

AFTER A
Workplace
Fatality

Support, Information,
and Ongoing Care



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Our Condolences

01

We are deeply sorry for your loss.

The death of a loved one in a workplace incident can be devastating and life-altering. You may be experiencing shock, grief, anger, confusion, or numbness. There is no right or wrong way to feel, and no set timeline for grieving.

WorkSafeNB is here to support you and your family during this difficult time. This guide explains what may happen next, what supports are available, and who will help guide you through the process.

*You do not need to read this all at once.
Take what is helpful now and return to it
when you are ready.*

Understanding a Workplace Fatality

02

A workplace fatality is a tragic and sudden event that can leave families facing many questions and unfamiliar processes.

Grief can affect people differently and may change over time. Some common reactions include:

- » **Intense sadness or disbelief**
- » **Difficulty sleeping or concentrating**
- » **Anger or guilt**
- » **Anxiety or fear about the future**
- » **Physical exhaustion**

These reactions are normal. There is no wrong way to grieve, and support is available when you need it.



What Happens Next?

03

When a workplace fatality occurs, the employer is required to notify WorkSafeNB immediately.

An investigator will be assigned to determine what happened and to help prevent similar incidents in the future. The investigator will contact the family and meet with them within 48 hours to explain the investigation process and answer questions. They will also provide their contact information, so the family knows how to reach them throughout the investigation.

The investigator will also begin the process of opening a claim. To receive benefits, the family will be guided through a short application process.

If charges are laid, the investigator will meet with the family to review the charges and explain what to expect in the legal process.

WorkSafeNB's Role

04

WorkSafeNB has several responsibilities following a workplace fatality, including:

- » **Providing compensation and benefits to eligible family members**
- » **Investigating under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act***
- » **Sharing findings of investigation with the Office of the Chief Coroner**
- » **Referring cases to the Crown prosecutor office when prosecutable violations are identified**

Investigations can take time and may take up to 24 months to complete. While not all information can be shared immediately, the investigator will keep the family informed about the process and will meet with the family to review the findings once the investigation is complete.



Information You May be Asked For

05

To help process benefits and supports, WorkSafeNB staff may ask for some basic information, such as:

- » **Basic personal and contact information**
- » **Employment details related to the incident**
- » **Information about dependents (if applicable)**
- » **Banking information for benefit payments**
- » **Any documents already provided by the employer**

Benefits and Financial Supports

06

If your loved one's death is confirmed to be work-related, WorkSafeNB may provide benefits to eligible family members. These may include:

- » **Coverage for burial and related expenses**
- » **Benefits for a surviving spouse or partner**
- » **Benefits for dependent children**

There are timelines to apply for benefits. WorkSafeNB staff can help explain what is available and help with the application process.





Investigation Findings and the Legal Process

07

Once the investigation is complete, the investigator will meet with the family to review the findings and answer questions.

If charges are laid under workplace safety legislation, WorkSafeNB will refer the matter to the Crown prosecutor. Court proceedings, if any, are managed by the Crown and are separate from WorkSafeNB.

Families who wish to attend court proceedings will be advised of dates and can ask questions about the process.

Can the Worker or Family Sue?

08

WorkSafeNB operates as a no-fault insurance system. This means workers and their families receive compensation regardless of who was responsible for the incident.

In most situations, this system replaces the ability to sue an employer for a workplace injury or death. Instead, compensation and benefits are provided through WorkSafeNB under the *Workers' Compensation Act*.

If you have questions about how this system works, WorkSafeNB staff can help explain it.



Media, Privacy, and Public Attention

Workplace fatalities may attract media attention. You are not required to speak to the media. You may choose not to comment, to delay responding, or to appoint a spokesperson.

If you do speak publicly:

- » **Share only what you feel comfortable discussing**
- » **Set clear boundaries about what is private**
- » **Take time before responding if you need it**

Protecting your privacy and well-being is important.

In many situations, rumors, social media and stories will come out about the incident. These are hard to hear because there is a lot of misinformation. The investigator is always available to answer questions and clarify any rumors you hear. The goal of the investigator is to be transparent and honest with the family.

Grief, Trauma, and Ongoing Support

Grief does not follow a straight path. For some, the impact may lessen over time. For others, it may resurface unexpectedly.

Counselling and mental health supports are available and may help you cope with grief, trauma, or stress reactions. If grief or stress reactions become overwhelming or continue over time, additional support may be helpful.

Reaching out for help is a healthy and important step, and support is available when you need it.



