

Prairie Manufacturer™

Magazine

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Trust but verify

Credential fraud and exaggeration are becoming increasingly more common. While high-profile cases often involve other sectors, manufacturing is affected more often than many leaders realize. So, what can employers do to protect their people, operations, and reputation?

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Raise a glass to safety, safely

Despite its long-standing place in society, alcohol significantly contributes to preventable injury, illness, and death. While modest alcohol consumption can coexist with healthy living, it comes with significant overuse and misuse, endangering and harming individuals and communities. Fortunately, most of this harm is preventable.

Manufacturing is like a box of chocolates...

You never know what you're gonna get. From tariffs and trade uncertainty to workforce and supply chain disruptions, there is seemingly no end to the variety of challenges you're facing.

This issue of *Prairie Manufacturer Magazine*, however, is less about navigating the surprises and is more about savouring the moment. Manufacturers in this part of the country are truly special — a tight-knit community of world-class innovators that embrace change, push boundaries, and bring bold ideas to reality. So, as you flip through these pages, remember that each day — each bite — is an opportunity for something amazing. Yes, there are obstacles to overcome, but you are built for exactly this.

Take that risk. Keep pushing forward.
Growth never came from standing still.



Ronda Landygo
Publisher

As the odometer turns

Looking back in the rearview, pressing forward on the gas

By Jeff Baker

There's a particular kind of energy that comes with standing on the edge of a transition. You know the feeling—when the odometer in your vehicle is about to roll over, and you find yourself watching the numbers as if something special might happen, or when you crack open that box of holiday chocolates (produced by a Prairie manufacturer, of course!) and dive head-first into the various shapes and colours, never quite sure what's hiding inside each sweet treat.

That's the feeling we've been carrying lately: a sense that *Prairie Manufacturer* is approaching a new marker. Truth be told, it is—we're nearing the proverbial roll-over of our own 'anniversary' odometer from single to double digits!

If there's one thing that the last decade of *Prairie Manufacturer* has taught us, it's that manufacturing on the Prairies is built on people as much as processes. It's shaped by relationships, shared wins, tough lessons, and a resilient optimism that seems to run through everyone who builds and creates in this special part of Canada.

And it is impossible to reflect on our journey without acknowledging the many hands that have helped shape this magazine. This is a great moment to pause, look around, and appreciate the ground we have covered together.

When *Prairie Manufacturer* launched, we knew the stories were out there—stories of ingenuity, grit, determination, leadership, and adaptation. What we did not know was just how strongly the Prairie manufacturing community would embrace the idea of a publication dedicated to their successes and challenges. Readers didn't just show up—they engaged, questioned, advised, and encouraged. Contributors didn't just

write—they offered expertise, insights, and perspectives that broadened our understanding of the sector.

Every issue has been an intricate mosaic of the work of writers, photographers, designers, editors, association partners, and the manufacturers themselves. We're constantly grateful for the business owners and managers who walk us through their facilities and pull back the curtain on their operations, and the front-line workers who show us what pride in craftsmanship truly looks like. We are inspired by the innovators who push boundaries to shape what Prairie manufacturing will become. Our advertisers continue to believe in this platform and their commitment makes *Prairie Manufacturer* possible.

Behind the scenes, countless people make each issue possible—those who refine the words, balance the budgets, sell the ad space, co-ordinate the schedules, and bring the visuals to life. Their work rarely gets a spotlight, but it's essential to every story we publish.

Reflecting on our journey so far also means thinking about momentum. Prairie manufacturing has never been static. The industry continues to evolve and diversify—from long-established strengths in agriculture and energy equipment to emerging growth in advanced manufacturing, clean technologies, and food processing. We've watched companies adapt to global pressures, invest in new capabilities, build strong cultures, and prepare the next generation of skilled workers.

This magazine has grown alongside that evolution. While we've never claimed to be at the centre of it, we have been fortunate to meet and learn from the people who are. That's part of what fuels our excitement today—the sense that the story of Prairie manufacturing is far from finished, and

Prairie Manufacturer still has a path ahead to forge, with all sorts of new and inspiring stories to tell.

Transitions invite us to appreciate where we've been while staying focused on what comes next. They ask us to pause long enough to recognize the people and moments that made the journey meaningful. And they remind us that momentum is only possible because of the effort invested along the way.

So, as we look toward the roll of the odometer here at *Prairie Manufacturer*, gratitude is the prevailing feeling. Gratitude for our readers, who continue to show up issue after issue. Gratitude for our advertisers and partners, who invest not just in us but in the broader mission of strengthening the manufacturing industry across the Prairies. Gratitude for the manufacturers who open their doors and trust us with their stories. And gratitude for everyone—contributors, advisors, experts, and supporters—who has offered their time, insight, or encouragement.

Prairie Manufacturer exists because so many people believed in the value of telling Prairie stories. It continues because there are more stories that need telling.

The commitment moving forward remains simple: to reflect the strength, creativity, and determination of Prairie manufacturers with honesty and pride. To celebrate the people who make this sector exceptional. And to keep evolving, just as the industry does.

Transitions provide a sort of clarity. They're about recognizing the road behind while leaning into the one ahead. And they're about that spark of excitement—the kind you feel when the numbers on the odometer roll over or when you are making a selection from that glorious box of chocolates.

So, as *Prairie Manufacturer* prepares to leave the heady days of its youth behind and enter the double-digit club, we offer you a heartfelt Thank You for being part of this journey.

Until we chat again, we hope you enjoy the read. ↵

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Psychological safety:

The hidden driver of productivity

By Prairie Manufacturer staff

Manufacturing has never been for the faint of heart. It's an industry built on precision, grit, and the constant pressure to deliver. Whether you're running a welding shop in Saskatoon, managing a machining line in Winnipeg, or operating a food-processing facility in Lethbridge, you know that productivity, safety, and retention can make or break your year.

But there's an often-overlooked factor that quietly influences all three: psychological safety.

The term can sound abstract—something better suited to a corporate HR seminar than a welding bay or an assembly line. Yet the data is clear: psychologically safe workplaces have fewer safety incidents, higher productivity, stronger teamwork, and lower turnover. For manufacturers battling labour shortages, training demands, and competitive pressures, psychological safety isn't a soft skill—it's a competitive advantage.

Developing psychological safety begins with a simple principle: people watch what leaders do more than what they say.

What psychological safety means

At its core, psychological safety is the shared belief that people can speak up—about hazards, mistakes, questions, or ideas—without fear of being punished, embarrassed, or ignored.

It means a welder can call out a near miss without worrying they will be blamed. A new worker can ask for clarification without feeling foolish. A machine operator can raise a process concern even if it challenges “how we've always done it.”

In manufacturing environments where the smallest oversight can cause injury, downtime, or quality issues, this matters enormously. If people hesitate to speak up, problems multiply in silence.

Why pay attention now?

Across the Prairies, manufacturers face several intersecting pressures:

- A tightening labour market. Labour shortages mean many facilities rely on newer workers who require more coaching and support. If they don't feel comfortable asking questions, the risks rise.
- Increasing automation and process complexity. When the work becomes more technical, the cost of miscommunication grows.
- Demand for faster turnaround times. Stress and speed amplify the likelihood of mistakes—and the need for workers to surface concerns early.
- A changing workforce. Younger employees expect workplaces where their voice matters and where leaders communicate openly.

In this environment, psychological safety isn't a “nice to have;” it's foundational.

Safety starts with speaking up

Physical safety and psychological safety are deeply intertwined. In fact, many serious incidents trace back not only to mechanical or procedural failures, but to moments when someone noticed something concerning—and said nothing.

Consider the following scenarios, which most plant managers have seen firsthand:

- A forklift operator notices a colleague working too close to a blind corner but assumes “they'll be fine.”
- A production worker sees a machine behaving oddly but waits for the next shift to deal with it.
- A temporary worker feels rushed and confused but doesn't want to slow down the team.
- A maintenance technician spots an outdated lockout practice but doesn't want to challenge a veteran colleague.

A psychologically safe culture flips these moments. It empowers workers to make the safer choice—the choice to speak.

The manager's role: using influence intentionally

Workplace leadership isn't limited to those with titles. Lead hands, senior operators, and anyone who gives direction to others will hold influence. But for business owners and formal managers, the stakes are even higher: their behaviour sets the tone.

Developing psychological safety begins with a simple principle: people watch what leaders do more than what they say. Employees decide whether it is safe to speak up based on the reactions they've seen before.

Model behaviours you want to see

Respond to concerns with curiosity, not defensiveness. When someone reports a near miss or points out a process gap, the instinct may be to correct, explain, or downplay. But the first response matters most. A curious response (e.g., “Tell me more,” “How did that happen?”, “Good catch—let's take a look”) signals that raising concerns is valued, not punished.

Admit mistakes and share learning openly. When leaders acknowledge their own misjudgments or oversights, it normalizes imperfection. On a shop floor, this can be disarming. It shows that the goal isn't blame—it's improvement.

Ask questions that invite honest input. Open-ended questions such as “What obstacles are slowing us down?” or “If you could change one thing about this process, what would it be?” help unlock insights from those closest to the work.

Reinforce early reporting, even when issues seem small. Celebrating proactive reporting—even when it turns out to be a non-issue—builds the habit. Over time, workers stop weighing whether something is “worth mentioning” and simply share it.

Overcoming common barriers

Despite best intentions, several obstacles can undermine psychological safety:

- Production pressure. When “getting the job done” becomes the only message, workers assume raising concerns will slow things down.

- High turnover and temporary labour. New workers may not feel secure enough to speak, especially if English is not their first language.
- Hierarchical structures. Many shops have long-standing traditions and respectfully defer to senior workers, which can discourage newer staff from challenging norms.

Leaders can counter these barriers by embedding psychological safety into existing routines: daily huddles, toolbox talks, shift changeovers, and corrective-action reviews. These moments already exist; they simply need to be used intentionally.

The business case: productivity, quality, and retention


Manufacturers with psychologically safe cultures report higher quality output (because workers surface issues before they escalate), lower incident rates (as hazards are identified earlier and reported more consistently), better employee retention (particularly among younger and newcomer workers who value supportive environments), and stronger continuous improvement (because ideas aren't trapped behind silence or fear).

In an industry where competitiveness depends on both efficiency and people, these gains are meaningful.

Building a future-ready workplace

Prairie manufacturers are no strangers to adaptation—automation, new technologies, supply-chain disruptions, and shifting customer demands have reshaped the sector over the last decade. The next frontier isn't just equipment upgrades or process optimization. It's cultivating workplaces where people feel confident, respected, and safe to speak.

Psychological safety transforms culture one conversation at a time. For leaders, the investment is small—an extra moment of curiosity, a commitment to openness, and the humility to listen. But the payoff is major: safer shops, stronger teams, and businesses equipped for long-term success.

In your manufacturing business, psychological safety may be the most practical, high-impact tool you're not yet using. Now is the time to change that. 

For information, tools, and resources, visit the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health & Safety at www.ccohs.ca.

Trump's tariffs begin to bite...

...but that's not all

By Jayson Myers

The Trump administration's tariffs are taking a chunk out of manufacturers' exports, sales, and new orders across the Prairies, and right across Canada this year. But the news is not all bad. Tariff impacts on exports to the United States are being offset by the growth of exports to other countries as well as by a pick-up in domestic sales. What is more concerning is the longer-term deterioration in manufacturing sales performance that has occurred since 2022, suggesting that much bigger and significant challenges than US tariffs lie ahead for both Prairie and Canadian manufacturers.

Sales declining across Canada

The value of goods sold by Canadian manufacturers between January and August* this year dropped to \$562.3 billion, down 1.0 per cent from \$567.8 billion during the same period in 2024. After taking price changes into account, manufacturers' sales calculated in 2017 dollars are down 3.3 per cent from a year ago. New orders have also declined in 2025, by 0.2 per cent in current dollar

terms and by 1.7 per cent in 2017 dollars when compared to the first eight months of last year.

** Note to reader: August is the last month for which statistics were available when this column was written in early November.*

While these are significant losses, they are surprisingly small. Two factors explain that. First off, many of Canada's manufactured exports to the United States still enter that country tariff-free under the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA). But, more importantly, a decline in exports to the US is being offset by an increase in sales to other customers in Canada and abroad.

