stakeholders in defining the issues and suggested responses. This report summarizes the five broad themes related to older workers including awareness of older workers and their needs, advantages of older workers, challenges for older workers, ageism, and age discrimination, and the need for programming and resources related to the older worker.

Project Introduction and Overview

Introduction

Manitoba's population has grown significantly in the past ten years and continues to grow. In addition to growing, Manitoba and Canada's population is also aging. This trend is consistent internationally. It is expected that over the next 30 years, the trend of an aging workforce will only increase. As the population ages and life expectancy increases people are working longer, out of necessity or by choice. As the workforce is aging (defined by this project as 45 years +) occupational health and safety will need to be one of the factors at the forefront in order to retain a viable work force.

Labour market shortages are anticipated as the population ages and more workers are retiring. It is important for employers to accommodate the needs of aging workers to ensure a stable labour force and economic viability. Accommodating the needs of these workers will help to minimize worker shortages. In meeting the health and safety needs of aging workers, employers are assisting their aging workers to safely remain in the workforce, a benefit to all.

Overview

The Aging Manitoba Worker Project has as its primary goal the creation of resources to aid employers, workers and other stakeholders in Manitoba. The goal is to develop on-line resources that promote development and maintenance of a healthy and safe aging workforce, which contribute to the WCB's framework to Create a Safe Work Culture.

These resources will address, to a lesser extent, age-based discrimination to assist in the creation of healthy and inclusive workplaces which will also aid in workers choosing to work longer and employers maintaining the experience and skills that they need.

Report Organization

This report begins with an overview of the secondary research completed by a research assistant and the project team. It includes international, national, and provincial demographic trends, issues, and resources relating to workplace health and safety and the aging workforce.

This is followed by the results of the primary research, completed by the project team. The primary research focused on Manitoba. It included focus groups held with stakeholder groups, an online survey, and interviews. Stakeholder groups included workers, employers, Safety and Health Practitioners, human resource professionals, industry based safety associations, unions, and worker safety and health Committee Representatives.

The research findings and recommendations include areas related to the workplace health and safety of the aging workforce. Appendices include a bibliography, other references, the e-survey, and focus group questions.

Limitations of the Secondary Research

The foremost limitation of the research stems from the data, internationally and nationally, not having a consistent definition of an aging worker. Many sources cite aging workers to be those over 45, 55, or 60 while other sources define aging workers to be those who are older than the common retirement age of 65. Throughout the report the 45+ definition is used whenever possible. However, other aging worker definitions will be used when 45+ statistics are not available.

A second limitation of the data is the recency of the topic in both studies and research. For example, there are significant gaps in the research surrounding women and their role in the workforce, and how this relates to whether they stay in the workforce longer than the general retirement age of 65. More information on which groups or communities work past 65 and the health and safety implications of this is required.

A further limitation in the secondary research is the lack of availability of health and safety centred resources for aging workers. There are indications of increasing awareness of the issues that affect aging workers. Examples of these are found in Appendix A.

Aging Worker Demographics

The working demographic is quickly aging for a multitude of reasons:

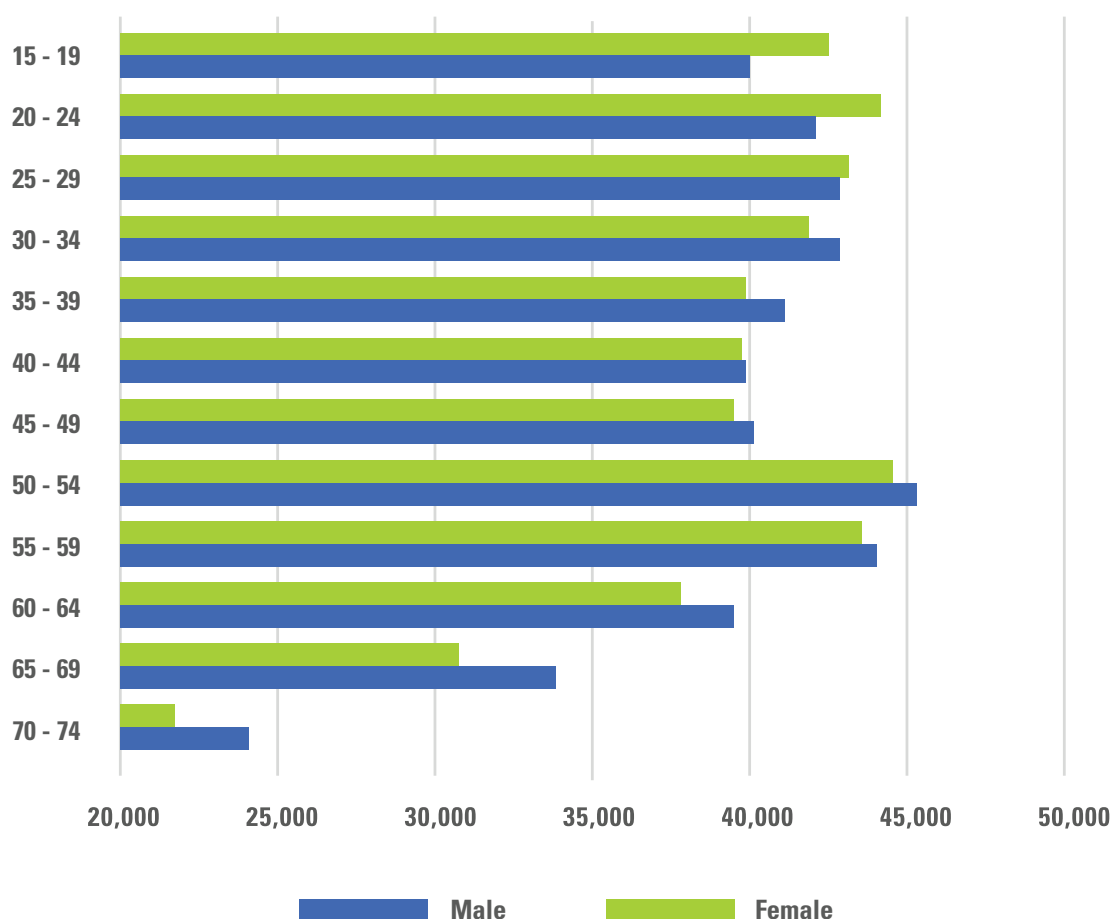
- As life expectancy is increasing, people are staying in the workforce longer, because they need or choose to continue working.
- The population itself is aging as the baby boomer generation is nearing retirement age.
- Lower birth rates are affecting the number of upcoming workers available
- Immigration will increasingly be relied upon to meet labour requirements. These workers often need to work longer due to their circumstances, e.g., starting work at a later age in Canada, supporting more than one generation, lack of pension plans, etc.

Internationally, the working population is increasingly aging as those who are reaching retirement age are staying in the workforce longer, by necessity or choice. Since 1996, the proportion of workers over 54 has doubled across the globe.

According to Statistics Canada, those who are aged 55 and older now make up 21% of the Canadian workforce. Statistics Canada estimates very little population growth in Manitoba over the next number of years supporting the need to keep the aging workforce healthy to enable them to stay employed.

In the 2011 census, the largest percentage of the population was between the ages of 45 to 54. Not surprisingly then in 2016, the majority of the population in Manitoba is aged 50 to 59 years for both males and females. The percentage of aging workers in Manitoba is increasing as well. The demographics are roughly the same as that of Canada as a whole, with 22% of the workforce aged over 54 and nearly half, 45% of the workforce aged 45 and older.

Population by five-year age groups and sex, Manitoba, 2016



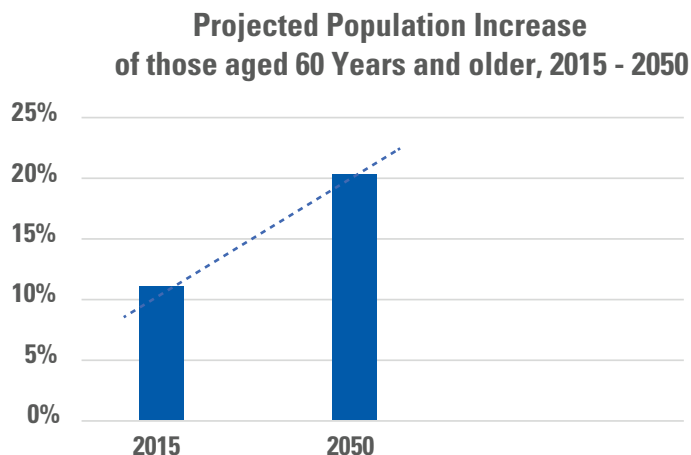
Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2016 https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/fogs-spg/desc/Facts-desc_Age.cfm?LANG=Eng&GK=PR&GC=46&TOPIC=2&#fd1_5

Of further concern is the participation rate of available workers. (The participation rate is the number of labour force participants expressed as a percentage of the population 15 years of age and over.) The labour force in Manitoba is shrinking more rapidly than Canada as a whole. Between 2016 and 2020 the Canadian workforce shrunk by 1.5 percent while in Manitoba it was nearly 2 percent. Keeping aging workers healthy and in the labour force is becoming more critical in Manitoba.

Aging Worker-General Issues and Trends

International

Internationally, the population is aging and thus, the workforce is aging. The World Health Organization (WHO) provides that the population that is aged over 60 will double by 2050.



Data source: World Health Organization: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/aging-and-health>

In Canada, the median age is projected to rise from 39 (in 2005) to between 45 and 50 years in 2056, according to Statistics Canada. (<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/91-520-x/00105/4095095-eng.htm>)

As populations age it is expected that workforces will shrink as people tend to retire out of their jobs. As a growing proportion of our population is nearing the age where people have planned to retire, it has been found that a solution to the shrinking workforce is to retain these aging workers. This contributes to stable economies and strong workforces, significant contributors to health and pension plans.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) states that immigration, fertility encouragement, and increased productivity can help to offset the effects of the retiring working population. They also state that mobilizing aging workers to stay in their positions is the most important factor. Populations are not only aging, but they are also living longer which provides the option for working longer.

