



# 2019 Safety Groups and Advantage Programs

## Frequently asked questions

### Employer questions

- 1. If my firm stays in the regular Safety Groups Program after five years, do I have to select element A6: Health & Safety Management Review Document (Internal Audit) as outlined in the Employer Guidelines 5<sup>th</sup> Edition?**

No. Firms that remain in the Safety Groups Program in 2019 after five years of participation are no longer required to select element A6.

- 2. Is my firm entitled to receive the 2019 Safety Groups Program rebate regardless of the program option we select?**

Yes. All firms who successfully complete the program requirements of the selected option are entitled to participate in the rebate.

- 3. If my firm selects the Advantage Program Hybrid option, do we have to maintain our previous Safety Groups Program elements in 2019?**

Yes. The five priority HSMS Audit non-conformities converted to Safety Groups Program elements will be worth 15 per cent per element or 75 per cent of the total available achievement score. The 2019 maintenance of your prior Safety Groups Program elements will make up the remaining 25 per cent of the achievement score.

- 4. What if my firm had less than five non-conformities from the 2018 Audit and CIP?**

The firm must choose the regular Advantage Program and follow the 2019 Safety Groups Advantage Program requirements.

- 5. Can I change my program option after submitting my 2019 Action Plan?**

Yes. With approval from your Safety Group Sponsor, firms will be allowed to change their program option prior to May 31, 2019. Your Sponsor is required to notify WSIB of your revised Action Plan.

- 6. What do I do if my firm has already completed all the return-to-work (RTW) elements?**

If a firm has previously selected all the RTW elements and the Sponsor has evaluated that their RTW is implemented and meets minimum legal requirements, a firm can select another element outside of this category. The Sponsor is expected to review the Action Plan to ensure the elements selected are relevant and any changes after the submission date are communicated by email to the WSIB, along with the Action Plan.

**7. Have the 2019 Advantage Program Employer Requirements been changed from the 2018 Advantage Program Employer Requirements?**

Yes. Requirement #5 – the development and implementation of a Continual Improvement Plan (CIP) – has been revised to focus on priority non-conformities within three months of audit completion (previously six months in 2018 program).

**8. How many corrective action points on the 2019 Advantage Program CIP must be started by December 31, 2019?**

At least one priority CIP corrective action point must be started by December 31, 2019. All other priority non-conformities must be started within three months of the audit being completed.

**9. Is there a deadline to complete the 2019 Advantage Program CIP corrective action points?**

No. Each firm determines their own timeline for effective implementation of their CIP corrective action points. Action points must be planned to resolution with timelines and responsibilities assigned for each point.

**10. Which priority non-conformities (five or more) can a firm select from their CIP for the hybrid option?**

The priorities must be selected from high-risk hazards, legal requirement, hazard recognition and assessment and/or return-to-work non-conformities.

Sponsor questions

**11. When can Sponsors update employers about the 2019 program enhancements (e.g. SGAP options)? Will WSIB help us market these changes to employers?**

Approval from the Board of Directors was received on November 21. WSIB information sessions will begin in Jan 2019 to promote the extended enrollment into Safety Groups .

**12. When employers go back into the Safety Groups Program or hybrid program are they scored at 20 per cent per element as in the traditional program?**

Regular Safety Groups Program scoring applies – 75% for the five 2019 elements and 25% for maintenance of the previous year's elements.

**13. Can Sponsors have until later in March to submit SGAP back-up documentation for the firms on the 2018 audit list?**

No. The March 1, 2019 deadline is required to ensure the validation audit process and the rebate process can be administered.

**14. Can Sponsors submit SGAP documents electronically for the 2018 validation audit firms?**

Yes. Sponsors are to ensure that the WSIB receives the SGAP backup documentation by March 1, 2019 to establish the desk audit score. Documentation can be submitted on a usb stick.

**15. Have the deadlines changed for the 2018 program year?**

No. As in previous years, all Year-End Achievement/Maintenance Reports and Year-End Achievement Checklists (for SGAP) are due to the WSIB by December 31, 2018. Please make arrangements to provide on time to your Safety Groups Program Consultant.

**16. What if a firm fails the validation audit for the 2017 program year in 2018? Can they repeat those elements in 2019, if not maintained/corrected in 2018?**

Yes. A firm that fails the validation audit in a program year, can repeat those elements in the following program year. If it was an SGAP firm, they can stay in the SGAP or choose to go back to the regular Safety Groups Program. They cannot do the Hybrid option for 2019.

**17. Can employers receive partial marks when scored, instead of a pass or fail (i.e. all five steps for all five elements)?**

No, the program does not recognize partial implementation of health and safety elements. Firms must fully implement using the five-step model for managing health and safety. All five steps must be implemented to receive credit for the element selected.