Canada exported \$213.9 billion in manufactured goods to the United States between January and July 2025 (again the last month for which statistics are available). That is a decline of \$7.9 billion or 3.5 per cent from the same period last year. On the other hand, sales within Canada are up 1.0 per cent while export sales to countries other than the United States are 6.4 per cent higher than

in 2024. The most dramatic increase in sales has been to Germany where Canadian manufactured exports have shot up by more than 35 per cent over the past year.

What is of far greater concern for Canada's manufacturing sector is that the decline in sales in 2025 is only part of a deterioration is sales performance that has taken place since 2022. Sales jumped 18.6 per cent in both 2021 and 2022 in the aftermath of COVID. They rose by a meagre 0.6 per cent in 2023 and fell by 1.7 per cent last year. This year's decline is actually smaller than that recorded in 2024.

Slight sales dip in Manitoba

Market diversification has been an important factor for Manitoba manufacturers in compensating for their loss of exports to the United States. Overall sales are down by only 0.8 per cent to \$18 billion for the first eight months of 2025 despite a 9.8 per cent decline in exports to the United States. In contrast, exports to other countries have grown by 9.0 per cent led by double-

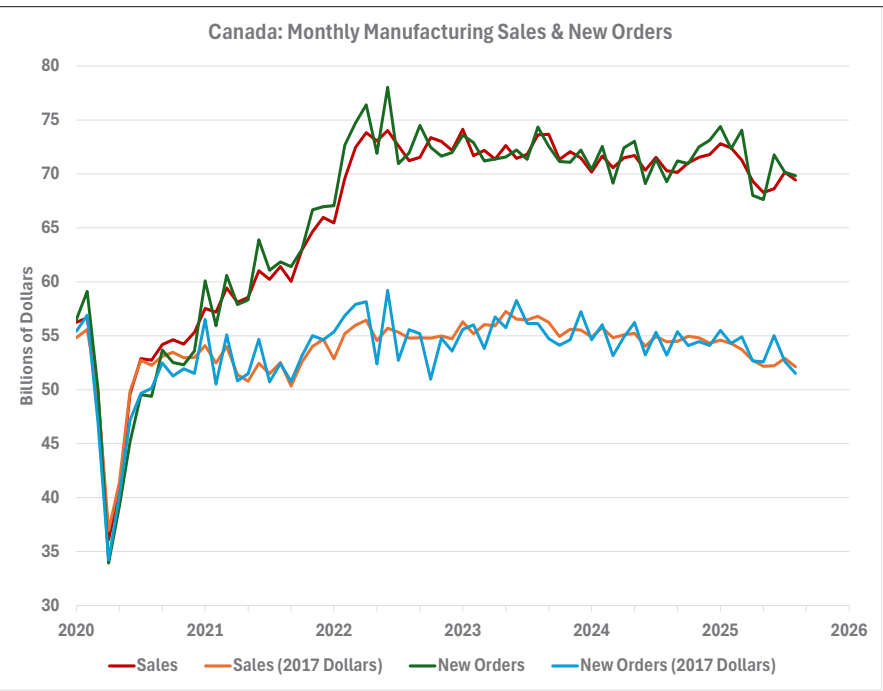
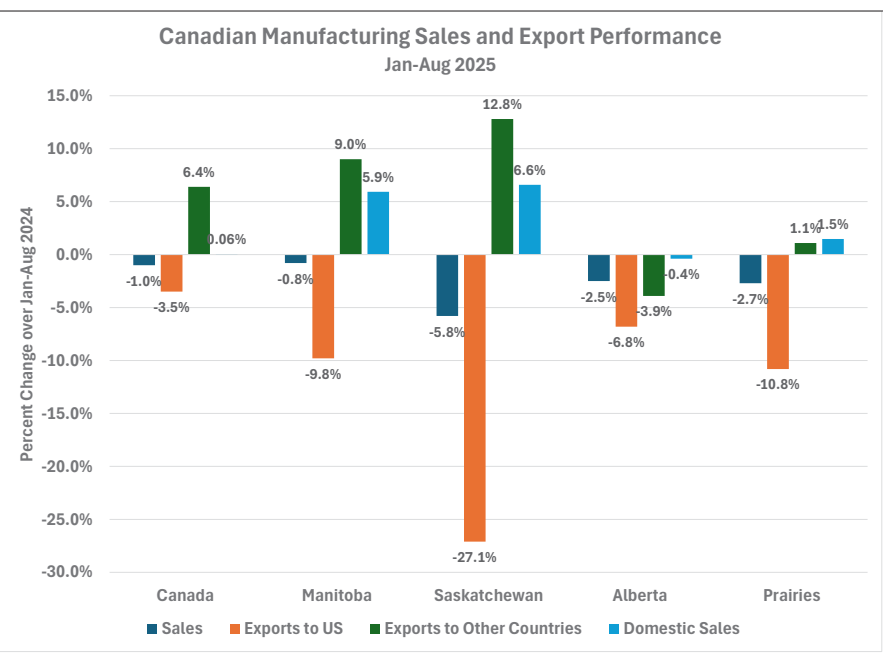
digit export growth to Mexico, Taiwan, Singapore, Spain, and Japan. Sales within Canada have also increased significantly this year, by more than 5.9 per cent on a year-over-year basis.

However, a similarly worrying long-term trend is apparent for Manitoba manufacturers as for the sector across the country. Following robust growth of 14.5 per cent in 2021 and 19.1 per cent in 2022, sales growth decelerated to 4.9 per cent in 2023 and only 1.0 per cent in 2024 before dipping into negative territory this year.

Other markets unable to offset decline in Saskatchewan

While Saskatchewan manufacturers are actively diversifying their markets as well, they have been unable to keep up with the loss of demand south of the border. Overall sales of manufactured goods amounted to \$14 billion over the period from January to August this year, a 5.8 per cent decline from 2024.

The positive news for Saskatchewan manufacturers is that domestic sales have increased by 6.6 per cent in 2025. And export sales to other countries have jumped by a full 12.8 per cent, with double digit growth recorded in exports to the United Kingdom, Indonesia, Mexico, South Korea, and Peru. However, while exports to the United States represented only 39 per cent of manufacturing output in Saskatchewan in 2024—a relatively low level of dependence compared with other parts of Canada—the growth of demand in other markets has not been able to compensate for a 27.1 per cent decline in sales south of the border.

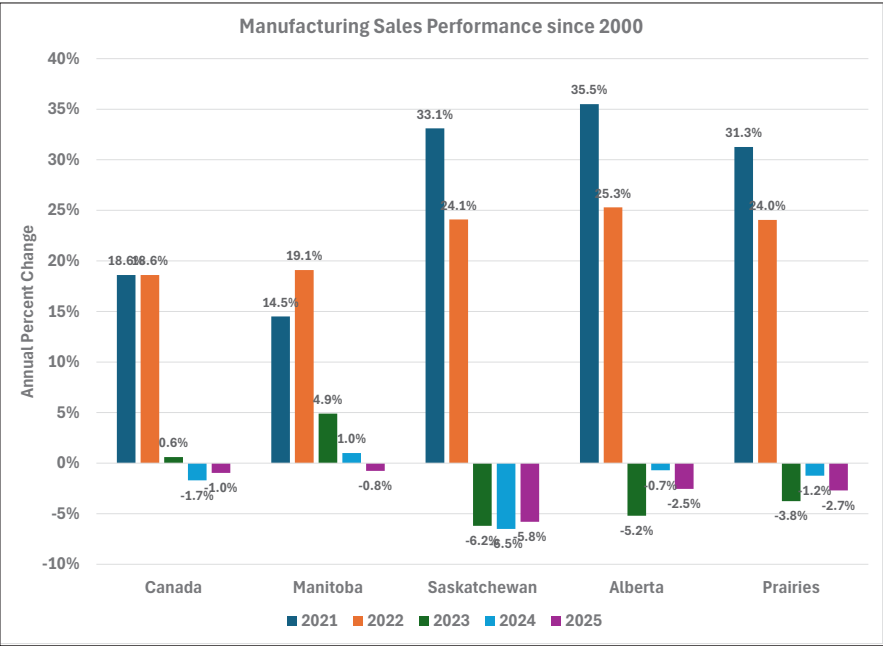


Saskatchewan is particularly vulnerable to US tariffs imposed on imports of steel and steel products.

The longer-term deterioration in manufacturing sales performance is again evident in Saskatchewan. Manufacturing sales jumped by 33.1 per cent in 2021 and again by 24.1 per cent in 2022. But sales dropped by 6.2 per cent in 2023 and by another 6.5 per cent in 2024. This year's decline has actually not been as bad as that recorded in the previous two years!

Sales down across for board in Alberta

Alberta manufacturers are recording lower sales in both domestic and export markets. Their total sales dropped by 2.5 per cent over the past year to \$67 billion for the period from January to August. A 6.8 per cent decline in exports to the United States accounts for most of that loss. However, domestic sales are also down by about 0.4 per cent, and,



The loss in manufacturing sales since 2022 cannot be attributed only to US tariffs. It is also closely tied to a downturn in the rate of manufacturing investment in Canada over that same period.

despite strong export growth to South Korea, Panama, UAE, Netherlands, and Australia, the overall value of sales to other countries apart from the USA has fallen by 3.9 per cent.

Alberta is also experiencing a pronounced deterioration in manufacturing sales performance. Sales zoomed up by a full 35.5 per cent in 2021 and by another 25.3 per cent in 2022. But they fell by 5.2 per cent in 2023 and by another 0.7 per cent last year. This year's decline compounds a three-year loss.

Prairie trends reflect broader challenges

Alberta accounts for approximately two-thirds of prairie manufacturing sales, Manitoba for another 18 per cent and Saskatchewan for 14 per cent of the total. So, the story for Prairie manufacturing, as a whole, in 2025 reflects a more serious situation when it comes to market diversification than is the case in either Manitoba or Saskatchewan, or in fact across Canada.

Prairie manufacturing has been hit harder by the Trump administration's tariffs than the rest of Canada. Across the Prairies, manufacturing sales are down by 2.7 per cent this year. Exports to the United States have fallen by 10.8 per cent. Meanwhile, sales to other export markets are 1.1 per cent higher, and domestic sales are up by 1.5 per cent.

The Prairies have also seen a more pronounced deterioration in manufacturing sales over the past three years than the rest of the country.

Based on results from the first eight months of this year, the overall value of manufacturing sales across the Prairies is likely to be 7.5 per cent lower in 2025 than in 2022. That contrasts with a 2.1 per cent decline in overall manufacturing sales for Canada over the past three years.

The loss in manufacturing sales since 2022 cannot be attributed only to US tariffs. It is also closely tied to a downturn in the rate of manufacturing investment in Canada over that same period. It's a strong and very worrying indicator of a deterioration in the competitiveness of Canadian and Prairie manufacturers, and of Canada as a location for companies to locate, invest, and grow. f

Jayson Myers is CEO of Next Generation Manufacturing Canada – the country's Global Innovation Cluster for advanced manufacturing. An award-winning business economist and leading authority on technological change, Myers has counselled Canadian prime ministers and premiers, as well as senior corporate executives and policymakers around the world.

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Top three “easy” safety mistakes

By Jamie Alyce Jurczak

Many employers do not realize that there are a lot of simple things that they can do—or fail to do—that make it difficult to prove due diligence when an accident happens. Many of these items are easy to fix, but failing to understand them can impact the ability to demonstrate the employer understands its safety obligations.

1 Confusing the Workplace Safety and Health Division with the Workers Compensation Board

The Workplace Safety and Health Division (WSH) and the Workers Compensation Board (WCB) are two completely different entities. The WCB provides workplace injury and disability insurance for both workers and employers, largely providing compensation and rehabilitation benefits to employees who have been injured at work. WSH is the regulator responsible for enforcing safety and health rules under the Workplace Safety and Health Act (“WSHA”). It is WSH that investigates accidents and makes decisions with respect to enforcement, including prosecutions.

Many employers have a misunderstanding that they are the same thing, and as a result, fail to follow the rules with respect to both. Confusing the two, particularly with respect to reporting accidents, can lead to significant problems.