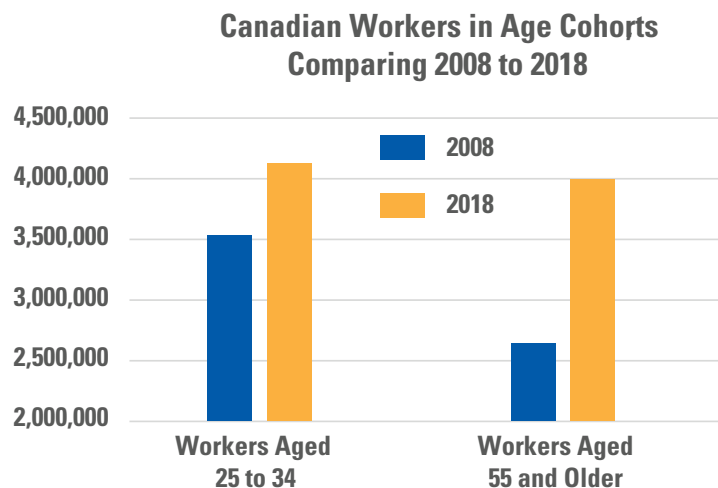
Despite life expectancies increasing, this does not mean that the years the average person spends in good health is increasing. European Union data suggests that the years spent in good health has remained relatively the same overtime despite life expectancy increasing. This means that disease, illness, and risk for injury has been relatively stable despite workers staying in the workforce longer, putting aging workers at further risk. This may require improved policy decisions in terms of health, wellness and occupational safety and health prevention programs.

Many international sources suggest that retirement age is much earlier than it once was. The reasons cited for people retiring earlier range from the financial ability to do so to the conditions of the labour market subtly forcing them out of the workforce. Ageism or “age discrimination” may be a factor.

US data is suggesting very similar trends. According to the CDC (<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/productiveaging/dataandstatistics.html>) the employment of the population aged 65 and older has increased by 117% since 2000. Further to this, aging workers are increasingly working full-time rather than part-time once again requiring planning and policy to protect workers’ health in general and a reduction in occupational risks.

National/Canada

Canada’s demographic does not differ from the global standard. According to Statistics Canada, the proportion of workers who are aged 55 and older doubled from 10% to 21% of the workforce since 1996. Further, this increase in aging workers has increased in all major occupations. In 2018, the greatest number of people in the labour force were aged 50-54. This indicates that there are now more aging workers then we have seen in the industrialized era. Statistics Canada also projects the overall workforce participation to decrease by 2036 due to the rapidly aging population. In relation to this, projections are showing that labour force growth will also slow down by 2036 due to the retirement of the baby boom generation.



With Canada currently having significant numbers of aging workers, Canada needs to be ready for this generation of workers to approach retirement age. Having the baby boom generation (born 1946-1964) all retire at once will cause severe economic harm as that generation is larger than the generation that is entering the workforce.

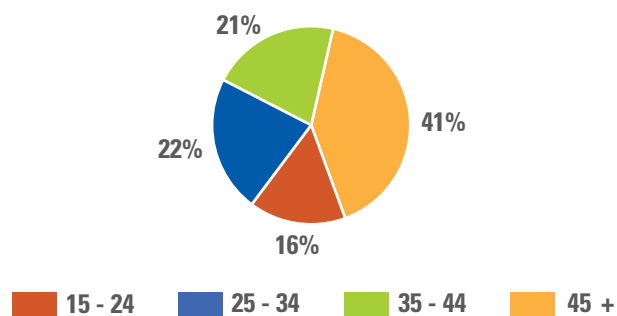
Statistics Canada reports the aging worker population has increased exponentially more than any other age group. Workers aged 25-34 increased by just 582,000 and the workers aged 55+ increased by 1.36 million.

Data sourced from: Statistics Canada, 2019.

Manitoba

In Manitoba, workers aged 45 and older make up 41% of the workforce, similar to Canadian and international data. There are more male than female aging workers in Manitoba. However, the rate of employment for female aging workers is increasing at a higher rate than men.

Manitoba's Workforce by Age - 2018



Manitoba data on aging workers is very similar to the Canadian picture. Manitoba is very similar to Canada in its rates of occupational participation by aging workers. However, Manitoba is unique in that older males aged 55- 64 have slightly less workforce participation rates than the national average.

Employment Sectors and Injury/Illnesses

In Canada, a significant number of workers aged 55 and older are employed in the healthcare sector. One in 5 nurses are aged 55 and older (in 2016). Agricultural managers are also aging, with 52% being over the age of 55. Those who are self-employed tend to retire later in life, with those working in the public sector retiring earlier.

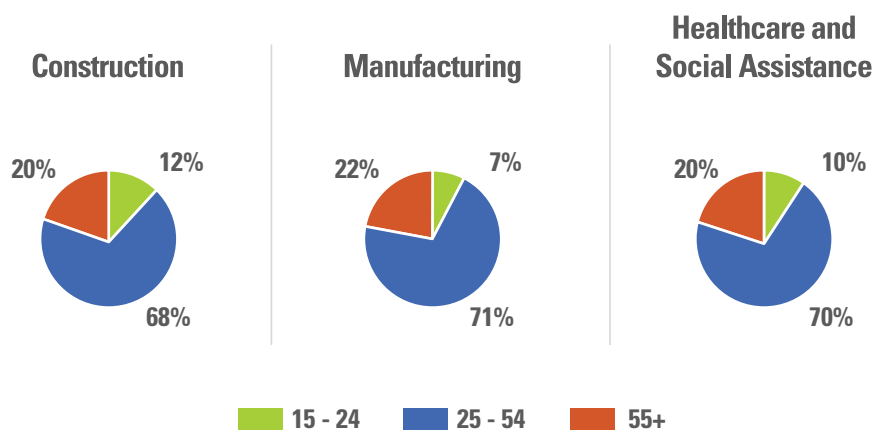
Approximately 20% of those in construction occupations were aged 55 years and older in Canada (<https://canada.constructconnect.com/dcn/news/economic/2019/08/workers-occupations-aging-construction>).

Manitoba's employment in agricultural sectors reflects the situation in Canada. In southern Manitoba, known for its agricultural activity, aging workers make up 61% of the agricultural workforce. It is expected that by 2025, 30% of the Manitoba's agricultural workforce will be retired.

Manitoba's healthcare and social assistance sector, manufacturing sector, accommodation and food services sector, and construction sector all have nearly one quarter of their workforce made up of workers over the age of 55 compared to all other employment sectors.

- Those aged 55+ make up 21% of the healthcare and social assistance sector.
- Those aged 55+ make up 22% of the manufacturing sector.
- Those aged 55+ make up 20% of the construction sector.

These sectors often require skilled workers that are often the most difficult to replace.



(data sourced from: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1410002301&pickMembers%5B0%5D=1.8&pickMembers%5B1%5D=2.2&pickMembers%5B2%5D=4.1&pickMembers%5B3%5D=5.1&cubeTimeFrame.startYear=2020&cubeTimeFrame.endYear=2020&referencePeriods=20200101%2C20200101>)

Injury Rates

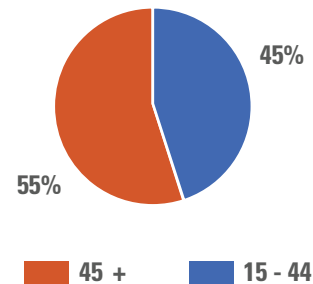
In 2019 in Canada, reports to the Association of Workers' Compensation Boards of Canada (AWCBC) showed approximately 63,000 injuries among those aged 50-59. Those aged 50-54 had the highest total number of lost time due to injuries at 31,717 followed closely by the 55-59 age group. When the 45+ age group is considered as a whole, they account for approximately 45% of all time loss claims in Canada. Those aged 15-44 make up the remainder of claims.

According to the AWCBC, in Canada as a whole, those aged 50-54 and 55-59 each have more time loss claims due to an injury or illness than any other age groups.

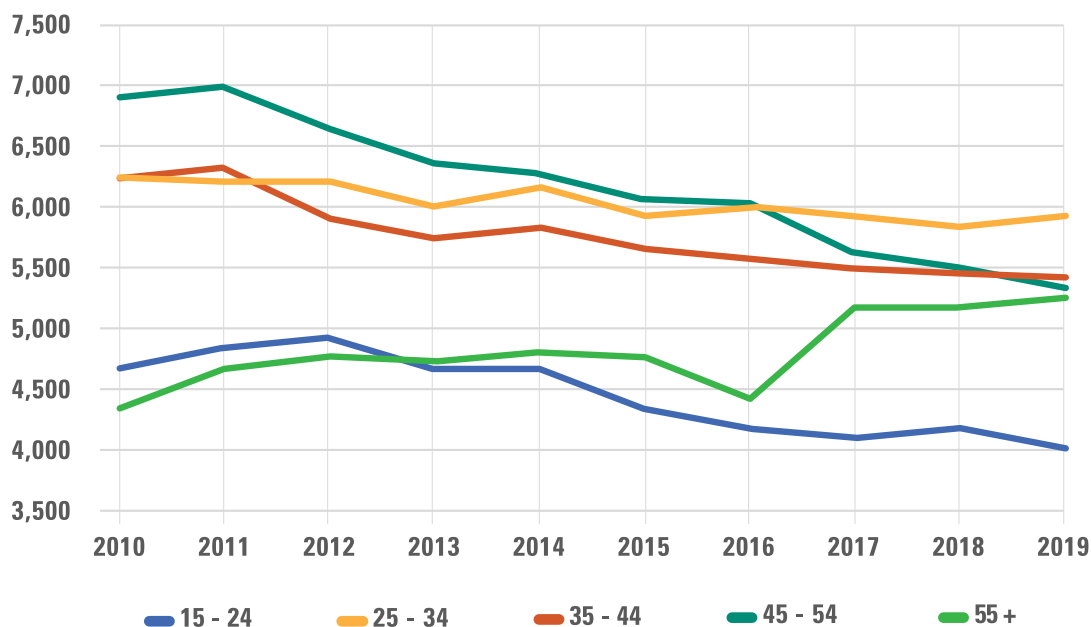
As illustrated in the upward trend line shown below Workers' Compensation Board data for Manitoba in 2019 supports this.

- 20% of all injuries occur in the 45-54 age group and 21% in the 55+ age group.
- Together they account for over 40% of all injuries.

