

MEREDITH PRINCIPLES

In 1910, in response to concerns about a lack of adequate funding for injured workers and a slow, inequitable court system, the Ontario government commissioned Sir William Meredith to produce a report on workers' compensation. Meredith reviewed systems in the United States, France, Belgium, England, and Germany and recommended a system based on collective liability and a wage-loss approach to calculating benefits.

The main principles of Meredith's report include the following:

- collective liability, under which all employers share responsibility for benefits to injured workers;
- no fault, under which the worker gains the right to benefits without regard to their negligence, in return for giving up the right to sue;
- universal coverage, under which all workers are eligible for benefits;
- industry funding, under which the entire costs of benefits are covered through levies on employers;
- state administration, under which the state assumes responsibility for the collection of employer contributions and the awarding and distribution of benefits to injured workers;
- exclusive jurisdiction, under which the administrative Board (the WCB) has the power to inquire into, re-hear and re-adjust all issues as necessary;
- security of payment, whereby the worker's claim was separated from the employer's ability to pay and guaranteed by an accident fund under the Board's (the WCB's) administration; and
- calculating benefits based on wage loss, whereby an injured worker received benefits based on a calculation of wages lost as a result of the injury.