For example, I have had many clients think that they reported an accident appropriately by reporting it to the WCB, only to find themselves faced with charges for failing to report an incident under the WSHA. This is because they did not report the accident to the WSH Division in accordance with the WSHA regulations.

Note that under new legislative amendments that came into force in June 2025, a failure to report a serious incident can result in administrative fines and penalties up to \$5,000, and there is always the potential for prosecution for failure to report in serious circumstances.

2 Failing to investigate work refusals in accordance with the process set out in the legislation

When an employee exercises their right to refuse dangerous work, there is a specific process set out in Section 43(1) of the WSHA that directs how the employer addresses this. Many employers do not realize that is the

case, and fail to follow this process, only to find themselves facing administrative penalties or allegations of reprisal, simply because they did not follow all the required steps in the process.

Where a worker has exercised their right to refuse dangerous work, an investigation must take place to determine a resolution between the worker and the employer. If the employer and the worker(s) are unable to agree on a resolution, and the worker is not satisfied that an employer has taken necessary steps to remedy the dangerous condition, WSH is to be contacted to investigate to determine the issue.

If it is determined there is a danger, the employer may be issued orders to correct the issue. If WSH determines there is no danger, they will explain their determination to the worker and advise that the right to refuse exercised for the job task or situation is no longer valid. If the worker continues to refuse at that time, then and only then, would it be appropriate to consider any form of discipline.

While these determinations are being made, other obligations arise under the legislation, including advising other workers who are assigned to work that there was a refusal, and how workers exercising the refusal are to be paid or otherwise reassigned to other work.

Note that under the June 2025 amendments to WSHA, “dangerous work” is confirmed to be work involving an imminent risk of serious physical or health injury where reasonable controls have not been put in place.

3 Assuming the workplace safety legislation is the same everywhere

The workplace safety and health legislation differs from province to province, across the territories, and in the federal sector. Countless times, employers have approached me with a policy or procedure that was developed in another province, assuming that it is appropriate for Manitoba, only to learn that it is missing certain items that are required under Manitoba law. Having a policy or procedure that is missing critical items as set out in WSHA may result in an inability to prove due diligence when the regulator is examining whether or not the appropriate safe work procedure was in place to prevent an accident.

The workplace safety and health legislation differs from province to province, across the territories, and in the federal sector.

Where a worker has exercised their right to refuse dangerous work, an investigation must take place to determine a resolution between the worker and the employer.

Assuming the law is the same can lead to other critical mistakes being made. For example, in the federal sector under the *Canada Labour Code Part II*, certain “hazardous occurrences”—which include certain accidents or serious incident—are to be reported within 24 hours, while others may be reported within 72 hours, and others within 14 days. However, in Manitoba, “serious incidents” (which would include some of the federal “hazardous occurrences”) must be reported immediately and by the fastest means of communication available.

A mistake like assuming you have 24 or 72 hours—or even 14 days—to report a particular incident, which should have actually been reported immediately, can result in a finding of a failure to report. Further, as different jurisdictions define “serious incidents” differently, an employer may fail to report something that should have been reported if they are considering the wrong legislation.

It starts with understanding

Ensuring understanding of these small but important measures is a simple way for an employer to demonstrate they are aware of their obligations under the legislation and thus taking safety seriously.

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Are you a manufacturer committed to inclusive hiring, an employee with learning differences in the sector, or a partner supporting workforce diversity? We want to hear from you.



Every individual learns differently based on factors such as age, language, essential skill levels, or learning disabilities. Sometimes, what works for one person doesn't work for someone else.

EMC's Supporting Learning Differences Project is a national initiative dedicated to helping manufacturing employers and employees enhance training and workplace performance. This project aims to enhance the capacity of the manufacturing sector to support employees with learning differences by providing access to customized supports, resources, and growth opportunities.

Project objectives are to:

- Conduct research to understand the scope of learning differences in the sector and unique challenges faced by employers and employees in the workplace.
- Provide manufacturing employees with tools and supports to excel in foundational skills development through new and innovative approaches to identify and address learning differences
- Provide employers with access to a toolkit of industry-validated resources designed to allow manufacturers to create equitable, diverse, and inclusive workplaces.
- Create awareness within the sector, share best practices, and strategies for accommodation to provide employers with the tools to build supportive and inclusive workplaces.

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Built for the future

Winnipeg's West End Radiators puts safety at the core of new manufacturing facility

By Jeff Baker

When a company has been a fixture in Western Canada's manufacturing community for more than half a century, every major capital project carries extra weight.

For Winnipeg-based West End Radiators—a long-respected manufacturer and service provider of heavy-duty heat exchangers—the opening of its new copper-brass manufacturing facility marks not just an operational milestone, but a meaningful shift in how the company approaches safety, growth, and the next generation of production.

And according to Justin Feeleus, Owner and Director of Plant Operations, this expansion was long overdue.

"After opening our copper-brass manufacturing plant over 20 years ago, we were outgrowing the original space," Feeleus explains. "It had grown much bigger than the space we had for it."

So, why did West End Radiators choose now to expand, how did they design a safer and more efficient facility from the ground up, and what might other Prairie manufacturers take from their journey.

Growing beyond the limitations of the old facility

For decades, the company's copper-brass core manufacturing operations were tucked inside the service centre of its Winnipeg shop—a layout that worked in the early 2000s but became increasingly strained as production volumes grew and customer demands evolved.

"The biggest issue was lack of space since our manufacturing centre existed in the same space where we service heat exchangers," Feeleus says. "This meant we had multiple departments coming and going in one area."

Anyone who has worked in a mixed-use industrial space knows the ripple effects: workflow congestion, shared hazards, reduced efficiency, and limits on what jobs can safely be completed at the same time.

West End Radiators had seen the advantages of a dedicated environment through its standalone aluminum core manufacturing plant.

"We saw how successful having a stand-alone aluminum core manufacturing plant was," says Feeleus. "We knew having copper-brass core manufacturing in a separate building would have the same benefits—allowing us to expand and grow the way we want to."

The decision became clear. To support future growth—and provide workers with the safest, most modern environment possible—the company needed a purpose-built copper-brass facility.

Designing for safety first

Across the Prairies, manufacturers are navigating a shifting landscape of labour availability, workplace expectations, technological change, and rising regulatory standards. Safety is no longer just a compliance checkbox—it's a competitive advantage and a foundation for attracting and retaining skilled workers. West End Radiators built its new facility with that philosophy top of mind.

"A huge priority in the new plant was ventilation for us," Feeleus emphasized. "The old space was set up 20 years ago, and since then a lot has changed with codes."

The new system is engineered to meet modern regulatory requirements, improve air quality, and reduce exposure to heating and soldering fumes typically associated with copper-brass manufacturing.

"This new space has top-of-the-line ventilation, fresh air coming in, and is up to code," notes Feeleus. "It gives us and our team peace of mind that they're working in a safe space each day."

The company is already planning further enhancements. "We have big plans to eventually go 100% lead-free, which will improve our health and safety even further."

Segregated operations = fewer hazards

Perhaps the most overlooked safety improvement—yet one that workers feel immediately—is the separation of manufacturing from service operations.

"It's so much safer now that manufacturing and service don't share a space," Feeleus explains. "For example, we don't have a forklift driving



PHOTO COURTESY OF WEST END RADIATORS

Wayne and Justin Feeleus.

through the area to move a part to shipping. We can just focus on building new cores for our customers.”

The result is a cleaner, quieter, more controlled work environment—conditions that directly reduce risk while also improving morale and focus.

Investing in modern machinery and automation

Many manufacturers face the same question when planning capital upgrades: how far to push automation, and how quickly? West End Radiators is taking a measured, strategic approach—focusing on areas where automation improves both quality and safety.

“We’ve invested in some new machinery that is industry-leading,” Feeleus shares. “And we’ve recently introduced automation to our header dipping process.”

The header dipping stage—traditionally a manual or crane-assisted process—has long presented ergonomic and safety challenges in copper-brass core production. Automating this step reduces physical strain on workers, lowers risk, and increases consistency in the final product.

This philosophy—targeted automation that enhances safety while preserving craftsmanship—is increasingly common among small and mid-sized manufacturers across the Prairies.

A layout that supports complex, large-scale jobs

In heavy-duty heat exchanger manufacturing, no two projects are identical. Jobs vary by equipment type, size, application, and customer requirements. That means space—and how that space is organized—matters. The new facility dramatically improves flexibility.

“With more space, we are able to complete jobs of any size,” says Feeleus. “And this is only Phase 1.”

“We plan to add an addition in the coming years to expand the plant further—making room for cranes and other lifting mechanisms that will allow us to build even bigger cores.”

This phased approach mirrors the growth strategies of many Prairie manufacturers: build for today, but design with tomorrow clearly in mind.

Improved workflow and cleanliness

Manufacturers know that productivity isn’t just about machines or floor space—it’s about flow. The previous layout forced workers from multiple departments to intersect, often competing for the same space or equipment.

The new plant eliminates those bottlenecks entirely, allowing manufacturing tasks to progress in a logical, uninterrupted sequence. This has also improved housekeeping.

“We wanted to improve shop flow, organization, and cleanliness,” Feeleus says. “And having this dedicated space allows us to do exactly that.”

Efficiency and safety often go hand-in-hand, and the new building has already demonstrated this principle in practice.

Faster turnarounds, greater capacity

Manufacturing upgrades are only worthwhile if they translate into improved value for customers—and West End Radiators is already seeing meaningful changes. The biggest shift? Speed.

“We envision our copper-brass manufacturing department evolving to eventually have multiple shifts,” Feeleus says. “That will improve our lead times for customers even further.”

With the ability to add shifts, take on more complex jobs, and scale production quickly, the company sees opportunities to elevate customer service far beyond what the previous facility allowed.

“We can build their heat exchangers overnight, which we couldn’t before.”

For customers in industries like transportation, agriculture, mining, and construction—where equipment downtime is costly—that speed can make a significant difference.

Strategic growth for the next decade

West End Radiators’ new facility is more than an upgrade—it’s a strategic investment in the next five to 10 years of Prairie manufacturing. But underlying it all is a people-first approach.

Every square foot of the new facility reflects a commitment to the team—safer ventilation, fewer shared hazards, clearer processes, and more room to do high-quality work with pride.

That philosophy is increasingly defining the future of manufacturing across the region and country. Companies that invest in their people—through better environments, modern tools, and safer processes—are the ones best positioned to attract talent and thrive in the next decade.

Looking ahead

For West End Radiators, the new facility represents both an achievement and a beginning. It provides room to grow, tools to innovate, and, above all, a safer, more effective environment for the skilled people who make the company what it is.

The manufacturing landscape is changing—and West End Radiators are showing what it takes to lead that change with confidence, clarity, and care for the people who make it possible. ¶

SKILLED TRADES IN ADVANCED MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY DRIVEN TRAINING

WILWorks Skilled Trades in Advanced Manufacturing is a pre-apprenticeship program for youth (15-29) to help manufacturers create a pipeline of talent to fill the growing demand in manufacturing skilled trades roles. For youth, the program will help them discover and learn introductory mechanical and electrical skills, along with hands-on training in skilled trades related to advanced manufacturing

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Beyond fire drills

Emergency preparedness and business continuity for Canadian manufacturers

By Kelly Killby

On a smoky Tuesday last June, intake shutters snapped shut at a mid-sized metal shop on the Prairies. The air was safe inside—but the line wasn't. With compressors idled and a truck due by 3 o'clock, the plant manager faced a choice: ship late and lose a customer or restart without a plan and risk quality—and safety.

That moment is why emergency preparedness and business continuity matter. The question isn't *if* an emergency will strike, but *when*.

The new risk reality

Wildfire smoke that forces air-intake shutdowns. Ransomware that encrypts recipes and orders. Floods, hail, and wind events that knock out power and logistics. A public-health event that keeps half your team at home.

