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Information Request and Responses: Non-binary data collection and communications

Board/Commission: AWCBC

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Topic: Non-binary data collection and communications

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Required Date: March 25, 2020

REQUEST:

Increasingly, countries and organizations around the world are working to be more inclusive in the collection of gender data and related communications. Currently, when tracking workplace injuries and illnesses by gender all Canadian workers' compensation boards and commissions code by the male or female sex. However, there is increasing recognition that sex at birth and gender are two different things. To acknowledge the diversity of the Canadian population and to give Canadians the opportunity to provide their gender in a non-binary fashion, Statistics Canada will be collecting census data on sex at birth as well as gender. Its definition of gender is as follows:

"Gender refers to the gender that a person internally feels ('gender identity' along the gender spectrum) and/or the gender a person publicly expresses ('gender expression') in their daily life, including at work, while shopping or accessing other services, in their housing environment or in the broader community. A person's current gender may differ from the sex a person was assigned at birth (male or female) and may differ from what is indicated on their current legal documents. A person's gender may change over time."

A recent survey conducted by the AWCBC National Workplace Statistics Program (NWISP) amongst its members indicates that most jurisdictions have no immediate plans to change their gender data collection but are anticipating change in the future especially as new IT systems allow for this. This change will not only conform to new non-binary statistical standards but also allow for more informed data analysis for injury/illness prevention.

To support future data collection changes, forms and corporate communications would capture new fields while also allowing for gender-neutral text. The Canadian government has developed guidelines for gender-neutral writing in English and French. These guidelines avoid references to gender whenever possible.

https://www.btb.termiumplus.gc.ca/tpv2guides/guides/wrtps/index-eng.html?lang=eng&lettr=indx_catlog_g&page=9tZXuAe4oZYs.html#an5

As AWCBC is the collector of Canadian workplace injury and illness data, it wants to ensure it is proactive and up to date with non-binary statistical standards and related communications. To help us plan for future changes, can you kindly advise your jurisdiction's practice pertaining to the following:

1. Do you ask for sex and gender separately on your WCB forms? If so, what are the categories? If not, do you have plans to change?
2. Do you use titles routinely when corresponding with each person such as Mr. Mrs. Ms? Or, do you avoid titles?
3. Do you use gender-inclusive or no pronouns in your communications?
4. Do you have corporate guidelines to share regarding gender-neutral communications?
5. Is there anything else you can share on the topic?

	Contact	Response
AB	<p>pieter.lambooy@wcb.ab.ca val.kushniruk@wcb.ab.ca</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At present we do not differentiate between sex and gender on our forms. We do have plans to change that in the coming years. We will make changes in future that go beyond traditional binary codes. 2. We have removed adding titles when corresponding with workers or stakeholders 3. We do not use pronouns in our communications, and we are in the process of revising all our documents and templates to facilitate that practice - including changing our procedures and our policies 4. You will see below we have draft guidelines that will be available to our staff once the pandemic situation is over and we are back at the office (Q2 likely): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusive language Avoid unnecessary descriptors – avoid labels that refer to a person's gender, race, sexual orientation, age or disability, unless valid to the purpose of the communication. Not: Mr. Smith, please advise on behalf of your wife, Mrs. Smith. But: John Smith, please advise on behalf of Heather Smith. Gender neutrality – use inclusive terms rather than gendered terms. Not: Mankind, man-hours, businessman But: Humankind, working hours, businessperson Pronouns – to avoid assuming one's preferred pronoun, eliminate pronouns where possible. Use 'they, them, their, etc.' It is OK to use pronouns if you have confirmed the subject's preferred pronoun. Not: Please discuss with the client to confirm he or she is happy. But: Please discuss with the client to see if they are happy with the plan. 5. Nothing specific to this topic.
BC	<p>Jeff.Miniely@worksafebc.com Stella.Kwok@worksafebc.com nicolette.gatzke@worksafebc.com</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We do not at this time. We are waiting an extensive external review report to be released with many recommendations. This issue is expected to be addressed in that review. 2. We avoid titles. 3. Our editorial style guide includes this section: Gender Neutral Language