Injuries in Canada



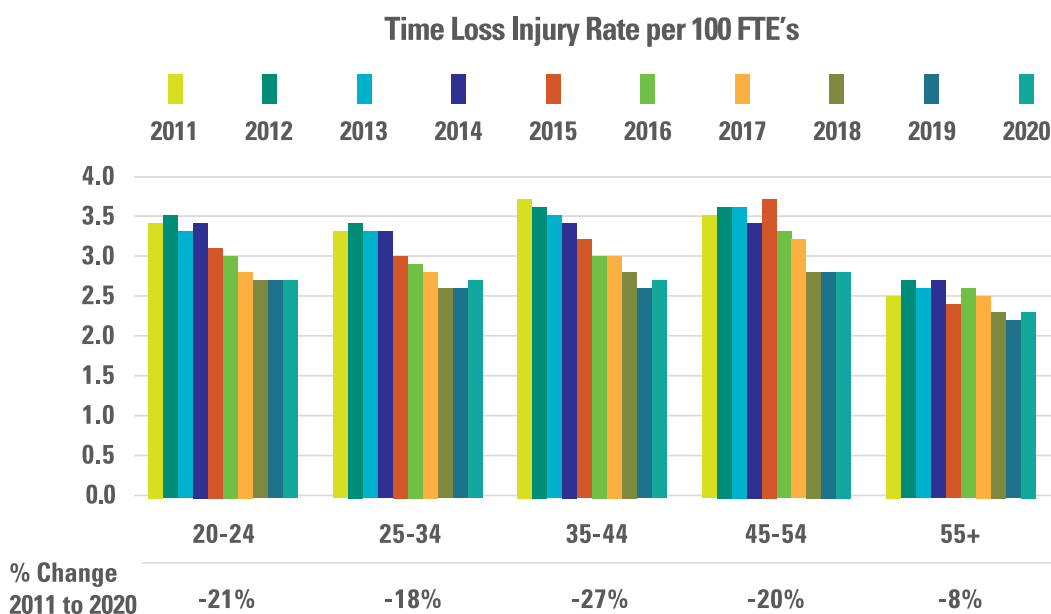
Injury Rate by Age Group in Manitoba, 2010 - 2019



Data sourced from: Safe Work Manitoba, The Manitoba Workplace Injury and Illness Statistics Report, 2020.

In Manitoba, while there is an overall trend toward lower rates of injuries in general, the downward trend is much less in those aged 55+ as shown in the chart below, where it is only 8% while others are double digit reductions.

Time Loss Injury Rate by Age Group, 2011 - 2020

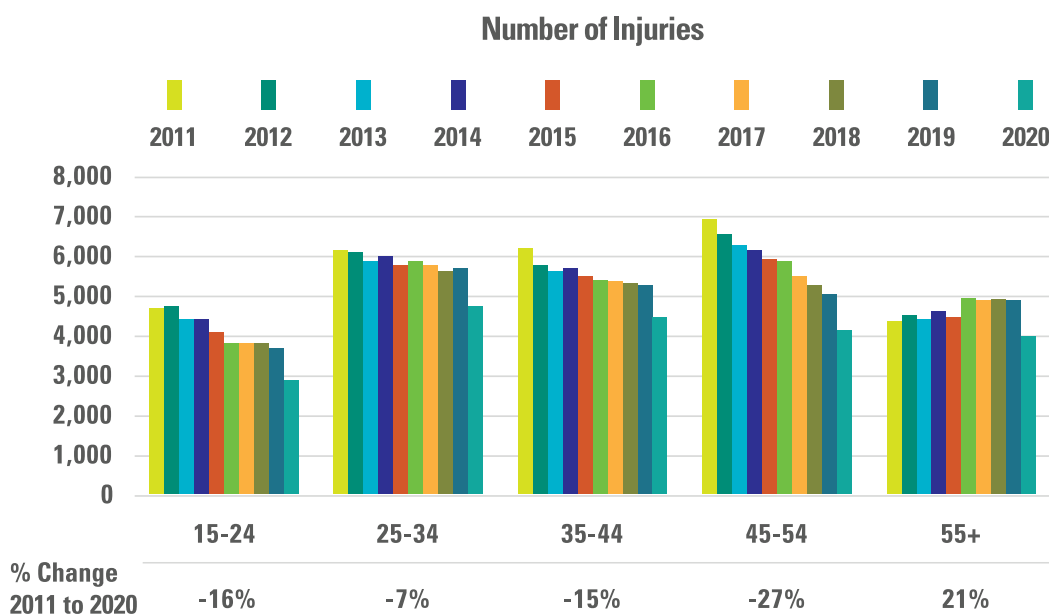


Source: The Manitoba Workplace Injury and Illness Statistics Report 2011-2020

https://www.safemanitoba.com/Page%20Related%20Documents/resources/ManitobaWorkplaceInjuryIllnessStatisticsReport_2011-2020.pdf

Aging workers are starting to report higher injury rates only in recent years, despite traditionally reporting fewer injuries. As illustrated in the chart below, all age groups have seen a significant decrease from 2011 to 2020 except those aged 55+ where it has increased by 21% in the same time period.

All Injuries by Age Group, 2011 - 2020



Source: https://www.safemanitoba.com/Page%20Related%20Documents/resources/ManitobaWorkplaceInjuryIllnessStatisticsReport_2011-2020.pdf

A review of a selection of other provincial data suggests a similar picture across Canada.

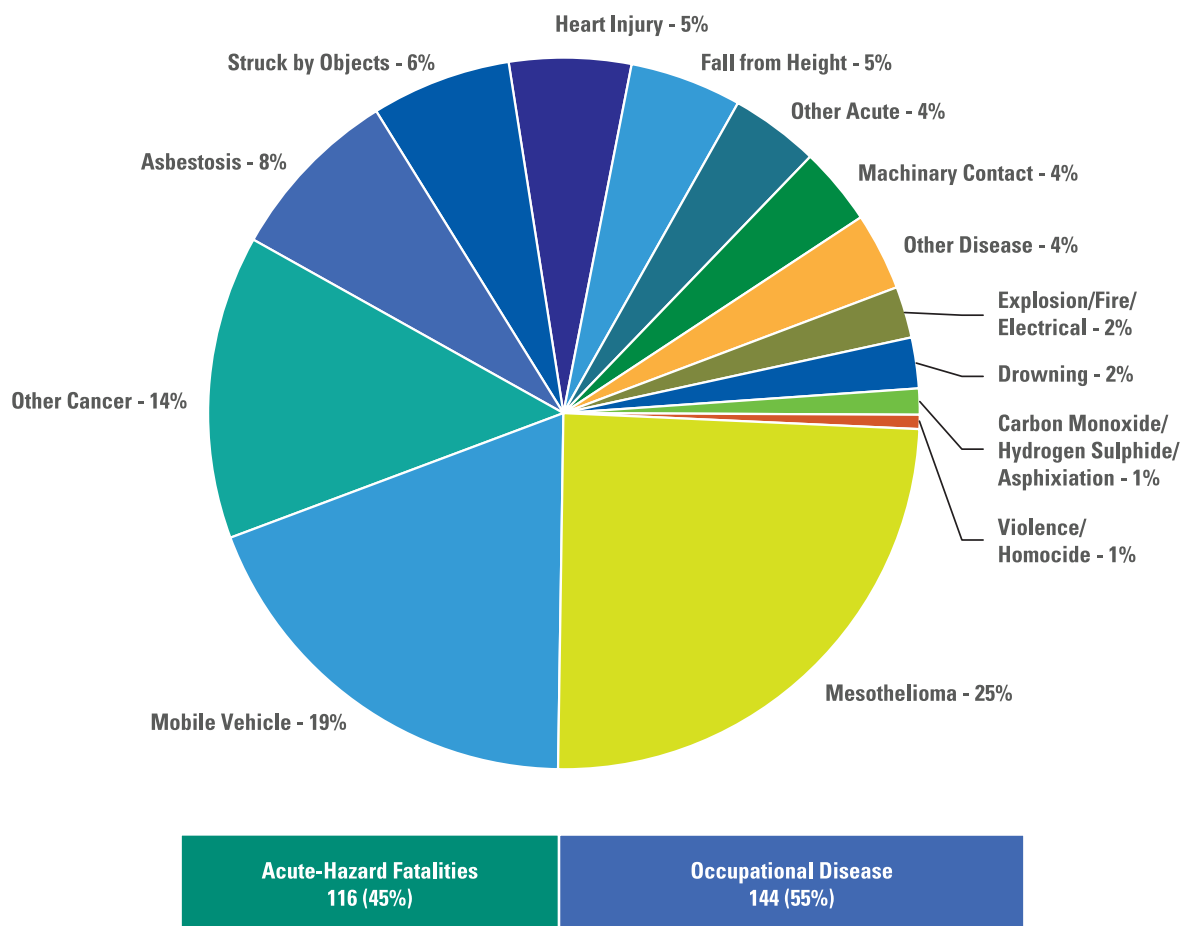
- Alberta reports in 2018 that aging workers (55 to 64 years old) had the highest lost time frequency rate followed by those aged 45 to 54. This was the same for both men and women.
- BC reports that in 2019 22% of workers injured were over age 55, the highest percentage of any age group.
- Ontario states in their report “Over the last 10 years, a growing number of allowed lost-time claims were for people who are 55 years of age and older. This is consistent with Statistics Canada’s employment trends and reflects the aging population.”

Fatal Injuries

Aging workers are more likely to be fatally injured on the job. A large portion of the aging workers who died from acute injuries are agricultural managers (farmers) and heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers.

However, of concern as well are the greater percentage of chronic hazard fatalities. As noted in the chart below, in total, 55% of fatalities are a result of chronic disease such as mesothelioma and other types of cancer. 138 of a total 144 occupational disease fatalities since 2011 are among those aged 55+. There were five chronic fatalities among those aged 45 to 54. As these types of deaths occur over time following chronic exposure to hazardous materials, they are most common among older workers once again reinforcing the need for improved prevention programs at an earlier age if those workers are to remain employed.

