



Danger

Workers at Risk

**New research reveals Alberta's
dismal record of under-funding
workplace safety**



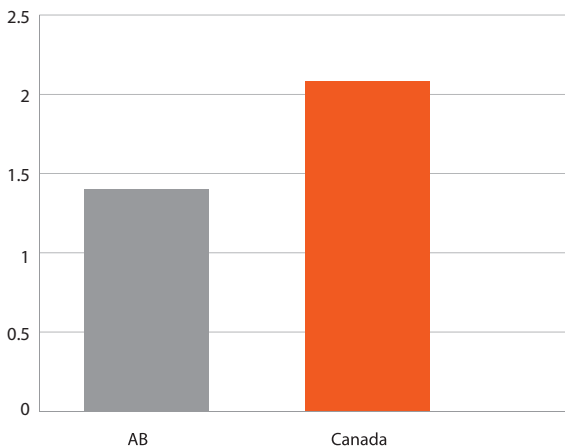
Alberta is one of the *most dangerous* places in Canada to be a worker.

Our province consistently records more workplace deaths than the national average. As a proportion of our overall labour force, we have more people working in dangerous occupations and industries than other provinces.

Given these facts, you'd think our provincial government would spend more on workplace health and safety than other provinces – but you'd be wrong.

The reality is that Alberta has fewer occupational health and safety inspectors than the Canadian average. In 2009, the Alberta government spent less on occupational health and safety than the Getty government did in 1991. Over that same period, the number of Albertans working in dangerous occupations has more than doubled.

Occupational Health and Safety Inspectors per 100,000 Workers



Spending on Occupational Health and Safety Trails Our Growing Economy

Alberta government spending on Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) has not kept pace with the growth in our provincial economy or changes in our provincial work force. In 1991, the Government of Alberta spent \$11.14 per worker on OH&S programs; in 2009, we spent \$10.13 per worker (both figures measured in 2002 constant dollars).

Alberta also spends less than many other jurisdictions on worker health and safety programs. For example, in 2009 Ontario spent \$10.80/worker, Nova Scotia spent \$13.61, and Manitoba spent \$11.73.

Number of Occupational Health and Safety Inspectors Lower Than National Average

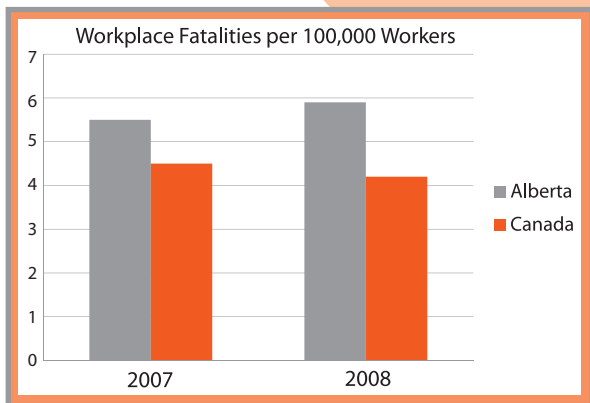
The Government of Alberta employs only 1.4 health and safety inspectors per 10,000 workers; the national average is 2.08. Only B.C. (1.0) and Quebec (1.1) employ fewer inspectors per 10,000 workers than Alberta.

Alberta's relatively small number of inspectors is particularly troubling in light of recent revelations from Alberta's Auditor General.

In his 2010 report, the Auditor concluded that "there are serious weaknesses in the (Alberta government's) systems to deal with persistent non-compliance. The Department does not have a clear decision ladder for escalating compliance action from promotion and education to enforcement."

In other words, not only does Alberta have an inadequate number of health and safety inspectors – it also doesn't empower those inspectors to crack down on employers who are violating the province's own health and safety rules.





Fatalities

Workers in Alberta are more likely to die on the job than workers in other provinces. Workplace fatalities increased substantially during Alberta's economic boom, but even during the most recent recession, unsafe work sites continue to result in serious injuries and death on the job. In 2008, the most recent year for which national statistics are available, there were 5.9 deaths per 100,000 workers in Alberta compared to the national average of 4.2 deaths per 100,000 workers.

Alberta cut spending on OH&S sharply in the 1990s, from a high of \$11.14/worker in 1991 to a low of \$4/worker in 2000. Workplace deaths in Alberta increased from 77 to 118 in that same period.

More Albertans work in dangerous occupations

As Alberta's economy has become more dependent on oil and gas, and oilsands-related construction activity, our workplaces have changed.