- Use language that is as gender-inclusive and gender-neutral as possible, while still retaining clarity for the reader.
- When the gender of a person is unknown, cast sentences as plural if possible or otherwise write to eliminate the need for a gender-specific pronoun.
- Choose gender-neutral terms (e.g., chair or chairperson, not chairman).
- **Exception:** Fisherman is the term strongly preferred by industry members; in general writing, use fisherman, rather than fisher or fisherperson.
- Don't use false generics or male-specific nouns and pronouns to represent both women and men (e.g., use human, not man, to represent the species).
- Don't use the phrases he or she, his or her, he (or she), (s)he, s/he, his/her, or similar combinations. Instead, avoid binary references to gender by recasting the sentence as plural if possible, using second person or imperative if appropriate, or otherwise rewriting to eliminate the pronoun.
- Use the singular they and their with indefinite singular pronouns such as anybody, anyone, everybody, everyone, and nobody (e.g., We asked everyone what they wanted to do first).
- Don't use they and their to replace a definite singular pronoun (e.g., he, she, his, her). Instead, recast the sentence as plural if possible or otherwise rewrite to eliminate the pronoun. Pronouns must agree in number with the noun they refer to.
- **Exception:** The singular they or alternative gender-neutral pronouns such as ze should only be used in reference to a specific individual at that person's request. This preference will usually need to be mentioned to avoid confusion. The singular they is treated as plural for verb agreement (i.e., they are, not they is).

Example 1: The meeting started when Joan, the committee chairperson, arrived.

Or

The meeting started when Joan, the committee chair, arrived.

Example 2: The worker was not using ear protection.

Example 3: Workers must check with their employers for program approval.

Or

Check with your employer for program approval.


Or

Participation in the program requires employer approval.

Example 4: Beck Smith, who prefers to be identified with the pronoun "they," said they were happy with how quickly their concern had been resolved.

4. See above

		5. The review we are expecting has been completed and submitted to the minister. It is unclear at this time whether it will be released before or after further stakeholder consultation.
MB	<p>Kim Vincent Kvincent@wcb.mb.ca</p> <p>Dan Holland DHOLLAND@wcb.mb.ca</p> <p>Maryjune Deslate Mdeslate@wcb.mb.ca</p> <p>Candace Crossland ccrossla@wcb.mb.ca</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The WCB of Manitoba asks only for gender. The space to identify gender is a free-form space in our paper form (no check boxes). The online fillable PDF form, internal reporting system and claims management system provide the option to enter Male, Female or leave the section blank. Our online reporting form provides a Male/Female option. Plans to change have yet to be discussed. 2. Our templated letters to workers use the name we have the claim registered under, without titles; our templated letters to service providers and employers have a Sir/Madame salutation. Titles are sometimes used in free-form letters and are decided upon by the writer. 3. Templated letters do not use pronouns, but use the worker's name. Pronouns are generally used in free-form letters and are decided upon by the writer. 4. No 5. Nothing else to share
NB	<p>Angela.Kippers@ws-ts.nb.ca</p> <p>monica.mallaley@ws-ts.nb.ca</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Our forms ask to select sex either male or female. At this time, we don't expect a change. 2. We will use titles, when known. We avoid titles when not known. 3. We tend to avoid pronouns in communications or use "their" in replacement for "his" or "her". 4. At is time, we do not. 5. We would be very interested in learning of your findings.
NL		
NS		
NT/NU	Michelle.Saunders@wscc.nt.ca	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In 2019, all WSCC forms were reviewed and edited from a gender-inclusivity perspective. The sex fields were removed entirely where deemed unnecessary and, where sex is recorded, a gender identity option – Gender X – was added. 2. At this time, we are currently using these particular salutations in correspondence with workers if the titles are identified in our internal claim management software system. This is informed by gender data collection from applicable forms. Internally, the corporate email signature has the option of including preferred pronouns: Thank you, Name Title Division Pronouns I use: she, her, hers Pronouns I use: he, him, his