Acute-Hazard and Occupational Disease Fatalities by Cause of Death, 2011 - 2020

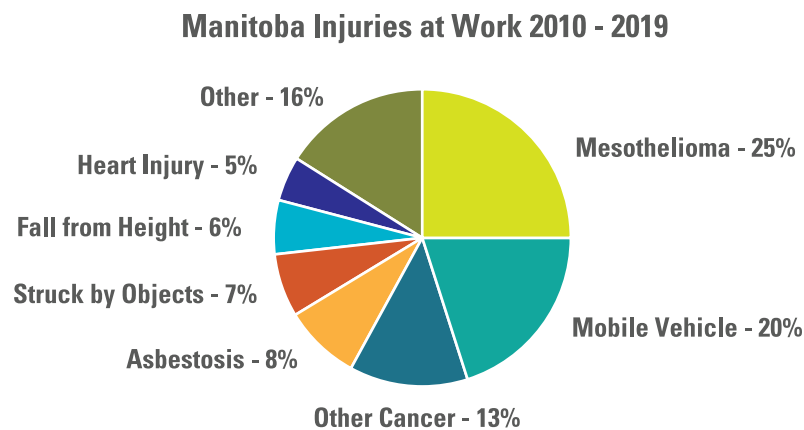


Sourced from https://www.safemanitoba.com/Page%20Related%20Documents/resources/ManitobaWorkplaceInjuryIllnessStatisticsReport_2011-2020.pdf

Types of Injuries

As noted earlier, aging workers are more likely to suffer more severe and fatal injuries on the job. These fatalities include preventable health concerns, such as long-term illness from exposure to noise and chemicals.

Generally, aging workers are at higher risk of falls from stairs, ladders, or heights and for specific types of injuries, including fractures and hip injury as well as strain and sprain type injuries.



Source: Safe Work Manitoba, 2019. (https://www.safemanitoba.com/Page%20Related%20Documents/resources/ManitobaWorkplaceInjuryIllnessStatisticsReport_2010-2019.pdf)

Female workers 45+ incur the majority of injuries in health care and service sectors, 40% in health care, with the injury trend going upward, unlike other sectors which have all been trending downward since 2011. The most severe injuries also occur in healthcare among the 45+ age group.

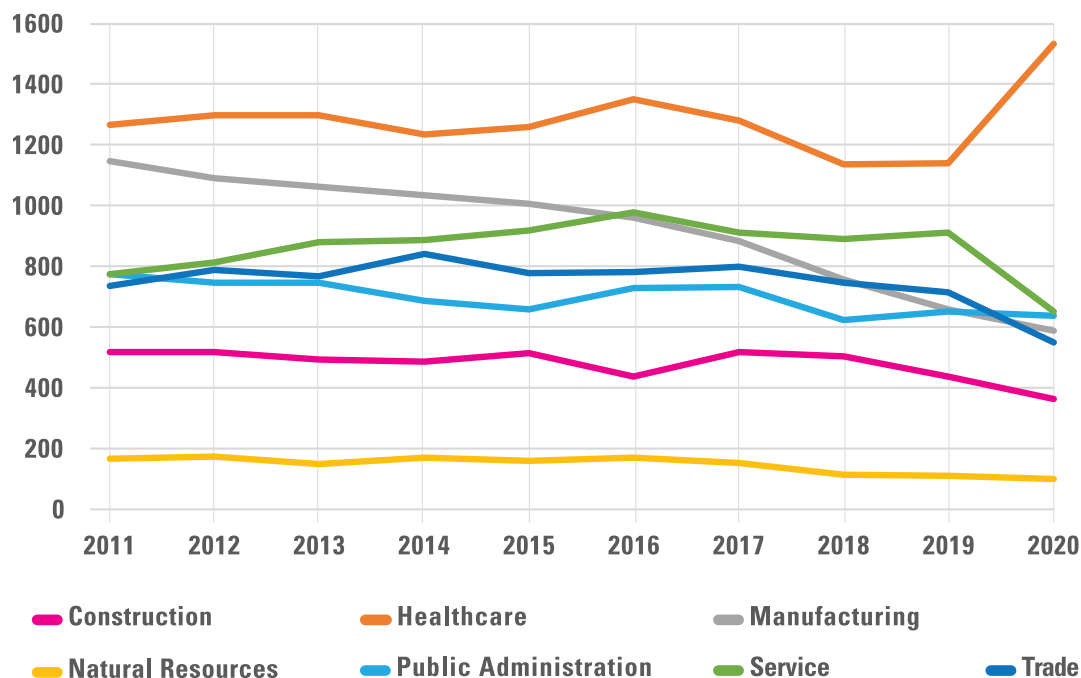
(Note: a severe injury is defined by WCB as: Accepted claim with any of the following characteristics:

- worker is off work for 60 or more days;
- injury or illness is identified as a serious incident under Workplace Safety and Health Bulletin # 119 and the worker missed 10 or more days of work;
- workplace fatality occurred.)

Male workers aged 45+ sustain injuries that occur primarily in the construction and manufacturing sectors, accounting for nearly half of the total number. Interestingly the number of male injuries in health care is also on the rise in the 45+ age group as is the severity of those injuries. Unlike female workers, the most severe injuries among men is more evenly distributed among sectors and occur in healthcare and the service sectors followed by transportation and construction.

Strains, sprains and tears are by far the predominant acute injury type among those aged 45+ followed by fractures and dislocations. The data is similar for both males and females in this age group with males suffering a greater number of other traumatic type injuries as well.

Severe Injury by Sector - Age 45+



Source: Workers' Compensation Board of Manitoba, Business Intelligence Unit: Data for RWIP project - MB Aging Workforce Health & Safety Initiative, November, 2021

Recovery Times

According to Statistics Canada aging workers experience more lost workdays and longer recovery times than their younger counterparts.

The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (https://www.ccohs-ca.uml.idm.oclc.org/oshanswers/psychosocial/aging_workers.html), also states that aging workers tend to have longer recovery times and are away from work or cannot return to their regular duties for an extended period of time or return at all, compared to those who are under 45.

Not surprisingly but significant is the finding that in Manitoba in all but health care, where the 35 - 44 age group has a marginally higher claim duration, the 45+ age group has the highest claim duration than any other age group in all sectors.

This has the potential to discourage aging workers from participating in certain occupations to avoid injury. This may be most significantly felt in the skilled workforce who are more difficult to replace. As aging workers are becoming a larger proportion of the workforce it is important that their health and safety needs are addressed. This not only contributes to their overall health but allows their continued participation in the workforce.

Return to Work Programs

Return to work programs are specifically beneficial to aging workers as it is found that aging workers are more likely to continue to work after retirement age if there are accommodations which allow them to continue to work part-time or with adjusted duties (Profile of Manitoba's Seniors, 2010).

Return to work programs aim to help people return to work after an injury or illness. Many of these include modified work schedules and duties to ensure a safe return to work.

According to the Workers Compensation Board, there are two ways to reduce the impacts of injury:

1. Investing in prevention: an effective safety and health program can help workers avoid sustaining an injury during the course of their workday.
2. Developing a practical and comprehensive Return to Work Program: these programs can help a business maintain productivity, reduce days lost and provide workers with the support they need for a healthy recovery.

Return to work programs keep experienced workers in the workplace longer, which is beneficial to both workers and the workplace as it replaces the cost of hiring and training new workers or in the current environment, even finding suitable workers at all. As the workforce is increasingly aging, it is important for workplaces to utilize programs such as a return-to-work program to keep the workplace staffed and productive.

There are benefits to both employers and workers. The WCB of Manitoba lists these as:

For employers:

- Keep experienced workers connected to the workplace
- Reduce the costs of recruiting and training replacement staff
- Maintain productivity and team dynamics
- Improve workplace morale
- Reduce direct costs related to workplace injuries
- Meet the legal requirements related to Human Rights and WCB re-employment legislation.

For injured workers:

- Recover more rapidly from their injuries
- Maintain their full rate of pay and benefits
- Continue to earn pension benefits and vacation days (in some cases)
- Get back on track sooner with less uncertainty about the future
- Maintain social contact with co-workers

The WCB of Manitoba offers programs, resources and support for employers to implement such programs.

Source: <https://www.wcb.mb.ca/return-to-work>

There is another upside to RTW programs for employers. One researcher stated the following “the findings we’ve seen in the research literature suggest that the policies and practices that improve RTW among older workers are generally the same practices and policies that improve RTW among all workers. While it’s true that older workers may experience physiological or mental decline, these changes may be offset by their greater experience and by the adaptations they make to compensate for their new challenges—for example, by taking additional precautions or switching out of demanding jobs. That older workers are not more likely to be injured seems to bear this out. The fact that they take longer to return to work may suggest that something in the way older workers are perceived or treated may be the difference.”

Source: https://www.iwh.on.ca/sites/iwh/files/oohna_journal_fw_2019_agingrtw.pdf

Aging Workers-Programs, Research and Resources

There has been some research done to develop resources for employers to manage their aging workforce. There are some international resources, Canadian resources, and provincial resources. These types of resources are useful in creating Manitoba specific resources. The following are some examples.

International

Australia uses an aging workers centred program to ensure safety and participation of their older workforce. The main recommendations are that employers need to plan for the demographics of their workforce:

- design the workplace for the projected demographics,
- take an age inclusive approach to hiring,
- match the work to the ability of the worker,
- ensure safe work is able to be practiced,
- and prevent harm and promote health of the worker.

The European Union (EU), which represents 27 countries, suggests that risk prevention and adaptations to the workplace for aging workers can prevent injury. According to the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, human resources must have a focus on the aging population in the workforce when creating and updating company policies. The report further states that human resources are a key component to ensuring the aging workforce has fair work conditions. The EU has created awareness campaigns and resources for employers which aid in adapting the aging workforce to the aging population.

The United States has aging awareness programs for those occupied in the field of mining which promotes the health and safety of the aging workforce. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) also has a similar program for older drivers.

Canada

There are some Canadian resources available to aid in maintaining the safety and health of the aging workforce. The Institute for Work and Health has research that expands upon the aging workforce which includes resources on age differences in return-to-work injuries, inequalities for aging workers, and information regarding chronic illnesses and aging workers (<https://www.iwh.on.ca/topics/aging-workers>).

The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety aids in creating resources for all topics relating to health and safety, which includes the aging population. They suggest that modified work environments and increased safety protocols are necessary when preventing occupational injuries and illnesses. This includes:

- having equipment in working order,
- sufficient training,
- supportive management, and
- proper risk assessment.

Additionally, workplaces need to promote healthy and active life styles which can have positive long term health effects.

The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety also has e-learning resources for information about the aging workforce and the health and safety risks that may appear as a result. This includes courses regarding musculoskeletal disorders which could be used for older workers as well as others.

B.C. also completed research regarding the occupational well-being of aging workers. Their project looked at patterns and trends of work injuries in aging workers. However, this project did not appear to present the best practices for employers or occupational health and safety committees to implement.