**18. How can small businesses participate in the Safety Groups Program without being overwhelmed? It appears the small business option is only open to firms that are new to Safety Groups. Can this option be expanded to any firm with less than \$90,000 in premiums as their challenges are likely no different than a firm that has never participated in the program.**

Yes. The flexibility of the 2019 program is to make it easier for small businesses (< \$90,000 premiums) to join. All small businesses can focus on implementing three elements from the prescribed list. If they have been in Safety Groups before, their 2019 elements (three) will be worth 25 per cent each and they would be expected to maintain the previous elements for the 25 per cent.

**19. Are the 'Building Your Health and Safety Program' (BYP) sessions running in 2019? If so, what would be the advantage of a small business joining the Safety Groups Program rather than completing this program?**

Yes. The Small Business and Workwell Programs will continue to be offered in 2019. Joining the Safety Groups Program in 2019 instead of doing BYP positions small businesses for participation in the redesigned program in 2020, which will promote continuous engagement and improvement.

**20. What if a firm comes back into Safety Groups and cannot find their implementation records or demonstrate maintenance of previous elements? Where do they start and what would the scoring be for the 2109 program elements/program?**

The firm is to report only the elements completed and therefore the score would be 75 per cent. For validation audit purposes, WSIB will validate to the 75 per cent. Therefore, they could score 75 out of 75. This maintains the integrity of the program and flexibility at the same time. Employers who have maintained elements and can demonstrate implementation should be scored out of 100.

**21. A few of the options (Hybrid, former Safety Groups regular or Advantage members returning to regular program) are dependent on the firm maintaining previous years' elements and/or selecting five new elements. If they don't know what they have worked on in the past:**

- **How do they pick 'new' elements and ensure they have not been repeated?**
- **Even if they know what elements they worked on in the past, can they 'redo' elements in 2019 if it makes sense for them?**
- **Will they be penalized for maintenance as they won't know what to maintain? If they will be penalized, can they just pick more elements this year to work on and record them on a maintenance form?**

As highlighted in #19 – the WSIB must maintain the integrity of the program for all employers who have effectively developed health and safety management programs/processes. If a firm has received rebates for years in which they declared that they implemented and maintained elements in their workplace, they would be expected to continue to maintain that number of elements in 2019; If they are unable to determine which programs were implemented, they may select other elements equal to the amount of their previous rebate(s). If they choose not to do this, they can forgo the 25 per cent for maintenance in 2019, their 2019 program elements will be worth 75 per cent and they can self report 75 per cent at year-end without maintenance.

**22. For firms that have five or more years in the Safety Groups Program and will be returning to the regular program, do they still need to select elements according to the process outlined on page 51 of the WSIB Employer Guidelines 5<sup>th</sup> Edition?**

Yes. Firms returning to the regular program with five or more years of participation need to select elements as outlined in the Employer Guidelines 5<sup>th</sup> Edition.

**23. For large corporations with many firms, multiple account numbers, multiple locations and the same line of business, can they all choose the same elements?**

With the variety of options available for 2019, large corporations should be able to align the same elements across all locations.

**24. What if a firm is currently in SGAP and interested in returning to the regular program, but their CIP is not reflective of what they need to be focusing on?**

The internal audit should identify , the non-conformities that the company needs to work on.They have the option of choosing the hybrid version in 2019 and moving to the regular program while working on five high priority-hazard non-conformities.

**25. Do Advantage Program firms that choose to move back to the regular program have to maintain previous core elements?**

Yes. If they cannot maintain their previous core elements, their maximum score would be 75 per cent.

**26. As well as the proposed increase of the rebate to seven per cent, is there also a funding floor being proposed for 2019?**

The funding floor for the 2019 Program Year applies to small businesses in the BYP. Small business that join a Safety Group will receive their incentive based on the Safety Group achievement and/or rebate option selected.

**27. Is the target date to let sponsors know about the changes to the rebate still December 14, 2018?**

Yes.

**28. Can the Sponsor fact sheets posted on the WSIB website include the Sponsor's rebate formula?**

Sponsors can include any pertinent information for potential members and employers will be advised to choose the group that best suits their needs and expectations.

Workwell to Safety Groups

**29. Are firms with an active Workwell action plan (since 2017 or 2018) that is not finished (i.e. standard written, communicated and/or training completed, but not yet evaluated) join a Safety Group?**

Yes. If the firm decides to join a Safety Group, they follow the “Five Steps to Managing Health and Safety” and all other program requirements.

**30. Will Workwell evaluators help firms transition into Safety Groups?**

Yes. Firms that miss the Safety Group enrollment deadline or that do not want to join a Safety Group can work directly with a Workwell evaluator throughout 2019 on their Workwell Action Plan.

Sponsors are encouraged to speak with their Safety Group Program Consultant if they have any questions regarding the 2019 Safety Groups Program options and/or the Safety Groups Program requirements.