Canada's manufacturers are feeling the strain:

- **Severe weather:** Insured damages in 2024 reached \$8.5 billion, the costliest year on record; four catastrophic events (Jasper wildfire, Calgary hail, Southern Ontario flooding, remnants of Hurricane Debby) drove more than \$7 billion of losses—translating on the shop floor to damaged facilities, prolonged outages, and costly downtime
- **Pandemics:** Public Health Agency of Canada modelling suggests 4.5–10.6 million Canadians could be clinically ill during an influenza pandemic, with absenteeism that will cripple production without cross-training or contingency labour plans
- **Cybersecurity:** The Canadian Centre for Cyber Security sent 336 pre-ransomware notifications to organizations in 2024–25; if ICS/OT is affected, production stops.
- **Supply chains:** In early 2025, 20.6 per cent of manufacturers expected supply-chain obstacles in the next quarter, a risk that cascades into missed windows and stressed customer relationships

The COVID-19 pandemic laid this bare. In 2020, 85 percent of manufacturing establishments reported operational impacts; total sector revenue fell \$69.8 billion (a 9.3 per cent decrease from 2019). Plants with continuity measures—alternate suppliers, cross-trained teams, flexible schedules, and clear remote-comms protocols—bounced back faster.

Preparedness vs continuity (and why you need both)

Most plants keep people safe with **emergency preparedness:** alarms, evacuation routes, first aid, and safe shutdowns. That's the first hour covered, but what about the hours and days that follow?

Business continuity is everything after how you keep critical functions operating—or bring them back quickly—so customers stay with you and quality stays intact.

Think of preparedness as the seatbelt. Continuity is the airbag, the spare tire, and the roadside assistance plan.

Bridge the two by answering four questions:

- How will we communicate with employees, regulators, and customers during a prolonged outage?
- Which lines or production units must resume first to meet critical orders?
- How long can your information technology or operational technology be down before quality or compliance is at risk (your Recovery Time Objective (RTO) and Recovery Point Objective (RPO)? RTO and RPO are two essential metrics for developing data backup and recovery, business continuity and disaster recovery, and operational resilience plans. RTO focuses on the maximum acceptable downtime for a system or business process, while RPO designates the maximum amount of data that can be lost during an outage.
- Which suppliers, carriers, and service partners are verified backups if primary channels fail?

"We're an SME. Do we really need this?"

Yes, and perhaps even more than the larger companies. SMEs often have thinner margins, a single facility, one key supplier, or one machine that they can't afford to fail. A right-sized plan reduces downtime, proves reliability to customers, and strengthens your hand in contract talks.

Build your business continuity-ready plan in six steps

WEEKS 1-2: Assess hazards, potential disruptions and business impact

List credible hazards by site (e.g., facility incidents, hazardous materials, utility loss, natural events, cyber). Pair this with a Business Impact Analysis to identify critical functions (e.g., QA, shipping, production, core line), their potential impact on company financials, production lines, production sites, technology systems, and data and rank consequences over time (safety, regulatory, financial, customer, brand).

As a priority, establish a team and Business Continuity Coordinator. The team will work through all these tasks. Typically, this is leadership team with representatives from other areas of the organization.

The business continuity plan should also include an emergency communication plan.

WEEK 2: Prioritize critical functions and set recovery targets

For each critical function, set:

- **RTO** (Recovery Time Objective): maximum tolerable downtime
- **RPO** (Recovery Point Objective): acceptable data loss
- **MASL** (Minimum Acceptable Service Level): throughput in “limp mode”

Capture these in a one-page matrix; it will be your blueprint for decisions under pressure.

WEEKS 2-4: Minimize the impact

Map dependencies and pre-position backups:

- **Suppliers & logistics:** pre-approve alternates; note lead times and minimum order quantities (MOQ)
- **People:** cross-train at least one backup for every critical role; create job aids
- **Equipment:** pre-arrange rentals/spares; list emergency service contacts
- **Utilities/IT/OT:** generators and uninterruptable power supplies (UPS), offline copies of recipes, tested backups, MFA and network segmentation. Inventory of hardware, software applications and data and backup sites, technology personnel, workflow and recovery priorities.

WEEKS 3-5: Write succinct scenario plans

For your top three to five risks, draft a plan that details the specific steps to be taken before, during and after an event to maintain operations, including procedures for personnel, assets, and business partners/stakeholders. These plans should cover triggers, immediate safety actions, communication tree (with backup channels), shutdown/restart steps, quality checks, and role assignments (primary + alternate). Employee compensation and sick-leave, flexible policies regarding remote work, spread of infectious disease at the workplace, and restricting travel should be included. Remember to document procedure and authorities/responsibility for activating and terminating the plan, for alternating business operations and for transferring business knowledge to key employees.

WEEK 5 and onward: Train & exercise

- **Tabletop (quarterly):** discussion-based activity where the team walks through a simulated crisis to test and improve their BCP without a full scale drill. Leadership walks a scenario, record decisions and gaps.
- **Live drill (semi-annual):** e.g., a power-loss drill during peak shipping or an OT isolation exercise during a rush order. Document and identify what went well and what gaps may exist.
- **Debrief:** fix what you find; update plans and training.

Ongoing: Sustain it

Assign a Business Continuity Coordinator and a back up person. Review after process or staffing changes and at least annually. Keep printed and digital copies accessible (plan for network/power loss). Track a few simple KPIs (see below as an example).

On the floor: the first 15 minutes

- **0-2 min — Safety:** hit emergency stops/safe shutdowns; account for your people
- **2-5 min — Activate:** name the Incident Commander; switch to backup communications if needed
- **5-10 min — Stabilize:** isolate affected equipment/areas; secure utilities; protect work in progress (WIP)
- **10-15 min — Communicate:** brief internal teams, regulators (as required), and key customers with status and the time of the next update. Document all actions. Should have a platform for communicating emergency status and actions to employees, vendors, suppliers, and customers inside and outside the workplace in a consistent and timely manner.

Say it clearly (templates you can adapt)

Employees (SMS/Email): Incident at [Site]. Everyone is safe. We’ve paused [Line/Area] and activated our business continuity plan. Next update at [HH:MM]. If off shift, await scheduling instructions.

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Customers: We've experienced [event]. Safety protocols are complete; recovery actions are underway. Orders [#] currently project for [date/time]. We will confirm at [next update time]. For escalations: [name/phone].

Regulators/Authorities: Notification of [event] at [facility]. Safety measures executed at [time]. No injuries [or specify]. We are securing [materials/area] and will provide an update by [time]. Contact [name/title], [contact].

Community / Neighbours: Notification of [event] at [facility]. All safety controls are in place and there is no risk to the public. You may notice [visible effects, e.g., increased traffic, emergency vehicles, noise, odour, etc.]. We are working closely with [local authorities/emergency services] to manage the situation and will share updates by [time] through [communication channel—e.g., website, local alert system, or media]. For questions or concerns, contact [name/title], [phone/email].

A 30-60-90-day starter plan

Days 1-30: Establish a team and name a coordinator; Assess hazards, potential business disruptions and potential impact. Prioritize critical functions, minimize the impact, set targets and draft an emergency communication plan. Perform a light business impact analysis (BIA) on your five most critical functions; set RTO/RPO/MASL; draft a comms tree with off-network backups.

Days 31-60: map dependencies; identify alternates (suppliers, carriers, equipment, IT/OT); write succinct plans; communicate and train internal staff.

Days 61-90: run one tabletop and one short live drill; close gaps; stage spares/backup power; brief key customers on your continuity posture to build trust.

What good looks like: simple KPIs

- Time to account for personnel: 15 minutes.
- Mean time to restart priority line versus its RTO.
- Coverage: 90 per cent of critical roles have a trained backup.
- Alternates: Two qualified suppliers for every A-class fire material.
- Discipline: Tabletop quarterly; live drill once a year; corrective actions identified closed.

Common pitfalls (and how to avoid them)

- Plans that read like doorstops - keep plans short; put policy in the appendix.
- IT-only thinking - include OT and utilities; practice network isolation without compromising safety.
- Single-champion risk - build a cross-functional team; assign alternates.
- No paper - assume a network outage; keep hard copies where people work.

The payoff: less chaos, faster recovery

Emergencies will keep coming—wildfire, flood, cyber, or the next unknown. With a tested plan, Prairie manufacturers can turn crises into manageable challenges and protect the long-term strength of Canada's manufacturing sector and the people whose livelihoods depend on it. ↗

Kelly Killby is Health, Safety & Environment Professional with EMC. Kelly is a Certified Sustainability Practitioner and an ISO Management System Lead Auditor. She has been a guest speaker at ISO's Next Generation Climate Change Project, as well as a guest lecturer for Western University's Masters of Environment & Sustainability program. Prior to joining EMC, she worked in the automotive and handheld electronics sector for more than 20 years.

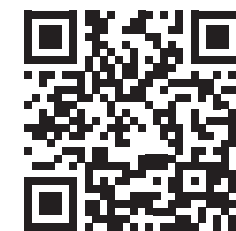


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WeMB supports all self-identifying women+ (cis, trans, 2S, and gender-diverse) in Manitoba to become successful entrepreneurs by offering a supportive, women-led community and services aimed at making their success our priority.

Our core services

Free Business Advising: Work with our team of experienced Business Advisors who draw on their education, knowledge, and entrepreneurial expertise to guide and support you along your business journey.

Financing: Our flexible financing options, available in any amount between \$5,000 - \$150,000, can help you launch, stabilize, or grow your business. Unlike most financial institutions, WeMB dedicates business advisory and loan services to support entrepreneurs through their entire journey, long after the loan is approved.

Training: We offer hands-on, highly interactive training and workshops on a variety of topics to provide you with the skills and knowledge you need to make your business a success.

Networking: We provide networking and professional development events to help you find community within and outside of your industry. WeMB's events help you forge important peer connections that will motivate and inspire you.

Strength in Community Workshops (SCW) program

One of our most impactful initiatives is the Strength in Community Workshops (SCW) program. This interactive program is designed to inspire, empower, and level you up for business growth and success through dialogue, learning, and community building. Made possible through the support of Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED), the program has expanded access to underserved regions and introduced new curriculum.

WeMB continues to enhance the SCW program and develop new, relevant offerings, including a focus on financial literacy to help women+ entrepreneurs gain confidence and control over their financial choices and reduce stress and anxiety around the topic.

Our impact

Manitoba women+ are transforming their dreams into sustainable and profitable enterprises that contribute to building a resilient local economy. It is a privilege to assist in their success.



Elm Natural Builders | Amalia & Francesco Zurzolo

Amalia Zurzolo, a former language teacher, registered for WeMB's Strength in Community Workshops program when an opportunity presented itself to join her husband in his construction business.

"Business really is a language, and I felt like I needed to learn how to speak it," Amalia said. "And that's where my journey with WeMB started; I just didn't know what to do or how to grow."

Amalia and her husband own Elm Natural Builders which specializes in hempcrete insulation and eco-friendly renovations using locally sourced natural materials to create high-performance, sustainable homes.

"Having a Business Advisor who listens and helps you see things from a new perspective has been invaluable," Amalia said. "As a small business owner, it can be isolating, and sometimes you just need someone who understands the journey."

Amalia and Francesco recently won first place at the Green Dragon's Lair Pitch Competition with a grand prize of \$10,000 for their business.

Long Way Homestead | Anna Hunter

First-generation sheep farmer Anna Hunter connected with WeMB when she had the idea to add a wool processing mill to her farm that she runs with her husband and two children.

She leveraged a WeMB Startup Loan to create Long Way Homestead, a fibre farm and wool mill near Ste. Geneviève, MB.

"I don't think our business would be here without WeMB's support because we were turned away from so many other places," Anna said. "Probably the biggest way that WeMB impacted our journey was by believing enough in our plan to finance it."

Anna's struggles to access early financing are not unusual. In the agriculture industry where inherited farms, land, and equipment, passed-down knowledge, and generational wealth are commonplace, it can be difficult to secure financing from traditional lenders.

"WeMB provided us with not only the financial support, but also the practical and emotional support of starting a new business and working alongside us."



StoriesMatter | Amna Burki

Amna Burki discovered her passion for storytelling early. Her business, StoriesMatter, transforms lives by fostering understanding, celebrating diverse voices, and using storytelling to strengthen communities.

Through WeMB's Strength in Community Workshops program, she gained guidance, inspiration, and a supportive network, which enabled her to launch StoriesMatter.

"SCW helped me reclaim my identity as a storyteller and facilitator, and I now see stories as a business that brings communities together," Amna said.

Participating in Strength in Community helped shift Amna's mindset about business. Through connecting with other women+ entrepreneurs who were building meaningful, impactful businesses, she was motivated to take the leap and officially begin her journey as a social enterprise entrepreneur.