- The researchers found that there was no increase in risk of injury with greater aging worker participation. Rather, it found that chronic conditions, such as osteoarthritis and diabetes, are contributing factors to increased workplace injury.

Alberta has resources available to employers which help ensure their workplace is aging-friendly. Their resource includes check lists which ensure the proper equipment and modification devices are available. Further to this, they promote wellness in their workforce to ensure mental and physical wellbeing (see Appendix B).

No relevant resources were identified from the other Canadian provinces at this time.

Manitoba

With 40% of all workplace injuries in Manitoba being those aged 45 and older, a significant proportion could in-part, be addressed by improved awareness and programs looking at issues facing aging workers. We could not identify any specific Manitoba developed resources or research that address safety and health issues in an aging workforce.

Ageism and Age Discrimination

Ageism has significant impacts on society in general and on the health and safety of workers and would be advantageous to address within the workplace.

The World Health Organization finds that ageism is the cause for “poorer physical and mental health, increased social isolation and loneliness, greater financial insecurity, decreased quality of life and premature death” (2021).

Age discrimination occurs when someone is treated differently or not given the same opportunities because of their age. Ageism forces aging workers out of jobs and encourages early retirement. According to the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, ageism is the main factor that prevents aging workers from returning to or remaining at work. Due to the aforementioned aging workforce and workforce participation rates, it is important that aging workers are encouraged, rather than discouraged, to stay in the workforce longer.

Perceptions of Aging Workers

As the workforce ages, it is evident that there may be stereotypes and perceptions about aging workers and their role in the workplace. Old age can be considered a disadvantage to the workplace, due to the misconceptions about aging. This is important information when it is understood that 82% of those aged over 50 have experienced discrimination based on their age, according to the Institute for Healthcare Policy and Innovation. (<https://ihpi.umich.edu/news/most-older-adults-say-theyve-experienced-ageism-majority-still-hold-positive-attitudes-toward>)

Despite the increasing participation of workers 45+, stereotypes about the competencies of aging workers persist. According to the Canadian HR Reporter in 2021 (<https://www.hrreporter.com/focus-areas/culture-and-engagement/ageist-stereotypes-challenge-older-workers/356715>), it is found that specifically young adults see aging workers as less competent than themselves and to be more of a “friendly face” in the workplace rather than a competent co-worker. As aging workers are important contributors in the work force, it is important to combat workplace ageism, and the perceptions that perpetuate these beliefs to ensure the continuation of aging worker participation in the economy.

Misconceptions about aging workers include

- having lower mental capacity,
- being less intelligent,
- being resistant to change, or
- being less willing to participate in training and career development.

Further to this, it is perceived that aging workers are more likely to have work related injuries and are unwilling to learn new approaches to their job. There is a perception that aging workers are a higher cost to the employer. These kinds of stereotypes negatively affect aging workers by prematurely forcing them out of the workplace and excluding aging workers from training and learning opportunities.

According to the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, research has found aging workers are more dedicated to their jobs, have less absenteeism, and bring positive work values to the workplace.

Excluding aging workers from training and learning opportunities put their health and safety at risk. These negative misconceptions about aging workers not only affect the worker, but they also affect employers as forcing aging workers out of their jobs prematurely does not allow for their years of experience and acquired wisdom to be shared with young workers who are taking over these roles. Therefore, it is a higher financial cost to companies that are excluding aging workers because they have to spend more on training and more time making up for mistakes made when the wisdom of an aging worker could have avoided the problem.

It is widely understood that age discrimination is prevalent in hiring practices. Despite aging workers being injured on the job less often than workers under the age of 45, it is common for employers to not hire an aging worker due to the risk of the aging worker taking sick leave. The avoidance of hiring aging workers is prevalent across countries and employment sectors, despite the experience that workers aged 45 and older bring to the workplace, according to the Government of Canada. (<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/seniors/forum/reports/older-worker-exploring-addressing-stereotypes.html>) .

It is often assumed that longer absences post-injury are explained by the greater likelihood of older workers having pre-existing chronic conditions. Yet, even after taking pre-existing conditions into account, about 70 to 80 percent of the effect of age on longer absences remains unexplained. This article https://www.iwh.on.ca/sites/iwh/files/oohna_journal_fw_2019_agingrtw.pdf suggests that:

- Workplace factors may explain the longer absences, including ageism.
- Those dealing with the return to work of older workers are advised to:
 - check their organization's implicit biases about age and aging,
 - consider the individuality of each older worker,
 - implement return-to-work plans that incorporate health care, case coordination and work modification interventions, and
 - implement accommodation policies and programs that are flexible and promote autonomy among all workers.

There are many ways to combat ageism in the workplace. Firstly, it is important to promote evidence about aging. Programs like Alberta's Guide to Managing an Aging Workforce provides evidence about aging and discusses stereotypes which uphold ageism in the workplace. Other ways to combat ageism include

- provide educational opportunities for aging workers,
- promote evidence that an aging workers can accept and embrace change,
- promote positive imagery of older people engaging in the activity of the workplace
- organize workplace to have multi-generations working together to better understand what each group brings to the workplace

Other countries have attempted to combat ageism in the workplace through implementing strategies that dismantle such stereotypes and promoting diversity training which extends to ageism.

An excellent example of one such strategy is the Age Smart Employer program introduced by New York City (NYC) when they recognized that nearly 20% of their workforce was over the age of 55. They provide resources with guidance for employers to create a workplace that encourages different generations to work productively side by side. Together with this program the Columbia Aging Center and the New York Academy of Medicine sponsor Age Smart Employer Awards to better understand and promote knowledge about this segment of the population. This enables hearing from a wide variety of employers about the strategies and programs that have been effective in their workplaces.

Having multiple generations in the workplace means that there are many different approaches to work, as world events have shaped each generation differently. There are five generations in the workplace, which include the traditionalists, baby boomers, generation x, millennials, and generation z. It is important for employers to understand each generation and what motivates them. Doing this helps create a harmonious work environment.

Understanding each generation and how they operate contributes to a safe and healthy workforce. Keeping safety and health on the forefront of the discussion of aging workforces allows for the aging workers to continue in the workforce to allow for knowledge and training to trickle down into the younger generations.

Employers must make changes to the workplace to keep aging generations safe. Looking at work tasks and processes with the lens of aging worker safety can ease the physical burdens of the job and ensure the safety and longevity of the aging worker.



Secondary Research Findings

Injury and Illness in the Manitoba's Aging Workforce

Manitoba's population is aging rapidly in all sectors of employment due to lower birth rates, higher life expectancies, longer working careers, and baby boomers aging.

The Secondary research indicates:

- As the population is aging, an increase in injury and illness, specifically among the aging workforce, is occurring along with it. Injury and illness are also unique in each sector of employment with construction and healthcare being the sectors with the highest and most severe injury rates in Manitoba in 2019 while also employing higher percentages of workers over the age of 45.
- Although aging workers are injured less often, they are spending more time away from work when injured. Workers' Compensation Board data for Manitoba in 2019 shows:
 - 20% of all injuries occur in the 45–54 age group and 21% in the 55+ age group.
 - Together they account for over 40% of all injuries.
 - Over 45% of injuries at work are illnesses which stem from long-term exposure; thus, long-term illness prevention is an important aspect of workplace health and safety for workers of all ages.
 - The average claim duration is also highest in these age groups for all but the public administration sector.
 - Those aged over 45 account for 40% of all of Manitoba's workplace injuries. Workers aged 65+ are significantly more likely to die from diseases caused by occupational hazards.
 - Aging workers tend to spend more time away from work after an injury, though they are injured less often.
 - From 2011 to 2020, Safe Work Manitoba reported a general trend toward fewer overall injuries at work. However, despite the general trend that injuries are decreasing in the workplace, the injuries from workers aged 55 and older have increased since 2011.
 - Agriculture, healthcare and social assistance, manufacturing, and construction have the largest proportion of aging workers in Manitoba.

Prevention and Resources for an Aging Workforce

International resources for the aging workforce were found, specifically in the European Union. In Canada, there are few provincial resources available and even fewer within Manitoba.

- The main recommendations made in international reports include:
 - match the work to the ability of the worker,
 - ensure safe work is able to be practised,
 - human resources taking an age-focused approach when creating and updating company policies.
- In Canada, the main recommendations found include:
 - modifying work environments and having increased safety protocols when preventing occupational injuries and illnesses,
 - workplaces should promote healthy and active living styles which can have positive long term health effects.
- Perceptions of aging workers and ageism impacts the health of aging workers and can contribute to workers leaving the workforce and add to societal costs.



Primary Research Findings

Focus Groups and Individual interviews

A major outcome for the AMW Project is to develop an aging worker e-learning resource centre to address the gap in educational resources. Focus groups were conducted to assist in understanding the stakeholders' perspectives on the issues facing older workers and their employers. This helped define the programming and educational resources needed to address these issues.

Primary research participants were selected from major stakeholder groups. These participants were in general agreement on the issues facing all stakeholders regarding an aging workforce and the lack of resources to address these issues.

Four focus groups were held on Zoom, with a total of 30 participants. Four individual interviews were completed with people unable to attend a scheduled focus group. To see the questions used as guidelines during focus groups and interviews, see Appendix D.

This report summarizes the five broad themes related to older workers, including awareness of older workers, advantages of older workers, challenges for older workers, ageism and age discrimination, and the need for programming and resources related to the older worker.

Awareness of Older Workers

Most participants felt employers need to have a better understanding of older workers and the challenges they face, and to consider workplace accommodations when needed. They also indicated that an understanding of inter-generational issues and differences in lifestyles is important. Education and awareness of the aging process and its effects for employers was also identified as important.

Advantages of Older Workers

Focus groups identified the same advantages of older workers as were identified in the international research. Older workers were described as having a strong work ethic and were seen as loyal to the company. They had knowledge and experience about their job and company and could mentor younger employers. Some indicated that they had developed long term relationships with clients and had learned to work smarter. For aging immigrant workers, language and cultural barriers can affect their safety in the workplace.

Challenges for Older Workers

Participants viewed that technology literacy and the ongoing adaptation to new technologies remain a challenge for some older workers. Sensory deficits and health factors associated with aging can affect safety in the workplace. Older workers may delay reporting injuries due to fear of losing jobs, and existing health factors may complicate injuries and increase return to work time.