		<p>Pronouns I use: they, them, theirs</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. The amendments to the Workers' Compensation Act which came into effect on February 10, 2020 removed all gender binary language (e.g. "he" and "she") from our governing legislation. This change was mirrored in WSCC policies. 4. No formal guidelines have been developed but gender inclusivity is tied to WSCC organizational values of engagement and respect. A course on Diversity and Inclusion is included in all new employee orientation and required training. 5. In our internal claim management software system, we can currently only choose M or F. We put an interim 'fix' in our procedure of adding the info to the warnings should an individual wish to identify as Gender X. Remedial software updates to our claims management software system are planned which will allow for full functionality of gender neutral data collection. <p>In our 2019 Public Awareness Survey, the WSCC worked with a surveying contractor to come up with an effective compromise to preserve M/F representativeness while also providing a representative percentage for non-binary respondents to be used in the reporting and interpretation of the results. StatsCan currently does not recognize a response option other than M or F to sex so instead of collecting non-binary responses only to remove it later, they recommend terminating the interview. This poses significant challenges to ensuring the sample size in any public surveying research that is weighted against census information is indeed representative.</p> <p>Upgrades are being carried out to the washrooms at the WSCC offices in Yellowknife to make them Universally Accessible.</p>
<p>ON</p>	<p>Linda_Lai@wsib.on.ca</p>	<p>Currently we do not collect data regarding sex (not gender) primarily because it is relevant to actuarial calculations. There has been some discussion about providing an "other" category on forms however, at this time we have not landed on an approach. We will keep you posted if there any any updates.</p> <p>Please see attached our style guide under Inclusive Language. The style guide pages that I have attached should answer Questions 2, 3 and 4.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Inclusive Language.pdf</p> </div>
<p>PE</p>	<p>Craig Abbott cabbott@wcb.pe.ca Sean Doyle sdoyle@wcb.pe.ca</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We do not ask for sex and gender separately on our forms. Currently, on our worker's and employer's report, we ask for sex. We do have plans on updating these forms in the future with more inclusive language. 2. We use "Dear" when sending correspondence followed by the name (e.g. Dear John Smith). We do not use Mr. or Mrs. in our correspondence. 3. We generally use gender inclusive pronouns in our communications 4. We have a WCB Style Guide.

		5. As we continue to update policies, procedures and practices, we are changing non-inclusive language to inclusive language.
QC	Josee.Beaudoin@cnesst.gouv.qc.ca sophie.genest@cnesst.gouv.qc.ca Marilou.Gariepy@cnesst.gouv.qc.ca Chantal.St-Amant@cnesst.gouv.qc.ca Nathalie.St-Pierre@cnesst.gouv.qc.ca	<p>1. Non, le sexe et le genre ne sont pas demandés de manière séparée sur les formulaires. Nous n'avons pas planifié changer cette pratique pour le moment.</p> <p>2. Oui, les formules "monsieur" ou "madame" sont utilisées dans les communications.</p> <p>3. La rédaction épïcène est favorisée dans l'organisation.</p> <p>4. Une capsule de formation sur la rédaction épïcène a été développée pour les employés et employées de la CNESST. Cette capsule explique notamment que la rédaction épïcène est une façon d'écrire qui permet d'accorder une valeur équitable à l'homme et à la femme dans les communications écrites. Cela ne signifie pas de féminiser tous les mots, mais de recourir à diverses techniques simples, telles que l'utilisation de termes neutres, par exemple. La rédaction épïcène inclut l'utilisation de mots épïcènes et de mots qui désignent explicitement les hommes et les femmes, mais aussi la féminisation des textes, qui suppose d'inclure parfois le féminin et de le mettre aux côtés du masculin. Un mot « épïcène » a la même forme au masculin et au féminin, comme « cadre », « collègue » ou « responsable ».</p> <p>5. n/a</p>
SK	<p>Jeff Dirksen jdirksen@wcbask.com</p> <p>Cindy Glaser cglaser@wcbask.com</p>	<p>1. The Saskatchewan Workers Compensation Board (SWCB) asks only for gender (male or female) on our forms. There are no plans to change this at the present time.</p> <p>2. The SWCB does currently use titles on our correspondence (Mr. Mrs. Ms).</p> <p>3. We typically use gender-neutral pronouns (we, our, your, they etc.) or traditional pronouns (his, her etc.)</p> <p>4. SWCB does not have specific policies regarding gender –neutral / gender – inclusive guidelines for communications.</p> <p>5. Nothing specific to this topic.</p>
YK		

Inclusive language

Gender neutrality

Use inclusive terms rather than gendered terms.

“humankind” rather than “mankind”

“staffing the office” rather than “manning the office”

“working hours” rather than “man hours”

“artificial,” “synthetic,” or “constructed” rather than “man-made”

When you must use gendered nouns, use parallel references:

“women and men” rather than “girls and men”

Whenever possible, eliminate pronouns, such as “he or she,” “him or her,” “s/he” or “he/she,” “him/her.” You can often re-work the sentence to use “they,” “anyone,” “everyone” and “someone”.

Avoid indicating marital or family status unless necessary. Use the term spouse rather than husband/wife, as you don’t know which the person has—if any.

When titles are used, they should be used consistently for all people listed. Use “Ms.” instead of “Mrs.” or “Miss”.