As we have seen, provincial per-worker spending on workplace safety has dropped since 1991. But since that time, the number of Albertans working in construction, manufacturing, mining and/or oil and gas, and transportation – the industries responsible for the highest number of disabling injuries and fatalities – grew by 50 per cent.

In 1991, 15 per cent (341,000 workers) of the Alberta workforce worked in the top four most dangerous occupations. In 2009, 22 per cent (620,000 workers) of Albertans worked in the most dangerous occupations.

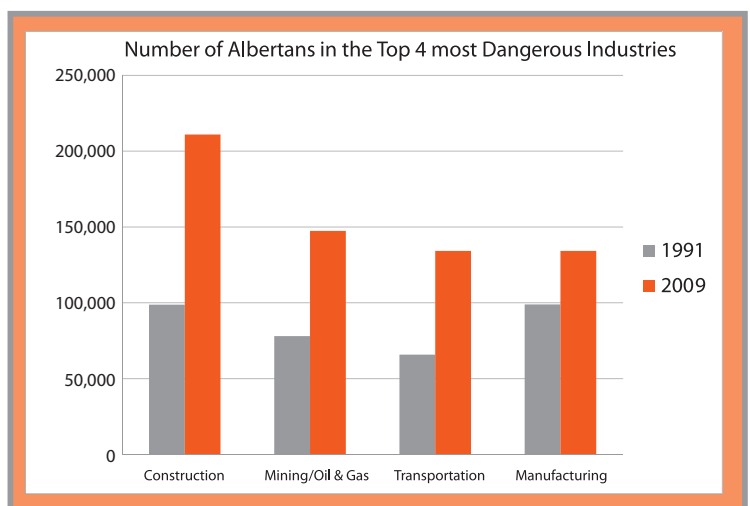
Proportionately, Alberta has four times more people in resource-extraction industries – one of Canada's most dangerous industries – than the Canadian average.

Alberta WCB Premiums for Dangerous Occupations Lowest in Canada

Alberta companies, especially in the most dangerous industries, pay the lowest Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) premiums in Canada.

In Alberta, oil and natural gas exploration companies pay just \$0.55/\$100 payroll, while companies in the rest of Canada pay four times as much, at \$2/\$100 payroll. Industrial construction companies in Alberta pay just \$2.04/\$100 payroll; in the rest of Canada companies pay more than double that, at \$4.30/\$100 payroll hour.

Alberta's low premium rates beg the question: If so little revenue is being collected by the Alberta WCB compared to other provincial WCBs, are injured Alberta workers getting the kind of support that they need and deserve?





**ALBERTA
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Data Sources

Government of Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Spending

Budget Estimates, Government of Alberta, 1991 – 2010. 1991 figures from Executive Council estimates, budget actuals, Occupational Health and Safety. Sub-program: all education, inspection, compliance programs in occupational health and safety.

2009 figures from Department of Employment and Immigration budget estimates, Occupational Health and Safety programs (legislation, technical support, and compliance/regional services), 2009 forecast spending.

All Government of Alberta spending figures are adjusted for inflation. All figures are expressed in 2002 constant dollars, using the Alberta Consumer Price Index inflation multiplier.

Figures are divided by labour force statistics, taken from Statistics Canada, CANSIM, Labour Force Survey (annual,

adjusted for seasonality). v2367943 Alberta; Labour force (Persons); Total, all industries; Both sexes; 15 years and over.

Spending figures for other provinces are adjusted to 2002 constant dollars using the Canadian Consumer Price Index inflation multiplier.

Number of Occupational Health and Safety Inspectors

Figures are taken from 2006 Census (most recent and comprehensive available), National Occupation Classification. C163 – Inspectors in Public and Environmental Health and Occupational Health and Safety, subcategory 912 – Provincial and territorial governments, public administration.

Fatalities

Figures are taken from Association of Workers' Compensation Boards of Canada, Workplace Fatalities Accepted by Workers' Compensation Boards by Province and Territory, 1993-2008 (most recent available).

1991 worker fatality figures are taken from Alberta Federation of Labour, Day of Mourning statistics, 2000.

Albertans in Dangerous Occupations

Definition of "dangerous occupation" from Alberta Employment and Immigration, Office of Official Statistics, Rates of Disabling Injury by Sector, 2008 (most recent available). Labour Force Statistics taken from Statistics Canada, CANSIM, Labour Force Survey (annual, adjusted for seasonality). Canada Tables v2363353 – v2363380; Alberta Tables v2367943 – v2367970.

WCB Premiums

Figures from Association of Workers' Compensation Boards of Canada, Key Statistical Measures, 2008.