Ageism and Age Discrimination

All participants agreed that ageism can exist in the workplace. Older workers may not be hired due to age or, if hired, can be seen as taking jobs from younger people, who may be viewed as less expensive to hire. Older workers may be encouraged to retire based on age rather than ability or are bypassed for promotion because of age.

Programming and Resources

All participants agreed there is a lack of resources and a need for different types of resources to address the issues related to the aging workforce for all stakeholders. Some suggestions were indirectly related to safety and health, providing an indication of the complexity of the issue. Indirect issues included areas such as assistance with retirement planning and job search assistance for older workers.

It was agreed there is a need to create awareness and promote benefits of older workers for employers. Employers need to be aware of different generations in the workplace and recognize different learning styles and increase technology literacy where needed. Employers need good assessment tools for older workers and how different types of workplace accommodation can be made when indicated. Organizational partnerships and sharing of best practices related to the health and safety of older workers would be beneficial.

Summary Conclusions

- There is a recognition that preventing injuries among aging workers can play a significant role in promoting and maintaining a safe and healthy workplace.
- Many employers are either not aware or do not address issues specific to aging workers.
- The health effects of aging need to be better understood to prevent injuries, and these factors need to be considered to accommodate aging workers.
- Resources addressing the issues of an aging workforce have significant gaps; no participants were aware of available resources.
- Any resources developed should include information about other related areas and agencies that provide support to aging workers.

Aging Manitoba Workforce

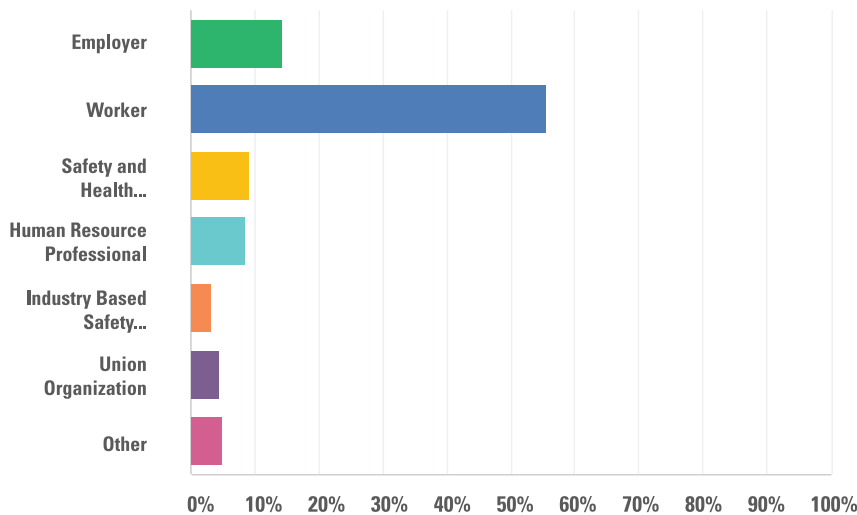
Electronic Survey Results

A total of 353 surveys were completed, representing input from the 7 identified stakeholders’ groups (Workers, Employers, Human Resource Professionals, Safety and Health Professionals, Industry Based Safety Associations, Unions, Workplace Safety and Health Representatives and Committees). To view all of the questions from the e-survey see Appendix C.

The following is a summary of survey questions.

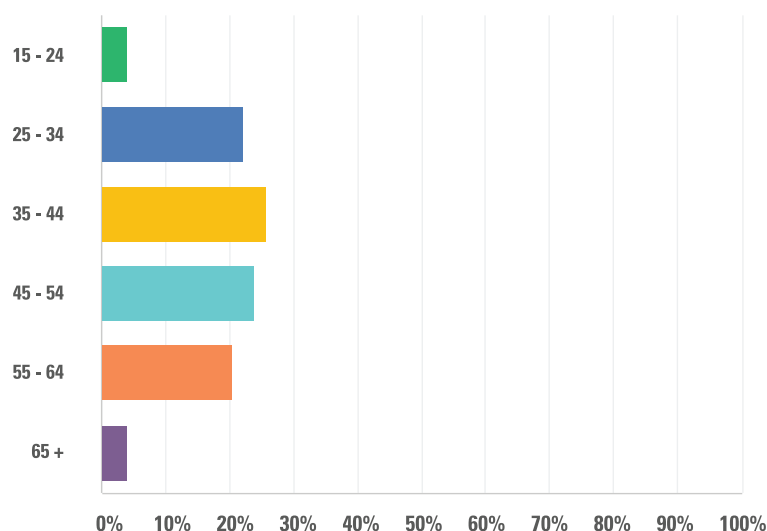
1. Survey Participants and Demographics

Q1 Please check the option that best describes you:

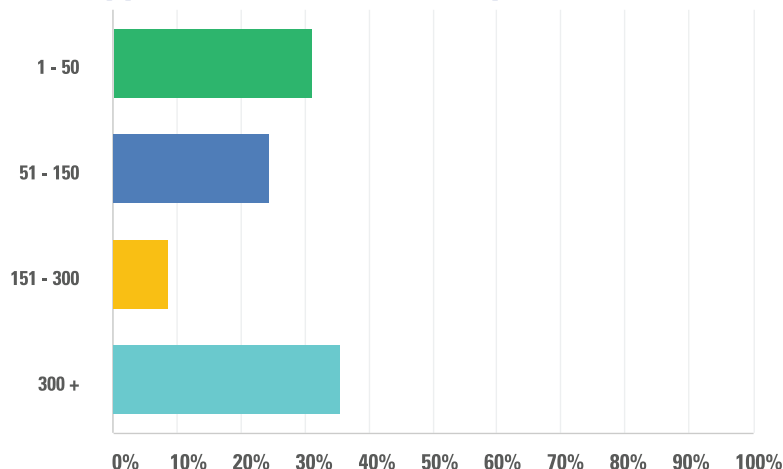


- Participants were asked to provide demographic information as well as general employer information along with their role in the workplace.
- The majority of responses came from workers at 55.68%.
- Nearly 15% of responses came from those identifying as employers and the remainder from other stakeholder groups.
- There was a balanced representation of age groups with an almost equal distribution between the age groups with the exception of those under 25 and those over 65 years where there were fewer responses.
- A balanced representation of workplaces by size was also found.
- Over two-thirds of respondents were male.
- Nearly 90% indicated their workplace has workers over the age of 45.
- A wide variety of occupations was represented in the survey.

Q4 What is your age group?



Q6 What is the approximate number of employees or members in your organization?



2. Issues Identified

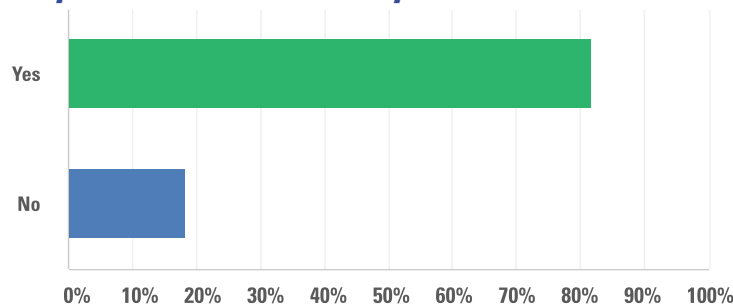
Employer Awareness

- 63% were either unsure or said their organization does not consider the age of the workforce in human resource planning. It is possible that employers do plan for aging in their workforce, but this information is not well communicated to staff.

Awareness of Issue

Prior to asking participants their views on issues facing an aging workforce, they were asked “Do you think that consideration needs to be given specifically to the health and safety needs of workers 45 years and older?” 82% said yes to this question indicating an awareness of the issue and as well, a level of support for programs and resources to address the concerns.

Q9 Do you think that consideration needs to be given specifically to the health and safety needs of workers 45 years and older?



Injuries and Illnesses

- Musculoskeletal injuries. Participants were asked specifically what injuries or illnesses they have had or observed occurring in those over 45. A wide range of answers were received but the most common was musculoskeletal injuries. These were described as strain and sprain injuries most commonly affecting the back, knee, hip and shoulders. Some were caused by acute physical injury while others are noted as chronic exposure, e.g., repetitive strain injuries from poorly designed work stations. It was noted that bodies will “begin to break down after many years of working in a physically demanding career”.
- The aging process. This by itself was indicated by a significant number of participants as contributing to increased health and safety risks for those over 45. The most common issues identified were:
 - Hearing loss
 - Vision loss
 - Loss of flexibility
 - Chronic illnesses such as diabetes and heart disease
 - Chronic conditions because of long-term workplace exposures, e.g., mesothelioma, respiratory conditions and cancers from dust and chemicals
 - Loss of strength
 - Chronic pain
 - Lower tolerance for high heat
 - Obesity, diminished fitness levels
 - Longer recovery times once injured

However, there were some comments that went against the majority - "...hazards are hazardous to everyone on the job. The older more experienced people on the job help people like myself foresee those because they have themselves seen it happen already." Others pointed out their level of fitness was excellent, and they have had no issues.

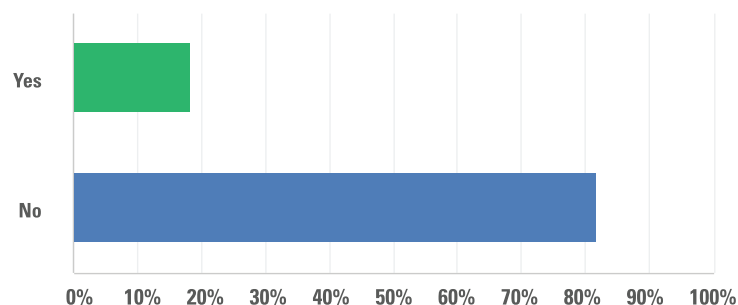
- Psychological stress. Of interest, several participants noted psychological stress as an issue. While many were not specific, some narrative indicated the following as causes:
 - difficulty with technology
 - pressure to "do more with less", causing burnout
 - working through illness and/or injuries and not reporting for fear of reprisal

3. Need for Health and Safety Resources

It was clear from the responses that participants feel there is an issue concerning safety and health and that resources to address them would be helpful.

- Over 80% felt that consideration needs to be given specifically to the health and safety needs of workers 45 years and older.
- 45% stated that they have seen health and safety hazards in their workplace that posed a higher risk specifically for aging workers.
- Over 80% are not aware of any resources addressing health and safety training materials related to aging workforce issues
- Over 90% felt such resources would be either somewhat or very helpful to their organization.