"I made friends through the process, I felt nourished, and it really opened me up to something that I wasn't even considering as a possibility: a business."



Learn more about WeMB and how we can help you along your business journey by visiting wemb.ca.

Saskatchewan Setting Pace in Aerospace and Defence



Saskatchewan’s annual Aerospace and Defence Forum attracts some of the world’s largest prime defence contractors, providing a platform for manufacturers from across Western Canada to network and connect with major players in the industry, including Leonardo, CAE, SkyAlyne, General Dynamics Land Systems, Airbus and the Department of Defence.

“The Saskatchewan Aerospace and Defence Forum has provided an invaluable opportunity for our team to connect with Canadian partners and suppliers across a broad range of skills and capabilities,” Tom Molinski, Head of Business Development at Leonardo Canada said. “Through this event, we’ve established meaningful new relationships that continue to strengthen our ability to deliver innovative, domestic, made-in-Canada solutions. These partnerships not only enhance the competitiveness of our proposals but also contribute to the growth and sustainability of the defence industry across the Prairies.”

Groundbreaking partnerships

In 2024, Boeing announced a \$17 million dollar investment to support the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies’ (SIIT) training capacity for aircraft maintenance engineers. This is a great example of the type of partnerships that can be cultivated by attending Saskatchewan’s Aerospace and Defence Forum.

Since the launch of SIIT’s Aircraft Maintenance Engineer - Mechanical “M” License program, the only one of its kind in Saskatchewan, 136 students have successfully obtained this qualification, with another 28 students enrolled in the 2025-26 academic year.

Increased NATO defence spending

In June 2025, NATO leaders, including Canada’s Prime Minister Mark Carney, declared that member countries will increase their defence spending to five per cent of gross domestic product over the next decade. Saskatchewan itself has a highly developed advanced manufacturing industry that is already producing items used in the defence sector. These include tools and equipment such as toxic gas monitoring systems for military operations and communications equipment and systems used by the Canadian Patrol Frigate Program.

The increase in spending is good news for Canada’s defence sector, and Saskatchewan’s manufacturing companies supporting the sector, who will be reaping the benefits. Increased opportunities in this space will lead to higher earnings for companies, the creation of many well-paying jobs, and stronger communities in the province.

Mark your calendars – March 11, 2026

The Aerospace and Defence Forum returns in the spring and is sure to be better than ever. The 2026 edition promises to be the biggest yet in the event’s eight-year history. It will be held at Saskatoon’s Prairieland Park on March 11, 2026, with many defence contractors already confirmed to participate.

If you’re working in manufacturing and feel the defence sector is an area you would like to get involved in, this is the event you can’t afford to miss.

Curious to learn more? Visit InvestSK.ca.



Saskatchewan: Powering Innovation Across Aerospace and Defence

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From UAV systems and satellite communications to advanced materials and shipbuilding steel, Saskatchewan delivers the capabilities that power aerospace and defence. With world-class research infrastructure, skilled technical talent, and competitive tax incentives, Saskatchewan is a high-performing destination for aerospace and defence manufacturing.

Connect with us to learn about investment opportunities, partnerships, and Saskatchewan’s annual Aerospace and Defence Forum.



Optimize your compressed air system to seal in savings

Compressed air systems are very common in industrial settings. By storing pressurized air, these systems can be used on demand and in a controlled way to power a wide variety of machines, devices, and pneumatic tools. Despite their versatility and many other advantages, compressed air systems require a significant amount of energy to operate. In fact, 10% of most industrial energy costs are related to the energy inputs required for these systems. That's why it's crucial to ensure yours is working at peak efficiency.

Optimizing your system is a worthwhile investment. Doing so can reduce energy consumption by an average of 30%. In some instances, reductions upward of 85% can be achieved!

In this article, we'll share the benefits of improving your compressed air system, the ways in which Efficiency Manitoba can help you improve your system, and how one Manitoba facility is saving big with Efficiency Manitoba's programs and incentives.

Efficiency Manitoba's programs for compressed air

Efficiency Manitoba has the expertise and incentives you need to make the process of improving your compressed air

system simpler and more affordable. They take a collaborative approach with you, your contractor, and other vendors to identify the best solutions and energy efficiency approaches for your unique operations. Plus, their technical experts assist from the beginning of your project all the way to completion, from estimating potential energy savings and calculating incentives to completing application forms.

Efficiency Manitoba has two offers that can help you with your compressed air system:

Benchmark studies - As a free service, Efficiency Manitoba will perform a benchmark study of your compressed air system to identify energy-saving opportunities. They work with pre-qualified compressed air specialists who will visit your facility and perform a baseline logging of your system. Efficiency Manitoba's technical experts will analyze the collected data and provide you with a report that has valuable information about your system; this will help you identify the appropriate size of your replacement units as well as other areas for improvement. Then, they'll work with you to identify energy efficiency upgrades to your compressed air system that can qualify for incentives through their Custom Energy Solutions Program.

Custom Energy Solutions Program - Once you're ready to upgrade your compressed air system, Efficiency Manitoba's Custom Energy Solutions Program will provide you with incentives to make the upgrade more affordable and lower your monthly energy bills for years into the future. They'll consider all technologies that save electricity or natural gas, including compressed air system upgrades. The incentives are based on energy performance, so the more energy your upgrade saves, the higher the incentive you'll receive!

Leaky business?

Here's a surprising statistic: leaks can represent 30% of compressed air loads when not managed properly. They can also be easy to miss in noisy industrial environments, and pinpointing the source of the leak is often a challenging task. At the same time, neglecting a leaky system can cause issues for you and your facility, such as reduced system capacity and production, unnecessary energy consumption, lower system pressure, and a reduced lifespan of your equipment.

The good news is that there are professionals who can help: both with detecting leaks and repairing them to ensure your system is operating as efficiently as possible. A comprehensive assessment of your compressed air system will let you know if it has any leaks and provide you with quantitative data regarding the potential energy savings associated with repairing them.

Once any leaks have been pinpointed, you'll want to remediate the issues and improve your compressed air system. There are plenty of measurable benefits to doing this:

- You'll enjoy lower energy costs.
- Your system will be more reliable, leading to fewer production outages and less downtime. This will make your operations even more productive, which is good for your bottom line.
- You'll see improved air pressure and reduced moisture in your air lines, allowing your system to run more efficiently.

Identifying and eliminating these leaks will reduce your energy consumption and costs — and Efficiency Manitoba can help.

Project feature: Canada Packers

Canada Packers (formerly known as Maple Leaf Foods), a food products manufacturer located in Brandon, had an aging compressor that was consuming significant amounts of energy and impacting their operations. Rather than shouldering the resourcing and financial burden on their own to address the issue, they reached out to Efficiency Manitoba for help.

"Efficiency Manitoba responded to our request in a timely manner and gave us lots of great information on how to move forward," said Tyler Henry, the Maintenance General Supervisor at Canada Packers. "They immediately made us feel confident that we were in good hands."

The project - First, Canada Packers conducted a benchmark study of their compressed air system, which identified numerous energy-saving improvements. Based on the results of the study, they elected to upgrade their aging compressor to improve their energy efficiency.

Upon reviewing the original design of the replacement system, Efficiency Manitoba's technical experts identified a problem known as "control gap." The system couldn't match supply to demand, causing energy inefficiencies and increased wear on the compressors. Efficiency Manitoba's modelling helped illustrate and quantify the financial impact of this problem.

Canada Packers implemented the recommended solution. The upgrade involved purchasing a new 300-horsepower variable speed compressor, three new 250-horsepower fixed speed compressors, a new heated blower desiccant dryer, and a central system controller.

During the verification process, Efficiency Manitoba's analysis identified control issues with the system. The supplier worked with Canada Packers to find the source of the control issues and corrected the problem. This correction saved nearly 200,000 kilowatt-hours (kWh) alone, which aligned the system performance with the original estimates.

The savings - With a more efficient compressed air system now in place, Canada Packers is enjoying several benefits. First, they received more than \$256,000 in incentives through the Custom Energy Solutions Program. "The incentive amount Efficiency Manitoba calculated for us made it easy to decide to move forward with the upgrade," Tyler told us.

The savings don't end with incentives, though. Canada Packers is estimated to reduce their electricity consumption by over 1.7 million kWh every year, resulting in saving nearly \$99,000 annually on their energy bills. This doesn't even include additional benefits like energy bill tax savings, lower maintenance costs, and improved reliability. A simple payback calculation shows that the project will essentially pay for itself in 2.6 years.

"Working with Efficiency Manitoba made so much sense, from both a financial perspective and a long-term operations perspective," Tyler said. "We're seeing the real impact of this decision on our energy bills and our everyday work. It's made a world of difference, for the better, in how we operate our business."

Start saving energy today

Efficiency Manitoba is eager to work with you to explore energy efficiency solutions for your industrial facility. Whether you're looking at starting with a benchmark study to identify opportunities to save, or are ready to start your energy efficiency upgrade, they can help with financial incentives and technical expertise. Get started by emailing customsolutions@efficiencyMB.ca, indicating that you're interested in improving your compressed air system. Efficiency Manitoba will contact you to see if you qualify and start coordinating your project. ¶

To learn more about their offers for energy-efficient industrial technologies and systems, visit efficiencyMB.ca/industrial.





Why Canada's advanced manufacturing leaders are heading to Toronto in 2026

*March 31 – April 1, 2026
Metro Toronto Convention Centre*

Canada is living through the most significant industrial repositioning since the post-war boom.

A confluence of forces has changed the game all at once: U.S. legislation that explicitly rewards North American content with hundreds of billions in subsidies, European and Asian buyers desperate to derisk supply chains after pandemic shocks and geopolitical tensions, a domestic policy framework that treats advanced manufacturing as strategic infrastructure rather than just another industry sector.

The result is a rare opportunity. One that closes the moment the rest of the world finishes building their own secure supply bases. If Canada seizes it, advanced manufacturing becomes the engine that re-industrializes entire regions, creates hundreds of thousands of high-skill jobs, and moves us from resource periphery to technology core.

The technologies driving this shift are no longer theoretical. Industrial AI that predicts equipment failure weeks in advance is already running on factory floors in Windsor and Calgary. Digital twins that cut new-product introduction time are live in aerospace clusters from Montréal to Winnipeg. Additive processes that produce flight-critical parts in titanium and high-performance polymers are certified and shipping from shops in British Columbia and Québec. Robotics and vision systems developed for automotive lines are being repurposed for dual-use defence applications that meet both DND and NATO requirements. And an entirely new generation of prefabrication, modular, and advanced materials developments for homebuilding technologies is emerging to tackle the country's chronic housing shortage while creating exportable intellectual property.

None of this happens in isolation. A single company cannot absorb the capital cost, the certification burden, or the market risk alone. The winners will be the consortia that combine specialized Canadian manufacturers, technology providers, research institutions, and anchor customers into teams that can bid against anyone on the planet.

That is exactly what NGen was created to orchestrate, and it is why the N3 Summit on March 31–April 1, 2026, at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre matters more than any trade show or conference on the calendar. Two days. Hundreds of decision-makers. More than one hundred Canadian exhibitors. International delegations that are actively sourcing. Investors who understand the sector. Policymakers who control the funding levers.

N3 is an opportunity to be where Canadian supply meets global demand.



What can you expect at N3?

Exhibit Hall - Open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. both days

More than 100 Canadian advanced-manufacturing companies will fill the hall at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre. These are not trade-show regulars with glossy brochures; they are the firms already delivering production parts and systems in industrial AI, additive manufacturing, robotics, hydrogen components, digital twins, and next-generation homebuilding technologies.

The floor is organized by technology stream so you can move quickly from a live demonstration of an AI-driven quality system to a modular housing panel line to a dual-use defence composite part.

High-Profile Policy Forum

The summit will feature engaging sessions that draw ministers, deputy ministers, and C-suite executives. This year's themes are laser-focused on the issues that will decide whether Canada captures the reshoring wave:

- Market diversification and new opportunities for Canadian exporters
- Manufacturing sector transformation driven by industrial AI, automation, and additive processes
- Supply-chain resilience in an era of geopolitical risk
- Leveraging advanced manufacturing to accelerate domestic homebuilding and close the housing gap
- Building industrial capabilities that also serve Canada's defence and security requirements (dual-use technologies that strengthen both civilian competitiveness and national sovereignty)

Bring your toughest policy questions; the people on stage are the ones who have the real-world experience and can actually move the file.

