

WCB - ALBERTA

WorkSIGHT

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Winter 2010

ISSN 1488-4631

Volume 4, Issue 2

Going to new heights with OIS

**GORDON FOOD SERVICE
RETAINS ITS PEOPLE
AND LOWERS
CLAIMS COSTS**



**YOUR SAFETY INVESTMENT
PAYS OFF** WCB's average
premium rate drops to \$1.22

THE TRIED AND TRUE
Key basics result in a decade
of discounts

PREVAILING OVER PTSD
Confronting psychological injuries
and beginning a new career

Driving home the benefits of

OIS Same-day access to treatment helps recovery

By: Jacqueline Varga

Carlos Pereira can't say enough about WCB's Occupational Injury Service (OIS), a program specifically designed for work-related injuries.

As the health and safety co-ordinator for Edmonton's Gordon Food Services (GFS) location, he says the OIS program has made a huge difference to his company's health and safety efforts, as well as its bottom line.

"I can't think of any logical reason why a company wouldn't use OIS," Pereira says. "The write-up we get from OIS physicians, for example, is much more in depth. It allows me to set up a much better modified work program."

OIS clinics offer multiple benefits to employers such as GFS. Injured workers can receive same-day access to an OIS physician, in-depth medical reporting, clear treatment communication and expedited diagnostic services (such as MRIs).

GFS is a broad-line food distributor with customers across Canada and the U.S. It employs approximately 680 people throughout Alberta. Three years ago, when GFS signed up with OIS, a worksite visit was conducted at its Edmonton distribution facility. Occupational specialists learned more about the company's

operation and gathered on-site information about the physical job demands.

"Because they are aware of what we do, they're able to assess an injury and have a better sense of the mechanism of injury," Pereira explains.

Statistics show that the up-front investment in best-practice disability management pays off in the long term. Employers see a faster return to work and lower claims costs when workers access OIS. Pereira's experience with the program over the past three years certainly supports the statistics—he has noticed a definite reduction in the amount of time his injured employees have been off the job.

Using the program has helped GFS retain skilled employees and avoid having to hire and train replacement workers. It has also reduced the company's compensation costs because workers are treated faster and back on the job sooner.

Pereira says it's a win-win situation for everyone. "The staff at the clinic make our guys feel at ease, which makes them more comfortable using it. From a human resources perspective, it helps to retain good employees. We see people wanting to stay with the company, so we're very satisfied, ecstatic even, with the OIS program." >>



Carlos Pereira (*centre*), health and safety co-ordinator, implemented OIS at GFS's Edmonton facility. Service representatives Ryan Lederhouse (*left*) and Jarrett Roberts (*right*) have both benefitted from the program.



“We see people wanting to stay with the company, so we’re very satisfied, ecstatic even, with the OIS program.” – Carlos Pereira

PHOTO: LAUGHING DOG PHOTOGRAPHY



Jarrett Roberts was unloading a skid of food from the side door of his truck when he slipped and fell backwards, hitting his head and left shoulder on the ground. As if that weren't bad enough, the box then fell on top of him. "The pain felt like I got shot in the shoulder," says Roberts, an Edmonton GFS service representative.

Roberts suffered a separated shoulder, which put him in a sling for over five weeks. After he received emergency medical care, he attended an OIS clinic for an assessment and evaluation, and to set up a return-to-work plan.

Roberts received a physiotherapy rehabilitation plan at the OIS clinic and credits the specialized care for his quick recovery and early return to work. "The OIS clinic gives you the resources you need to get back to work. I got good advice, and the pulley system they gave me for my home exercises really worked."



PHOTOS: LAUGHING DOG PHOTOGRAPHY

Ryan Lederhouse, a service representative with GFS for the past six years, is used to the common aches and pains that come with driving a delivery truck and unloading heavy boxes. But one morning last July, he suffered a sharp, stabbing pain down his left leg that left him unable to walk by the end of the day.

Lederhouse attended an OIS clinic, where he saw a physician who assessed his condition and arranged for an MRI. It turns out he had a ruptured disc in his lower back, which he attributes to years of handling heavy loads. He had surgery to correct the problem and is now pain-free and back at work.

The OIS process was simple, Lederhouse says. "You don't have to wait around to see a doctor. Everything is taken care of for you; all you have to do is show up for your appointments." 