Q14 Are you aware of any aging worker health and safety resources developed that would be useful in the workplace?

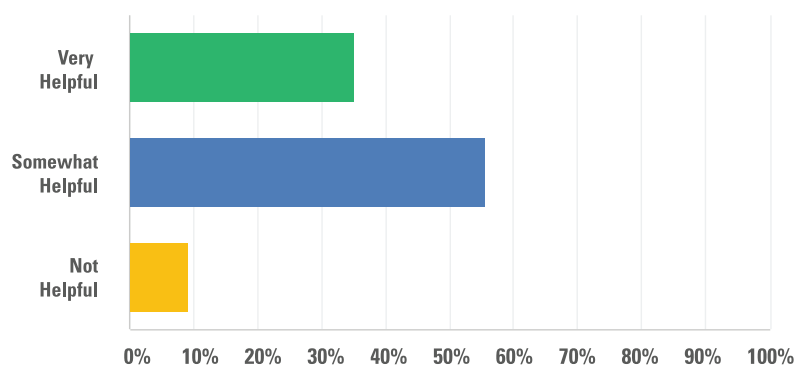


5. Conclusions

- A vast majority in a wide variety of workplaces are aware and recognize that there are health and safety and other issues facing aging workers
- There is a lack of awareness among respondents as to whether their employer plans for an aging workforce
- There is a lack of awareness of any available resources to address the issue
- There is strong support for resources to assist in addressing issues in the aging workforce
- Question 15-resources helpful

There is general overall awareness of issues facing the aging workforce. There is strong support for resources to assist in addressing these issues.

Q15 If not already available, how helpful would it be to your organization/ workplace to have online safety and health resources relating to aging workers?



Conclusions/Findings

- A vast majority of respondents from a wide variety of workplaces are aware and recognize that there are health and safety as well as other issues facing aging workers and their employers
- There is a lack of awareness among respondents as to whether or not their employer plans for an aging workforce
- There is a lack of awareness of any available resources to address the issue

There is strong support for resources to assist in addressing issues in the aging workforce. The complete survey results are attached as Appendix D.

Summary Findings and Recommendations

These findings are based on the primary and secondary research, in particular the research completed in Manitoba. An analysis of the research focused around five major themes and areas of need. The recommendations identified are not mutually exclusive and may overlap. Programming and resources developed will be further defined by the stakeholder groups represented on the Project Committee Advisory and the Resource Development Group.

The following outlines the major findings and recommendations of the Aging Manitoba Workforce Project. This report summarizes the five broad themes related to older workers, including awareness of older workers, advantages of older workers, challenges for older workers, ageism and age discrimination, and the need for programming and resources related to the older worker.

Issue: Ongoing Need to Increase Awareness and Understanding of Older Workers Health and Safety

- Finding: Many employers are either unaware or do not address issues specific to older workers health and safety. To prevent injuries and facilitate timely return to work, the health and functional effects of aging need to be better understood.
- Recommendation: Develop awareness and education materials for employers and other stakeholder groups to increase their understanding of the aging process and its effects in the workplace to accommodate older workers.

Issue: Need to Communicate the Advantages Older Workers Bring to the Workplace

- Finding: A number of advantages that older workers bring to the workplace were identified and there was strong agreement on these advantages.
- Recommendation: The development of communication strategies regarding the advantages of older workers for employers, other workers, and human resources professionals. Human resource professionals can play an important role in this area.

Issue: Challenges that Older Workers Face in the Workplace that can Affect Their Health and Safety

- Finding: Numerous challenges were identified that can affect the health and safety of older workers.
- Recommendation: Education and awareness materials need to be developed that not only identify these challenges but provide approaches to deal with them.

Issue: The existence of Ageism and Age Discrimination in Employment and the Workplace

- Finding: Based on research responses, negative perceptions and stereotyping of older workers remains a concern in many workplaces.
- Recommendation: Design and develop awareness and educational materials for employers and all employees to promote positive attitudes regarding aging and the benefits of older workers. This may include education regarding the different generations in the workplace, inter-generational issues, and differences in lifestyles.

Issue: The Need for Programming and Resources to be Developed which will Assist in Creating and Maintaining the Health and Safety of the Aging Workforce.

- Finding: A significant need to gain a better understanding of the needs and issues related to the health and safety of older workers. There is a lack of programming and educational resources related to workplace health and safety of the aging workforce.
- Recommendation: Design and develop a comprehensive sustainable e- learning program that can offer a broad range of programming and educational resources for employers, employees, and other stakeholder groups. Form a coalition of community partners, including industry-based safety providers, elder serving organizations, and other stakeholder groups to assist in sustaining the program.

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Appendix B: References

Aging Worker Issues and Trends

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- This Australian report has found that employers that take the time to support aging worker's needs are finding increasingly positive results which include increased participation, decreased absenteeism and turnover in aging workers. This report also gives recommendations to employers; which include, but are not limited to, tailoring health and safety practices, addressing discrimination, and removing disincentives.

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- This paper aids in understanding the health and safety considerations of having aging workers included in the workforce. This research is specific to those who perform physical work. Further to the health and safety considerations, Rice also considers the value that aging workers bring to the workplace.

Silverstein, M. (2008). "Meeting the challenges of an aging workforce." American Journal of Industrial Medicine, 51:4, 269–80. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/18271000/?otool=icaumlib>

- Silverstein addresses the barriers to aging workers in the workforce and how to aid in removing them. It is found that, "Employers who establish age-friendly workplaces that promote and support the work ability of employees as they age may gain in safety, productivity, competitiveness, and sustainable business practices" (Silverstein, 2008, pg. 269).

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- Statistics Canada breaks down the aging population into their sectors of employment, which enables the viewer to understand which occupations need more specified aging worker programs due to the influx of aging worker participation. This specific study compares how the population has aged from 1996 to 2016.

Institute for Work and Health (Toronto) <https://www.iwh.on.ca>

- The Institute for Work & Health (IWH) is an important Canadian reference in the area of occupational safety and health. They are an independent, not-for-profit research organization based in Toronto, Canada. Their goal is to protect and improve the health and safety of working people by providing useful, relevant research in two key areas: (1) preventing work-related injury and illness, and (2) promoting recovery and work functioning following injury and illness. Their work provides impartial, evidence-based guidance to government policy-makers, health and safety associations, workers and employers, occupational health & safety professionals, disability management professionals and clinicians. The IWH conducts research in two broad areas: primary prevention to ensure workers remain healthy and safe at work by preventing work-related injury and illness, and secondary prevention to improve the health and recovery of workers who have sustained a work- or non-work-related injury or illness that affects their ability to work.

There are a number of related articles and studies on the subject of the aging workers. A few references are noted below but this is a site that can be followed for ongoing information on a variety of topics about occupational safety and health.

<https://www.iwh.on.ca/newsletters/at-work/98/understanding-employment-patterns-among-older-workers-in-four-countries>

- A newsletter article summarizing the results of a partnership among four countries to study employment rates and factors that contributed to it.

At Work, Issue 98, Fall 2019: Institute for Work & Health, Toronto <https://www.iwh.on.ca/journal-articles/age-differences-in-return-to-work-following-injury-understanding-role-of-age-dimensions-across-longitudinal-follow-up>

- This article will require a subscription to the Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine. The goal of the study was to examine the overall association between chronological age and return-to-work (RTW), and understand if existing data could be used to better understand the role of age-related dimensions (functional, psychosocial, organizational, life-stage) in explaining these associations. They concluded that findings underscore the importance of moving beyond age measured only in chronological years, towards more complex conceptual and analytical models that recognize age as a multidimensional construct.

<https://www.iwh.on.ca/summaries/research-highlights/comparing-retirement-expectations-of-older-workers-with-and-without-chronic-conditions>

- This study set out to explore the retirement expectations of older workers with chronic conditions, and to what extent these expectations differ from those of their healthy peers. Predicting when workers expect to retire is a constant topic of interest for all those involved in workforce planning, especially when chronic disabling conditions are a factor to consider. But changes in treatment and self-management may have altered the impact of many chronic diseases on decisions about working.

National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)

- This U.S. based organization was established by the US Occupational Safety and Health Act as a research agency focused on the study of worker safety and health, and empowering employers and workers to create safe and healthy workplaces. NIOSH is part of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It has the mandate to assure “every man and woman in the Nation safe and healthful working conditions and to preserve our human resources.” NIOSH has more than 1,300 employees from a diverse set of fields including epidemiology, medicine, nursing, industrial hygiene, safety, psychology, chemistry, statistics, economics, and many branches of engineering. NIOSH is an internationally recognized organization and has contributed extensively to a wide variety of areas in the field of occupational safety and health.

Below are noted a few good examples of the attention being paid to the issue of an aging workforce but there are others that may be of interest.

- <https://agefriendlyworkplace.squarespace.com/>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/productiveaging/ncpaw.html>
- <https://agefriendlyworkplace.squarespace.com/overview-video>



Injury Types and Severity

Safe Work Manitoba. (2020). "The Manitoba workplace injury and illness statistics report 2010- 2019." https://www.safemanitoba.com/Page%20Related%20Documents/resources/ManitobaWorkplaceInjuryIllnessStatisticsReport_2010-2019.pdf

- This report gives detailed statistical information which breaks down the injury and illness reports that the Workers' Compensation Board has given. Not only is this report broken down by gender and workforce sector, but this report also gives information about the age breakdown of these WCB injury and illness claims. This type of information is crucial in understanding how to prevent injuries and illnesses in the workplace.

Smith, P. (2021). "Examining determinants and consequences of work-injuries among older workers." Work Safe B.C. <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/about-us/research/examining-determinants-and-sequences-of-work-injuries-among-older-workers?lang=en>

- This Work Safe report describes injury trends among aging workers in B.C. and Canada and compares the costs of these injuries to those who are younger and get injured at work. The researchers found that there was no increase in risk of injury with greater aging worker participation. Rather, it found that chronic conditions, such as osteoarthritis and diabetes, are contributing factors to increased workplace injury.

Smith, M., Sean M., Pegula, S. (2020). "Fatal occupational injuries to older workers: Monthly labor review." U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26872767>

- To understand international data, this report breaks down US injury data and examines that aging workers are more likely to be fatally injured compared to overall workers, but aging workers are not more likely to be injured.