Startup Pitches

Dozens of Canada's most promising advanced-manufacturing scale-ups will take the stage for live, pitches to a room of corporate venture arms, institutional funds, and strategic investors.

Workshops - Running Concurrently Both Days

Small-room (40–60 person), practitioner-led sessions will dive deep into implementation. Sample sessions include:

- Scaling industrial AI without a PhD on staff
- Qualifying additive parts for aerospace and defence
- Digital-twin deployment that cuts new-product introduction time
- Retrofitting existing lines for net-zero heat treating
- Modular and 3D-printed homebuilding systems ready for Canadian climates



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Networking Lounges and Bookable B2B Meeting Rooms

Access dedicated networking lounges and a bank of private meeting rooms that can be booked in 30-minute blocks through the event app. NGen's matchmaking team pre-populates schedules weeks in advance based on the capability profiles every delegate submits at registration, so you land in Toronto with a full diary of meetings that matter.

Exclusive VIP Gala - Evening of March 31 at Aera Toronto

Cap the first day at Aera, the stunning 38th-floor venue overlooking the city. This gala will bring together exhibitors, speakers, international delegation leads, investors, and senior government officials in a relaxed setting that's premium, memorable, and made for mingling – you may just land your next deal there. VIP gala tickets are available for purchase at n3summit.ca

How to get involved – your next step is simple

N3 Summit 2026 is intentionally limited in size to keep every conversation high-value, so the sooner you move, the better your outcome.

Attend as a Delegate

Purchase your delegate pass directly at n3summit.ca. You'll choose between the standard two-day pass (with full access to the Policy Forum, exhibit hall, startup pitches, workshops, networking lounges, and all matchmaking) or the VIP delegate pass, which includes everything above plus reserved front-section seating and the exclusive VIP gala at Aera Toronto on the evening of March 31.



Early-bird pricing ends December 31, 2025.

Exhibit – Put Your Capabilities in Front of Hundreds of Decision-Makers

Exhibit space is limited to just over 100 Canadian companies and is allocated on a first-come, first-served basis after a short qualification call with NGen's events team. If your company has production-ready advanced-manufacturing technology or capacity and you're incorporated in Canada, submit your expression of interest today at n3summit.ca. A member of the team will contact you within 48 hours to discuss booth options and confirm fit. Act fast – booth space is limited and 25% of the floor is already reserved.

Become a Sponsor

A small number of strategic sponsorship packages are still available (presenting sponsor for individual Policy Forum themes, workshop streams, the VIP gala, networking lounges, and more!). These opportunities include prominent branding, speaking opportunities, and guaranteed private meeting time with delegation leads. Contact info@ngen.ca for the current sponsorship deck and availability.

Don't wait for the reminder email. Register, submit your exhibit interest, or reach out about sponsorship today. Once the delegate cap is hit and the floor plan is full, that's it until 2027.†

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Trust but verify

Ensuring employee and consultant credentials

By David Quinn

In manufacturing—where the work is fast-paced, technical, and often safety-critical—businesses rely on people who truly know what they’re doing. A single unqualified worker in the wrong role can introduce hazards, compromise product quality, or trigger costly shutdowns. Whether you’re hiring a maintenance technician, a safety consultant, or a process engineer, you need confidence that the credentials they claim are genuine and relevant.

Credential fraud and exaggeration are increasingly common. And while high-profile cases often involve other sectors, manufacturing is affected more often than many leaders realize. So, what can employers do to protect their people, operations, and reputation?

Why credential verification matters

Manufacturing operations depend on expertise. The people responsible for equipment maintenance, process control, welding, fabrication, quality assurance, and workplace safety must have the right training to perform their roles safely and effectively. When someone claims credentials they don’t have, the consequences can go well beyond poor performance—they can put workers at risk.

Consider a technician who claims a trade certification they haven’t earned. They may not understand lockout/tag-out procedures, electrical safety, or proper equipment operation. A consultant who misrepresents safety training could provide incorrect advice that leads frontline workers into dangerous situations. Even a manager exaggerating their experience can create gaps in hazard recognition or regulatory compliance. In a sector where hazards are ever-present and production pressures are real, credential verification isn’t simply due diligence—it’s a core safety practice.

The growing issue of misrepresented credentials

While outright forged diplomas exist, most problems in manufacturing hiring stem from subtler forms of misrepresentation. Some applicants inflate job titles or overstate their responsibility levels. Others list certifications that have quietly expired or suggest that short training sessions were formal qualifications. In some cases, applicants present degrees from unaccredited or non-existent

institutions. Consultants may also overstate their technical expertise or regulatory knowledge.

Online “diploma mills” have made it easier for people to present questionable credentials, and social media has created résumé-style profiles that emphasize marketing over accuracy. Rapid hiring cycles—especially during labour shortages—can tempt employers to rely on intuition rather than verification. Smaller manufacturers may struggle with these pressures, but even large companies can find themselves exposed. In any operation where technical competence impacts safety, the risks associated with unverified credentials are too significant to ignore.

Safety risks associated with unverified credentials

Manufacturers understand the importance of hazard controls and safe operating procedures, yet an overlooked hiring risk is allowing unverified or unqualified individuals to influence those controls. The safety implications can be severe. For example, an unqualified worker performing maintenance may unknowingly create unsafe conditions by bypassing or misapplying lockout/tag-out procedures. A poorly trained consultant conducting a safety audit may fail to identify obvious hazards, leaving frontline workers vulnerable. Workers who receive improper training may believe they understand safe procedures when, in fact, they have been misinformed. Regulatory non-compliance is another danger—many roles in manufacturing require certified personnel, and using unqualified individuals can expose companies to liability, fines, or operational shutdowns.

Across Canada, investigations into industrial incidents regularly cite insufficient training, improper supervision, or lack of qualifications as contributing factors. While equipment and environmental conditions play major roles in workplace incidents, human error resulting from inadequate training or fraudulent credentials can be just as dangerous. Verification is therefore a critical component of incident prevention.

Credential fraud and exaggeration are increasingly common. And while high-profile cases often involve other sectors, manufacturing is affected more often than many leaders realize.

Common red flags employers should watch for

Most applicants and consultants are honest about their backgrounds, but certain warning signs should prompt closer inspection. Employers should be wary of credentials from institutions they have never heard of, particularly if the institution’s name sounds unusually generic or international without context. Résumés that lack clear completion dates or present vague timelines for training or experience also warrant scrutiny. If documents appear amateurish—showing inconsistent logos, spelling errors, or odd formatting—it may be a sign that they were not issued by a legitimate organization.

Some applicants may list certifications without naming the issuing body, which could indicate that informal workshops or online videos are being passed off as accredited training. Reluctance to provide documentation or a defensive attitude when asked for verification is also a warning signal. Consultants who lean heavily on years of experience but avoid describing specific technical training or regulatory knowledge should prompt further questions. While none of these signs automatically indicates fraud, they all justify deeper follow-up.

Practical steps for employers

Establish a standard verification process

Every company benefits from having a clear, structured verification procedure for each stage of the hiring process. This procedure should outline how degrees, safety training, trade certifications, professional designations, and previous work experience will be verified. Treating verification as a standard practice rather than an exceptional one both normalizes the process and improves consistency. When every applicant is subject to the same checks, the process reinforces fairness while protecting the company and its workforce.

Use official sources to confirm information

Employers should rely on official, authoritative sources when confirming credentials. Universities and colleges can verify degrees and diplomas through their registrars. Provincial apprenticeship and trades authorities can confirm journeyman status and Red Seal endorsements. Professional associations—such as engineering, safety, or inspection bodies—maintain registries that show whether a person is certified, licensed, or in good standing. Regulatory bodies also track licences and continuing-education requirements. Direct confirmation through these organizations eliminates ambiguity and reduces the risk of relying on forged or misrepresented documents.

Manufacturers understand the importance of hazard controls and safe operating procedures, yet an overlooked hiring risk is allowing unverified or unqualified individuals to influence those controls. The safety implications can be severe.

Leverage third-party verification services

For manufacturers who hire frequently, work across borders, or fill roles involving advanced technical or safety expertise, specialized verification services can be valuable. These companies verify that educational institutions are legitimate, confirm international credentials, check professional memberships, and identify questionable documentation. Third-party services are especially useful when an employer must evaluate credentials from unfamiliar institutions or countries, reducing guesswork and ensuring accuracy.

Strengthen reference and experience checks

Experience matters as much as paper credentials, and reference checks provide insight into how an applicant applied their knowledge in real-world settings. Instead of simply confirming employment dates, employers can ask detailed questions about responsibilities, safety performance, scope of work, and problem-solving ability. This step helps determine whether a candidate’s stated achievements align with their actual contributions. Proper reference checks often reveal discrepancies in a candidate’s account of their duties or the level of technical authority they held.

Set clear expectations for consultants

Consultants play a significant role in manufacturing operations, especially in areas like process engineering, equipment commissioning, system upgrades, and safety audits. When engaging a consultant, employers should request proof of all relevant certifications, confirm that training aligns with project requirements, and ensure that any required regulatory qualifications are up to date. Consultants should be transparent about the roles of any subcontractors, and employers should verify those subcontractors’ credentials as well. Consultants who understand the importance of accuracy and safety will readily provide this information.

Integrate verification into safety management systems

Credential verification should be embedded into the wider safety management system. Manufacturers may choose to maintain a centralized credential log for all employees in technical, supervisory,

or safety-sensitive positions. Certifications that expire should be tracked and renewed proactively. Contractors working on site should be expected to meet the same credential requirements as employees. Employers can also review credential requirements during incident investigations or near-miss analyses to identify gaps. Integrating verification into safety systems strengthens the organization's overall risk-management framework.

Train hiring managers to spot risks

Hiring managers often serve as the first line of defence against misrepresented credentials. Providing training and guidance on relevant qualifications, distinctions between accredited programs and informal courses, red flags to watch for, and reliable sources of verification can significantly reduce risk. When managers understand what quality credentials look like—and why they matter—they're better equipped to protect the organization from unqualified candidates who may inadvertently create hazardous situations.

Building a culture of integrity and safety

Credential verification is ultimately about fostering a culture of integrity and safety. Manufacturers often operate in close-knit communities where trust matters deeply. Verifying credentials reinforces that trust by ensuring everyone meets the same standards and that claims of technical competence are backed by real training and experience.

A transparent and consistent verification process also sends an important message to employees: the company takes safety and professionalism seriously. Workers are more likely to maintain their own certifications and stay current with training when they know the organization values accuracy and invests in diligence. In this way, verification contributes to a culture where safety is reinforced at every level.

Verifying the credentials of employees and consultants is more than administrative due diligence—it is an essential part of maintaining safe, reliable, and compliant operations. By recognizing the risks associated with misrepresented training or experience, looking out for warning signs, and implementing structured verification procedures, employers can ensure they bring qualified, capable, and safety-minded individuals onto their teams.

Trust plays an important role in any workplace—but verification keeps people safe. ☞

Honorary degrees and the use of “Doctor”

Around the world, many universities award honorary doctorates to recognize outstanding contributions to society, philanthropy, or professional achievement. These degrees are a mark of respect, but they are not the same as an earned academic doctorate.

This distinction matters in professional and business contexts. An earned doctorate—whether in engineering, medicine, or another field—signifies years of specialized training and research. An honorary degree, by contrast, is symbolic and purely titular. It does not confer the academic or technical expertise implied by the title “Doctor.”

So, when is it appropriate to use an honorary title? Traditionally, recipients may be addressed as “Doctor” at the ceremony where the degree is conferred and in university contexts celebrating the honour. Outside those settings, it is generally considered misleading or inappropriate for individuals with honorary doctorates to style themselves as “Dr.” in business, consulting, or professional correspondence. Institutions will often provide guidance that honorary degrees should be listed in one's résumé or CV as an award, not as an educational attainment.

