

TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY PROGRAMS SET TO HELP IMPROVE HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK

Richmond, B.C., January 23, 2009: Hotels, restaurants, pubs and ski hills in BC now have a new resource to help reduce injuries and improve workplace safety. go2, BC's tourism and hospitality industry human resources association, will publicly launch their new health and safety division at the BC Foodservice Expo, Western Canada's largest hospitality show, January 25–27.

“Tourism and hospitality workers are at risk of injury from a number of health and safety hazards such as slips, cuts, or burns, and with about a third of the industry's workforce between the ages of 15 and 24 many of the claims we see come from young workers,” said Terri Holizki, WorkSafeBC's Industry and Labour Services Manager for Small Business. “WorkSafeBC believes a designated partner agency that has industry-specific health and safety knowledge will help to reduce injuries to these vulnerable workers.”

WorkSafeBC and go2 have signed an agreement for go2 to develop a health and safety division initially for employers in hotels, restaurants, pubs and ski hills. Moving forward, go2 will work with WorkSafeBC to promote their services to all tourism and hospitality industry workplaces across BC. A key component of the agreement includes implementing and administering a Partners in Injury and Disability Prevention Program (COR program) for these employers in tourism and hospitality.

The new health and safety division of go2 will focus on reducing the injury rate by:

- Evaluating causes of injuries and fatalities, and advocating reasonable and practical cost-effective solutions to those problems
- Identifying, assessing, and communicating best safety practices in the industry
- Consulting with the industry on selected well-defined, high-priority safety issues

“Taking on the health and safety initiative for the tourism and hospitality industry is a natural fit for go2 and it is in line with our overall mandate to coordinate and implement the industry’s Human Resources strategic plan, which includes training,” said Arlene Keis, CEO, go2. “We are looking forward to working with the associations within our sector to reduce the number of work-related injuries and to increase our safety record. Ultimately the incentive-based structure of the Certificate of Recognition (COR) program will translate to bottom-line business results for BC tourism and hospitality employers.”

A statutory committee of go2’s Board of Directors will oversee the design and development of the health and safety division programs. The Health and Safety Committee will be chaired by an industry board member and will consist of qualified industry representatives from all regions and all major sectors. go2 has commenced a search for a manager of the new Health and Safety Division and Certifying Partner to lead the development of this new service mandate.

WorkSafeBC is an independent provincial statutory agency governed by a Board of Directors that serves about two million workers and more than 200,000 employers. WorkSafeBC was born from the historic compromise between B.C.’s workers and employers in 1917 where workers gave up the right to sue their employers and fellow workers for injuries on the job in return for a no-fault insurance program fully paid for by employers. The organization is committed to safe and healthy workplaces and to providing return-to-work rehabilitation and legislated compensation benefits.

go2 is BC’s tourism and hospitality human resource association helping the industry to recruit, retain and train to support industry growth. Tourism is one of the largest resource industries in BC comprising 18,000 mostly small to medium sized businesses which directly employ over 117,900 British Columbians. Tourism is one of the most significant economic generators in BC with over \$10 billion in spending in 2007. For more information, visit www.go2hr.ca.

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