Dr. Mary Low, Mr. Philip Lalonde, Ms. Dionne Hudson

Mental and physical disabilities

A person’s disability should not be mentioned unless it is relevant. As in other cases, it is better to ask the individual what they prefer.

Avoid defining people by their disorders or depersonalizing people by turning descriptors into nouns. For example, you should never say “the disabled,” “the blind,” “an epileptic,” “a schizophrenic.”

Use language that puts the person first, not the disability.

a person with Down syndrome

a person with schizophrenia

a person diagnosed with mental illness

a person living with fibromyalgia

a person who is blind

a person who is deaf or hard of hearing

a person who has a visual or hearing impairment

a person who has epilepsy

Moving away from using “injured worker” helps us use people-first language and think about our customers as individual people.

“Visual impairment” or “sight impairment” are often used to indicate some loss of vision or as alternatives to “blind.” Some individuals or groups may dislike the use of “impaired.”

The preferred terms are “deaf” or “hard of hearing” rather than “hearing impaired.”

Use factual rather than negative references or stereotypical assumptions. A person may have a condition but may not necessarily “suffer” from it.

a “person who uses a wheelchair” rather than “wheelchair-bound person”

a “person with a mobility issue who uses a wheelchair”

a “person who has had a stroke” rather than “stroke victim”

Sexuality and gender identity

A person’s sexual orientation should not be mentioned unless relevant and necessary.

Whenever possible, use the terms that are preferred by the people you are interacting with or referencing. Gay and lesbian are the preferred adjectives to describe people attracted to the same sex. “Lesbian” can be used as a noun, but gay should not be used as a noun. Do not use the expression queer. Refer to sexual orientation, not sexual preference.

Transgender is an umbrella term under which more specific descriptions fall, such as people who do not fit well within traditional concepts of gender or who may feel as though their biological sex and their socially expected gender do not match up. Use the terms and pronouns the person uses to describe themselves. If you don’t know – ask.

Use the abbreviation LGBTQ+ for general references to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, two-spirited, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, and ally community.

Race, ethnicity and faith

Our communications should reflect the diversity of our employees and customers in a natural way, free of explicit or unconscious racism or other discrimination. A person’s race, colour, national origin or religion should only be identified when it is truly necessary.

Avoid stereotypes, generalizations or assumptions about ethnic or racial groups. Try to be inclusive in the use of examples, where appropriate.

Avoid expressions that may be culture-bound and may contain stereotypes, racial slurs or other inappropriate meanings.

Whenever possible, use the terms that are preferred by the people you are interacting with or referencing.

Indigenous Peoples

Indigenous Peoples includes all people who identify as First Nations, Inuit or Métis.

Do not use the possessive phrase “Canada’s Indigenous Peoples (or First Nations/Inuit/Métis)” as that implies ownership of Indigenous Peoples. A better approach is “Indigenous Peoples in Canada.”

At the community level, follow their lead. If someone uses First Nation, as in Aamjiwnaang First Nation, then go with that. Some communities use band, as in Burns Lake Band, while others use nation, as in Squamish Nation. Some use Indian, as in the Osoyoos Indian Band.

Age

Most times there is no need to refer to a person's age. When the need arises, list the specific age number, rather than assigning a category that may be vague and create negative connotations (for example, "millennials"). Do not use language that patronizes, sentimentalizes, distorts, or ignores people based on their age number. Avoid negative, value-laden terms that overextend the limitations of a young person's developmental stage or the severity of an older person's health.

Abbreviations, acronyms and initialisms

Use periods with initialisms that appear in lowercase, but no spaces.

e.g., a.k.a., a.m., p.m.

Do not use periods with initialisms that appear in uppercase.

VP, USA (US), CEO

Abbreviations with mixed upper and lowercase should have a period at the end.

Dr., Mr., Mrs., Ms.

Do not include a space between initials.

J.B. Doe

Place acronyms and initialisms in uppercase except when they have become common words.

NAFTA, NATO, scuba, laser

Initialisms of provinces and territories should appear in uppercase without periods.

AB, BC, MB, NB, NL, NS, NWT, NU, ON, PEI, QC, SK, YT

Place foreign currency codes in uppercase.

CAD, USD

Addresses

Always write street addresses using numbers (not spelled out).

In numbered addresses, write Ave., Blvd., Cir., Cres., Dr., Hwy., Pky., Rd., Rte., Sq., St., Ter.

40 University Ave.

Single letter initialisms are followed by a period.