For employers and business leaders, this is more than an etiquette issue—it's about clarity and trust. If a consultant introduces themselves as “Dr. Smith” based on an honorary degree, it may create the impression of technical expertise that is not there. A respectful but cautious approach is best: recognize the honorary degree as an accolade, but do not treat it as evidence of professional qualifications.

Building safety together: Free tools and training from WorkSafe Saskatchewan

A safe workplace doesn't happen by chance. It's built through awareness, education and action. Safety training gives workers and employers the tools they need to recognize hazards, prevent injuries and make smart decisions that protect everyone on the job.

WorkSafe Saskatchewan is here to help you build safer, healthier workplaces. WorkSafe Saskatchewan and its affiliates and partners provide training to more than 30,000 workers and employers on an annual basis. Monthly training sessions for Occupational Health Committee Level 1, Occupational Health Committee Level 2 and Supervision and Safety help workers and employers meet their legislative obligations.

WorkSafe Saskatchewan and its partners provide several training courses to equip everyone, from front-line workers to safety leaders with tools and resources to help prevent work-related injuries and make safety, health and well-being part of everyday work.

Learn with WorkSafe Saskatchewan

WorkSafe Saskatchewan offers a wide range of free and partner-provided courses designed for the needs of Saskatchewan workplaces. Topics include:

- Occupational health and safety committees
- Supervision and leadership
- Ergonomics
- New and young workers
- Psychological health and safety
- Return to work and disability management
- WHMIS and hazardous materials
- Workplace hazards and safety awareness

Courses are available online or in-person, making it easy for workers and employers across the province to participate. Each course is practical and designed so participants can act right away.

“Training equips individuals with the knowledge and skills to identify, assesses and mitigate workplace hazards. By investing in training, organizations can create a culture of safety that encourages continuous improvement. - Kevin Mooney, vice-president of prevention and employer services at the WCB

A smart investment

Every year, approximately 2,700 Saskatchewan workers are seriously injured — many performing routine tasks that could have been done safely with the right training and preparation. From understanding how to lift and carry properly to identifying

high-energy hazards or responding to an emergency, training helps equip workers with the skills to prevent harm.

For employers, investing in safety training helps reduce injuries, improve productivity and lower the costs associated with lost-time claims. Research consistently shows that for every dollar invested in effective safety programs, organizations can save several more in reduced injury costs and downtime. Educated workers are more confident, more engaged and better prepared to prevent incidents before they happen. Training protects not only your people, but also your bottom line.

Building a culture of safety

When everyone understands their role in keeping the workplace safe, it changes the culture of an organization. Workers feel more confident and valued when they know how to protect themselves and their co-workers. Supervisors and managers gain peace of mind knowing their teams have the training to make safe decisions.

A strong safety culture also boosts morale and retention. Employees who feel supported and protected are more engaged and motivated to contribute to a positive work environment. In short, training builds trust and trust helps build safer workplaces.

Accessible training for every workplace

In addition to its own training, WorkSafe Saskatchewan connects you with approved training partners who offer specialized programs — some free, others fee-based — that address unique industry needs. These partners provide expertise, certifications and skills development that complement WorkSafe Saskatchewan's core education offerings.

By training through WorkSafe Saskatchewan and its partners, you can be confident you're learning from credible, experienced safety educators who understand the realities of Saskatchewan workplaces.

Get started today

Safety training is one of the most effective ways to prevent injuries and improve well-being at work. Whether you're just beginning your safety journey or strengthening an existing program, WorkSafe Saskatchewan can help you find the right learning opportunities for your team.

Explore the full list of free and partner-provided courses, and register for training, at worksafesask.ca/education. ☞

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Raise a glass to safety, safely

Understanding the risks and shared responsibility for alcohol and safety in manufacturing and beyond

By Dr. Martin Lavoie

Alcohol made its way into society thousands of years ago - used in celebrations, rituals, and social gatherings. Yet despite its long-standing place in society, alcohol significantly contributes to preventable injury, illness, and death. While modest alcohol consumption can coexist—more or less—with healthy living, its broad availability and normalization in our society come with significant overuse and misuse, which endanger and harm both individuals and communities. Fortunately, most of this harm is preventable.

Understanding the intersection of alcohol and safety is not just a matter of personal choice—it's our collective responsibility. While individuals play a role in how alcohol is consumed, it is undeniable that families, workplaces, governments, and communities all share an interest in preventing alcohol-related harm. Knowing the historical roots of alcohol in our society, how its consumption has various physiological effects, how it is responsible for a number of safety issues, and the importance of both individual and societal actions will help us create safer drinking cultures.

In the beginning...

Evidence from different ancient societies tells an interesting story about alcohol. For example, archaeological findings from 7000 BCE China show evidence of fermented rice and fruit beverages, while beer and wine was used in ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt as gifts to the gods. In ancient Greece and Rome, wine symbolized both pleasure and intellect - and, interestingly, its use in excess was negatively perceived and derided, a concept that speaks to a longstanding understanding of its harms and to the concept of moderation.

The patterns of consumption and regulation in Canada have their own history. From early colonization, European-style alcoholic beverages (beer, wine, spirits) were part of trade, social life, and community rituals. Over time, Canada developed its own alcohol control system: provincial liquor boards, public-run outlets, and regulation of production and distribution.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, temperance movements had a strong presence in Canadian society. These movements influenced our liquor laws, many of which persist today as provincial regulations on where, when, and how alcohol can be sold.

Modern Canada tries to balance the cultural role of alcohol with public health concerns: provincial governments regulate sales, and federal and public health agencies monitor harm and fund interventions.

How alcohol affects the body and mind

Alcohol is a psychoactive substance that slows down brain activity, impairing coordination, judgment, and reaction time. Its impact depends on blood alcohol concentration (BAC)—the proportion of alcohol in the bloodstream. At low levels (0.02–0.05 per cent), effects can include relaxation, reduced inhibition, and mild euphoria. The effects get more pronounced with higher concentrations:

- 0.06–0.10%: Poor coordination and judgment, slower reflexes
- 0.11–0.20%: Blurred vision, emotional swings, impaired balance
- Above 0.30%: Possible unconsciousness or death

The liver is the key organ that metabolizes alcohol at about one standard drink per hour (one standard drink is the equivalent of roughly 30 ml of pure alcohol). Drinking faster than this leads to accumulation in the bloodstream, bringing on intoxication.

On the longer-term side of things, use, overuse and misuse of alcohol contribute to a variety of health issues, including liver disease, heart problems, neurological damage, and cancer. These many different health harms represent a significant burden both for individuals but also the healthcare system and our society. According to the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, in 2017, alcohol contributed to over 18,000 deaths and more than 100,000 hospitalizations.



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None for the road

Driving under the influence of alcohol remains one its most serious safety threats, one that impacts not only the impaired driver, but too often many others – passengers in the car, others on the road, and nearby bikers, pedestrians, and other people going about their daily lives.

Impaired coordination and delayed reaction times dramatically increase the likelihood of crashes. The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that about one in four road traffic deaths globally involves alcohol. Statistics Canada stated that nationally, police reported 71,602 incidents of impaired driving in 2023 and also reported that alcohol remained the leading reason for impaired driving deaths in 2023.

The Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction reports that impaired driving is one of the most common factors contributing to serious motor vehicle crashes in Canada. From 2000 to 2014, over 12,000 people are estimated to have died in crashes involving an alcohol-impaired driver. Despite some progress, self-reported behaviour suggests that 5.9 per cent of Canadian drivers admitted in a 2024 poll to driving over the legal limit in the past 30 days.

The *Criminal Code of Canada* prohibits driving with a BAC of 80 mg per 100 ml of blood (0.08 per cent) or when impaired. Convictions can lead to fines, licence suspensions, and jail time.

Even at lower BAC levels, alcohol can impair vision and judgment. For this reason, many countries have set even lower legal driving limits between 0.02 and 0.05 per cent, with strict enforcement saving thousands of lives annually. Preventive measures—such as sobriety checkpoints, ignition interlock devices, and public campaigns work best when supported by a shared sense of responsibility. Safe transportation isn't just the driver's duty; passengers, friends, and communities all play a role in preventing impaired driving.

On the job

The workplace is another environment where alcohol misuse has far-reaching consequences. Impairment reduces concentration, reaction speed, and decision-making—critical abilities in many workplaces, including manufacturing. Alcohol misuse costs the economy staggering amounts each year, with most losses linked to reduced productivity and absenteeism. But beyond economics, alcohol misuse threatens co-worker health and safety.

Creating alcohol-safe workplaces requires a combination of individual accountability, clear

and effective policies, and organizational culture. Employers can and should set clear policies, provide education, and offer confidential support for employees facing alcohol-related challenges. Co-workers, too, share responsibility for speaking up when their and their colleagues' safety is at risk. A healthy work environment is clearly a team effort, one where support predominates and where stigma is not tolerated.

Stopping community harm

Alcohol's influence unfortunately extends well beyond the individuals who consume it; it is shaping broad community harm. As it reduces self-control, alcohol is a major factor in domestic violence, assaults, and public disorder, often escalating conflicts. Research indicates that alcohol plays a role in up to 50 per cent of all violent crimes worldwide. In homes, alcohol can intensify domestic tensions, placing partners and children at risk. In public spaces, it contributes to fights, aggression, and vandalism.

Community-level solutions are therefore essential. From a policy perspective, Canadian public health advocates (like the Canadian Public Health Association) call for stricter regulation of alcohol marketing, taxation, and outlet density. Limiting alcohol outlet density, restricting late-night sales, and training serving staff to refuse service to intoxicated patrons have all proven effective. When combined with education and strong law enforcement, such measures create environments where responsible drinking is the norm, not the exception.

It is also important to address the culture of alcohol, one our society has developed over hundreds, even thousands of years. That culture has shaped many aspects of our lives, but in many ways has also gone beyond what is safe. As it was getting deeply rooted and established, this simple substance has also developed tension and many opposing views in our society – one pushing for maintaining its position, assets, benefits and privileges, the other, suffering its direct and indirect harms or highly concerned about the risks, trying to dial it back.

Know the risks, make smart choices

At the individual level, alcohol lowers inhibitions and distorts risk perception. Intoxicated individuals are more likely to engage in dangerous behaviours—such as unsafe sex, swimming while drunk, or engaging in physical altercations—that can have long-lasting consequences.

Unintentional injuries linked to alcohol include falls, burns, drownings, and poisoning. In fact,

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Michael Forster, Director of Made Safe
michael.forster@makesafe.ca

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alcohol contributes to up to 70 per cent of adult drowning deaths. Binge drinking—defined as consuming several drinks in a short period—can lead to alcohol poisoning, a potentially fatal condition characterized by vomiting, slowed breathing, and loss of consciousness.

Safety begins with personal choices like pacing drinks, eating before drinking, and avoiding alcohol in risky situations. But personal responsibility does not operate in a vacuum - it is directly and strongly influenced by social norms, rules, policies, evidence-based interventions, and legislation, among other things. It also plays out more favourably in a culture that encourages care for others—friends ensuring each other gets home safely, hosts providing non-alcoholic options and food, and communities normalizing moderation.

Education and shared responsibility

Education can be an effective tool in preventing alcohol-related harm, but it works best when paired with shared responsibility and other structural elements like policies and legislation related to licensing, enforcement, and social norms. Effective programs don't just inform and warn against drinking—they work in synergy and complement each other, coherently shaping our collective and individual behaviour, ultimately fostering understanding, empathy, and informed decision-making.

Ultimately, education should promote a collective ethic of care—where individuals recognize their influence on others' safety, and communities support healthy behaviour through culture, policy, and example.

Policy, regulation, and collective action

Public policy forms the backbone of alcohol safety. The various levels of governments influence consumption patterns through measures including taxation, pricing, licensing, accessibility, enforcement, and marketing controls. Research also plays a very important role. However, regulation alone is not enough; it must align with social values and community cooperation.

Effective policy approaches include:

- Minimum drinking age laws that limit early exposure
- Taxation and price controls that reduce excessive consumption
- Advertising restrictions to protect vulnerable groups
- Outlet and hour regulations to prevent late-night harm

When combined with local engagement—such as responsible beverage service training and community policing—these measures create safer environments. The success of countries like Iceland and Australia, where education, enforcement, and culture work hand in hand, shows that reducing harm is achievable when responsibility is shared among citizens, industry, and governments alike.