Best Practices

Belin, A., Dupont C., Oulès, L., & Kuipers, Y. (2016). "Safer and healthier work at any age: Final overall analysis report." European Agency for Safety and Health at Work. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. <https://osha.europa.eu/en/publications/safer-and-healthier-work-any-age-final-overall-analysis-report>

- This report analyzes the challenges that an aging workforce approaches. With the focus on safety and health at work, this report poses best practices that will improve the safety and health of an aging workforce. Policy development and best workplace practices are the centre of this work, and it is a crucial document to reference due to the scope and nature of this report.

Crawford, J. O., Davis, A., Cowie, H., & Dixon, K. (2016). "The ageing workforce: implications for occupational safety and health: A research review" European Agency for Safety and Health at Work. <https://osha.europa.eu/en/publications/ageing-workforce-implications-occupational-safety-and-health-research-review>

- This review is to address the health and safety of aging workers in the workforce and outlines occupational health and safety measures that are necessary for stakeholders in the workforce.

Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs. (2014). "Working better with age Switzerland: Assessment and main recommendations." OECD. https://www-oecd-org.uml.idm.oclc.org/els/emp/AR_SWITZERLAND.pdf

- Switzerland's approach to keeping aging workers in the workforce is one to be aspired to. They have one of the highest employment rates for aging workers in the OECD (which involves 38 countries, including Canada). This report outlines how to keep aging workers in the workforce longer, which include incentives (including comprehensive coverage and back to work programs), removing barriers to employment and retainment (such as unsafe working conditions), and enhancing employability.

Government of Alberta. ND. Resources on Alis for mature workers. <https://alis.alberta.ca/media/3004/resources-for-mature-workers-2019.pdf>

- This Albertan fact sheet has condensed resources for Albertan aging workers to find their resources. Projects like these aid aging workers in finding the workforce accessible to their working.

Government of Alberta. (2020). "Engaging the mature worker: An action plan for Alberta." <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/51a9c057-9430-4c39-af52-e8259a954d08/resource/06aa1fbe-25c5-420a-a85d-11fc-3c9c8f7d/download/5353389-2011-engaging-the-mature-worker-an-action-plan-for-alberta.pdf>

- This action plan sets out how Alberta plans to engage employers and aging workers in ensuring the labour force is supported as the population ages toward retirement. This plan promotes active aging and sets out policies which aid in supporting aging workers.

Return to Work

Belin, A., Dupont, A., Oulès, L., Kuipers, Y., & Fries-Tersch, Y. (2016). "Rehabilitation and return to work: Analysis report on EU and Member States policies, strategies and programmes." European Agency for Safety and Health at Work. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. <https://osha.europa.eu/en/publications/rehabilitation-and-return-work-analysis-report-eu-and-member-states-policies-strategi-0>

- This report analyzes how the workforce approaches returning to work after an occupational injury. Not only does it cover rehabilitation and return to work strategies, but it also outlines prevention of workplace health and safety issues. This European standard is one which can be useful in optimizing Manitoba's health and safety approach to aging workers.

Workers Compensation Board. (2021). "Return to work." <https://www.wcb.mb.ca/return-to-work>

- This resource outlines best practices for returning to work after an injury. Further to this, it provides information about what the role of the employer is for when an injured employee returns to work.

Educational Resources

Government of Canada, Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety. (2021). "Aging workers: OSH Answers." <https://www.ccohs-ca.uml.idm.oclc.org/topics/workers/aging/>

- The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety has many programs that are available for enrolment. One can engage in e-learning and learn about specific illnesses which are common within aging working populations, such as musculoskeletal disorders.

OECD. (2020). "Promoting an age-inclusive workforce: Living, learning and earning longer." OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi-org.uml.idm.oclc.org/10.1787/59752153-en>.

- This report outlines how to keep aging workers in the workforce longer, including how to exclude ageism out of the workplace. Specifically, it opens up dialogue about workplace policy which can aid in keeping aging workers working safely longer.

University of Manitoba: Centre on Ageing. (2011). "Profile of Manitoba seniors 2010." <http://digitalcollection.gov.mb.ca/awweb/pdfopener?smd=1&did=21552&md=1>

- The University of Manitoba's Centre on Aging is a key resource when understanding the demographic of Manitoba's workforce. This is a detailed profile of Manitoba's aging population. Not only does it outline the demographic information, but also other important aspects of all things concerning the aging workforce including health status, Indigenous seniors, and financial well-being.

Ageism

Government of Canada. (2021). "Older workers: Exploring and addressing the stereotypes." <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/seniors/forum/reports/older-worker-exploring-addressing-stereotypes.html>

- This Government of Canada resource aids in understanding the stereotypes that are prevalent about aging workers and how to address such stereotypes in the workplace.

World Health Organization. (2021). "Ageism is a global challenge: UN: Ageism leads to poorer health, social isolation, earlier deaths and cost economies billions: report calls for swift action to implement effective anti-ageism strategies." <https://www.who.int/news/item/18-03-2021-ageism-is-a-global-challenge-un>

- The World Health Organization outlines just how damaging ageism can be. It not only excludes aging people and workers from their choice of life but leads to poorer health and earlier deaths. This report outlines resources that aid in combatting ageism globally.

Appendix C: Survey Questions

Aging Manitoba Workforce Survey

This survey is being conducted by Manitoba Building Trades as part of a WCB-funded project on workplace health and safety in Manitoba's aging workforce. The purpose of the survey is to collect information which will help develop educational health and safety resources.

For this survey, older workers are defined as 45+.

The survey has 17 questions and should take approximately 5 minutes to complete.

At the end of the survey, you have the option to enter your email to win a \$250 cash prize.

1. Please check the option that best describes you:

- ☐ Employer ☐ Worker ☐ Safety and Health Practitioner
☐ Human Resource Professional ☐ Industry Based Safety Association
☐ Union organization ☐ Other

2. What is your job title? _____

3. Are you a member of a safety and health committee or a worker representative for safety and health in your workplace? _____

4. What is your age group?

- ☐ 15-24 ☐ 25-34 ☐ 35-44 ☐ 45-54 ☐ 55-64 ☐ 65+

5. What is your gender?

- ☐ Female ☐ Male ☐ Non-binary ☐ Choose not to specify

6. What is the approximate number of employees or members in your organization?

Employees

- ☐ 1-50 ☐ 51-150 ☐ 151-300 ☐ 300+

Members

- ☐ 1-50 ☐ 51-150 ☐ 151-300 ☐ 300+

7. Does your organization have any workers that are 45 years or older?

☐ No ☐ Not sure ☐ Yes _____

If yes:

Approximately how many? _____

What % of your workforce? _____

8. Does your organization consider the age of the workforce in human resource planning?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

9. Do you think that consideration needs to be given specifically to the health and safety needs of workers 45 years and older?

☐ Yes ☐ No

10. Have you seen health and safety hazards in your workplace that pose a higher risk specifically for aging workers

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what are they? _____

11. What injuries or illnesses have you seen or experienced among workers aged 45 and older? Please tell us as many as you think of.

12. Do you know of any organization that has health and safety training materials related to aging workforce issues?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, are the materials:

☐ Offline ☐ Online ☐ Offline and online

13. Are you aware of any aging worker health and safety resources developed that would be useful in the workplace?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please describe: _____

14. If not already available, how helpful would it be to your organization/workplace to have online safety and health resources relating to aging workers?

☐ Very Helpful ☐ Somewhat Helpful ☐ Not Helpful

15. Ageism is stereotyping and/or discrimination against individuals or groups on the basis of their age.

Have you seen or experienced ageism in your current or previous workplaces?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please describe: _____

16. Do you think there is a generally an awareness of ageism in your workplace?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

17. Do you think educational resources related to the health and safety of aging workers should include material related to recognizing and preventing ageism in the workplace?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Appendix D: Focus Group Questions

Guideline Questions for Focus Groups October, 2021

Introduction and description of process to members

Participants to briefly introduce themselves

Aging Workers and Health and Safety

1. Does your workplace track and consider the age of your workforce?
(Workers - do you think your employer considers the age of its workers?)
 - a. Is your workforce aging?
 - b. Is or will worker retention be an issue for your company?
2. What advantages have you observed with having older workers?
3. What issues have you observed with having an aging workforce?
4. Is there a need for employers to better understand issues facing aging workers? e.g., background or thinking styles of the older worker? a. Would a better understanding of this contribute to a safer work site? Would this enable you to retain older workers?
5. Are you aware of any unique challenges that aging workers face as it relates to safety and health?
 - And if so, please tell us what you think those are.
6. Are you aware of any unique challenges or barriers related to aging workers receiving the health and safety training they require?
 - If so, what are they?
7. Is there a need for employers and other stakeholders to better understand aging workers and the challenges they may face?
 - Is there a need for employers to better understand how the aging process can impact the health and safety of aging workers?
 - Do you think a better understanding of this can contribute to a safer work site?
8. What are current processes in place in workplaces for workers to raise concerns regarding their capability to do certain tasks?

Ageism

Ageism refers to discriminatory actions based on age. i.e., reluctance to hire aging workers simply because of age or treatment of older workers differently than other workers. Negative perceptions of aging workers abilities for example.

9. Have you observed ageism in a workplace that could impact of health and safety?
 - If so, can you describe.
10. Are you aware of any resources that create awareness and understanding of ageism?
11. Are you aware of any developed resources that seek to address issues of ageism in relation to workplace health and safety?
12. If not, what type of resources do you feel would be helpful and for whom?
(Employer, Aging Workers, Workers younger than 45)
13. What approaches/resources do you feel would help to combat ageism in the workplace?

Aging Worker Resource Centre

14. Do you think that an e- learning centre can help contribute to keeping aging workers healthy and safe?
15. How do older workers want to be approached in cases of heavy and or potentially hazardous work?
16. Are there practicable tools or support equipment that could be supplied at workplaces according to older workers (or being done by employers)?
17. Do you have any specific thoughts about what an e-source centre could contain?
18. Are you aware of any health and safety materials or programs in Manitoba designed for aging workers?
19. Do you know of any organization that has any health and safety training materials for aging workers?
 - If yes:
 - Where are they found?
 - Are the materials online or offline?
20. Are you aware of any aging workers resources developed for employers?
21. What do you think are some ways to create awareness and promote the use of the Aging Worker Learning Centre?

Other

Is there anything else you would like to discuss that you feel is relevant to this discussion?