Finding the balance

Responsible drinking means recognizing both the personal and social dimensions of alcohol use. On an individual level, moderation involves understanding alcohol's harm, one's limits, one's impact on others, alternating drinks with water, and never driving or operating machinery after drinking. On a societal level, it means cultivating environments that support those choices—places where refusing a drink is respected and where moderation is celebrated rather than mocked.

Families, schools, and communities all influence drinking culture. Modelling responsible behaviour, checking in on friends, and offering alternatives to heavy drinking reinforce the idea that safety is a shared value. Collective responsibility transforms alcohol safety from an individual challenge into a community strength.

So, where now?

Alcohol's presence in human history reflects our enduring search for joy, connection, and comfort—but also our vulnerability to excess. Ensuring safety requires more than individual behaviour change - it demands a shared commitment to responsibility, compassion, and awareness.

By blending education, policy, and mutual accountability, communities can create cultures where alcohol enhances life rather than endangering it. True safety emerges when individuals act thoughtfully and societies work collectively to protect one another—proving that balance, not prohibition, is the most powerful form of prevention. ⁸

Dr. Martin Lavoie, M.D., FRCPC, is a physician with a specialty in public health and a Clinical Instructor at the School of Population and Public Health in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of British Columbia. A graduate of Université de Montréal in 1996, he has practised public health/community medicine in Québec, Alberta, and British Columbia.

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Meet **DREAM KID** Declan

Declan is a very outgoing and social little boy. He is not shy and loves to talk to anyone and everyone.

You would never think he's been through such a difficult ordeal.

This dreamer is obsessed with Oreos – but not the thin ones and DEFINITELY not the “double stuff”. They **have** to be the classic Oreos. Declan loves to watch YouTube, play Roblox on his iPad, and video games on his Xbox.

Declan has been a Dream Kid since 2024 and has been soaking in every opportunity to take back his childhood!

Kids like Declan experience moments of hope, joy, and laughter starting as soon as they begin their Dream Factory journey. Instead of just telling you, **let us show you in the video below the impact of the everyday magic** which is only made possible thanks to our incredible community!

This video was made in partnership with the incredible team at REDEYE (A CoPilot Company) to share the impact of the support people like you have provided to Dream Kids and their families.

SCAN THE QR CODE TO WATCH!



When a child is diagnosed with a life-threatening illness, it's more than just one difficult day. It's years of tests, appointments, needle pokes, and treatment.

When **Declan** was diagnosed with a heart defect in 2022, he began a medical journey consisting of CT scans and IVs, trips across the country for heart surgery, and spending weeks in the ICU.

While these moments are incredibly scary, **they also take away the chance to enjoy all the fun parts of being a kid.**

When Declan and other sick children like him become Dream Kids, we make it our mission to outshine as many of those difficult days with **memories of FUN.**

Thanks to our kind community, Dream Kids experience the joy of being a kid throughout their entire medical journey.

Before Declan's dream even came true, there were already so many moments of fun: he was the star of the show at Submission Series (a Jiu Jitsu fundraiser), he spent a day hanging out with the Winnipeg Blue Bombers, and he walked the “Cloud Carpet” dressed to the nines at the Dream Maker Auction.

Earlier this year, Declan and his family went all out at Disney World for his Dream Trip, creating countless lifelong memories together that will last forever.

But the magic doesn't stop there!

It was amazing to watch how much Declan enjoyed Disney World. He had a constant ear-to-ear smile!

Declan's dream trip to was full of special moments where he and his siblings could just enjoy being kids.

- Declan's mom

DID YOU KNOW?
On average – Dream Families stay active in our programming for 5-7 years!

Safety through risk management

Knowing what you're insuring and why is just the start

By Dustin Halvorson

Safety is always on our minds. We are making decisions throughout our days to be safe and to protect our family members, friends, and colleagues. Making sound decisions that allow the best path forward while eliminating as much risk as possible is built into our DNA.

Safety culture within an organization often falls—frequently by default—on leaders in operations, perhaps a designated safety manager, but how safe the company is and what standard the company holds comes from the top. The decision makers who set the tone on how employees are kept safe on the job are also the people who make the decisions to focus on safety across the company. This can mean safer hiring practices, proper employee reviews, safe relationships with lenders and interest holders, and attention to the details of how the company is protected in the event of a loss. Or it can mean the opposite.

Resilience of the company to withstand an unexpected loss, labour dispute, injury, or even a cyber event comes into question. Manufacturing companies have, in general, a great track record of being safe, and so much focus goes into this. Does the same attention go into proactively planning if a negative situation were to occur? Do the leaders think about contingency plans, or how insurance would and would not cover a claim?

The way businesses operate is changing weekly if not daily, especially in the current climate of tariffs, pandemic 'hangover,'

supply chain challenges, rising equipment costs, interest rate fluctuations, and growing litigious tendencies. How we think of being "safe" needs to evolve, and it takes attention and planning. Planning for growth and opportunities is great, but what about the risk dynamic of growth - is that balanced in the short- and long-term strategy your company is following?

Do your fellow leaders know the short-term strengths and weaknesses of the company? Do they know how to leverage your competitive advantage? Do they know the vision for the next 12-18 months and what success looks like? Is this regularly checked? The same goes for the three-to-five-year window.

Are leaders assigning team members into staying current on the evolving trends within the industry? Do they have time to meet with specialists to learn new best practices to support the company's goals and address weaknesses? Who is up to date on best hiring and firing practices? Who oversees knowing the best cyber and IT strategies and education for employees around fraudulent emails, requests, and the risks associated? Who is taking the time to track inventory, equipment, and building values so that your insurance policies are correct in the event of a loss? Do leaders know how their business interruption insurance would respond in the event of a catastrophic loss? Can the company pay its bills, staff, and interest holders while it rebuilds? How long would it

Manufacturing companies have, in general, a great track record of being safe, and so much focus goes into this. Does the same attention go into proactively planning if a negative situation were to occur?

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take to rebuild and regain market share if you had to start from scratch?

Another part of this exercise is to ask which losses you could “self-insure.” In other words, what losses could you withstand on your own? Have you set parameters and reserves aside for a rainy day? Have these been communicated to fellow leaders of the group.

Being safe as an organization takes planning. It takes direction, advice, and communication to the team, so you are prepared BEFORE something goes wrong. Often, we make assumptions, which can be very costly when assumed unknowingly or incorrectly.

The good news is that there are professionals that specialize in your company’s needs—accounting, banking, human resources, legal, risk management, and insurance. Have you taken the time to engage with these professionals to help plan and integrate strategy to safely support your growth, address challenges, and make the most of the opportunities around you?

As fast as your business is changing and the challenges continue to mount, now is the time to dig in and ask if what you did to get to here is what you need to do to get to there. Do you have the right support? Are you empowering your team to make changes and find solutions? Do you feel confident in the direction and plan going ahead or are you relying on comfort of the past?

Safety of your people is a daily focus, but has the same focus gone into protecting your company so that it is ready to perform through stormy economic times and prepare for the better days ahead?

Taking the time to pause and work on the business rather than only in the business is part of the solution. Dedicating time to focus on the health of your

Can the company pay its bills, staff, and interest holders while it rebuilds? How long would it take to rebuild and regain market share if you had to start from scratch?

company is time that will see a return on its investment. During this time, you can look to experts around you to guide and share thought leadership.

In my world of risk management, we are always looking for ways to optimize your risk profile and reduce the cost of risk, working from your profitability backwards. In initial conversations with business owners, we like to identify opportunities for growth, not just of revenue but growth of the company’s people, products, and services.

Proactively, we can use educated probability to predict what could go wrong and how wrong it could go. If a loss were to occur, is it actually insured and how would the policy react in its current form? Is there anything we can do to ensure the coverage you need is in place or is it an uninsurable business risk that needs to be made known, prior to a loss occurring?

Identifying opportunities with a risk advisor adds to the confidence that you can pursue opportunities knowing you have the backing to take reasonable risks and have taken steps to educate your team, clients, and interest holders about what they need to know to be as profitable in your endeavours as possible.

Taking smart risks, seeking and using advice from industry experts, and being open to ‘what if’ will give you confidence in strategizing for growth and will support the overall health and safety of your business. 𐀀

Dustin Halvorson is Partner and Managing Director of Commercial Lines at HK Henderson Insurance, Saskatchewan’s most innovative commercial brokerage.

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Why wellness should be in your budget

By Ali Stajniak

If you lead people, you lead their health. In manufacturing, the health of your workforce shows up in quality, incident rates, sickness and mental health days and overall employee burnout. Fund your employee wellness properly and you get the opposite: happier more engaged employees, fewer errors, fewer injuries, more engagement, and steadier production.

The business case (not the wellness poster)

Employee mental health concerns from burnout to depression and anxiety drain the global economy of roughly US\$1 trillion a year in lost productivity largely from presenteeism (people at work but not performing) and absenteeism (mental health and sick days). Figures from the World Health Organization indicate that every US\$1 invested in treatment for depression and anxiety returns about US\$4 in improved health and ability to work.

Closer to home, Canadian research has tracked real return on investment (ROI) from workplace mental-health programs. Analyses of Canadian employers show positive returns when organizations invest in leadership training, early intervention, and psychological support.

Engagement is the other half of the equation. When employee engagement drops, output, quality, and safety often follow. Inversely, highly engaged teams consistently show lower absenteeism and higher productivity, outcomes that manufacturers feel directly on the floor.

And then there's fatigue and burnout—constants in 24/7 operations. The National Safety Council reports that 97 per cent of workers have at least one fatigue risk factor, and fatigue is directly linked to more errors, more injuries, and more missed work.

Wellness isn't a perk

Safety is non-negotiable. Sleep, stress, and musculoskeletal resilience determine reaction time, decision-making, and injury risk. Targeted programs, including fatigue management, nutrition, mobility/strength routines, and mental-health access will lower near misses and incidents on the floor.

Talent math has changed. A credible wellness strategy improves attraction and retention because it communicates, "We run a high-performance, high-care environment." To the newest generations entering the workforce, this matters more than an extra dollar per hour.

The cost is already on your books. Absenteeism, modified duties, short-term disability, and preventable turnover are not fixed costs; they're the result of not having systems in place that prioritize and support employee wellness.

What the future of corporate wellness looks like

A wellness plan that works isn't a fruit basket in the staff room or a team building day once a year. It is a well-designed operating system that fits your shifts, your constraints, and your risks:

- Leadership micro-skills, and mental health first aid: Equipping supervisors to spot risk early, hold better one-on-ones, and route people to support without stigma
- Regular, ongoing access to fitness facilities or a budget dedicated to enable the behaviour. Ongoing access to support in this area, in person or virtual, will reduce workers compensation claims and improve stamina for repetitive and awkward tasks.
- Food that fits the floor: Realistic nutrition for night and rotating shifts, hydration plans, and high nutrient vending/meal setups that promote wellness.
- Confidential mental-health access: Rapid triage to virtual counseling, psychological safety training for leaders, and peer resource visibility.
- Fatigue and shift-work protocols: Sleep education, schedule design consults, and employer flexibility to schedule for employee work life balance.
- Measurement that matters: Track leading indicators (near misses, first-aid-only incidents, schedule adherence, participation), not just a monthly step count.

If your current "program" can't demonstrate impact on safety, quality, or schedule stability within a quarter, it's not a program, it's a marketing poster.

The payoff

Bottom line: corporate wellness isn't about putting a ping-pong table in the break room or buying pizza once a month. It is about investing in your employees' health and wellbeing by providing an environment for wellness and access to professional guidance in order to move the company needle.

When organizations invest in mental health and practical, job-specific wellness, they see meaningful returns in fewer injuries, steadier attendance, and better performance. With engagement slipping worldwide and fatigue driving costly errors, underfunding wellness in 2026 is a strategic risk.

If you'd rather outsource the heavy lifting, that's an entirely fine option! Let the experts take care of your employee wellness plan this year and watch your team engagement rise. You'll see the payoff in in your accounts and, more importantly, in your people. ☞

Ali Stajniak is Founder of Podium Executive Club, a luxury fitness and co-working facility in Regina. She has spent the past decade helping people, from executives to athletes, bridge the gap between physical health and personal or professional success.



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