

ACSC Meeting
December 5, 2023
Meeting Minutes

IN ATTENDANCE

Municipality

Participant

City of Red Deer	Juan Bustos
City of Leduc	Jeri Wolfe
City of Beaumont	Lisa Rantucci
City of St. Albert	Denise Isbister
City of Lacombe	Megan Miller
City of Beaumont	Marvin Shmyr
City of Red Deer	Bev Glass
City of Lethbridge	Justin Brunelle
City of Red Deer	Sally Paradis
City of Grande Prairie	Patty Pura
City of Grande Prairie	Leanne Litchfield
City of Red Deer	Rob Carver
City of Airdrie	Ken Crossley
City of Edmonton	Cyndil Taylor
City of Calgary	Paul Shields
Edmonton Police Service	Nicole Wetsch
City of Grande Prairie	Kristi Lea
City of Fort Saskatchewan	Quinn Gillard

Guests

Sanjeev Bhagrath, Workers' Compensation
Board Alberta

AMHSA

Shannon Thomas, Program Evaluation Manager
Olana Todoruk, Director of Learning & Assurance
Sunny Kakar, Director, Corporate Services
Sydney Perozak, Digital Coordinator
Jessica Meyer, HSMS Advisor/HR Consultant
Rob Rosete, Senior Health & Safety Advisor / HSR

1. Introductions and Welcome

- Meeting called to order: 10:02am.
- Housekeeping by Sydney Perozak.
- Introductions by Shannon Thomas.

2. Health and Safety Moment

- OHS Emerging Issues 2022: Overhead Powerline
- Impairment in the Workplace

3. WCB Update – Sanjeev Bhagrath

- Employer Mobile App 3.2 Release
 - <https://www.wcb.ab.ca/resources/for-employers/online-services.html>
- Fit for Work Dashboard Seminar
 - <https://www.wcb.ab.ca/resources/for-employers/seminars-and-workshops/>
- Seminars and Workshops
 - <https://www.wcb.ab.ca/resources/for-employers/seminars-and-workshops/>
- Help someone start a new career – TOJ Program
 - <https://www.wcb.ab.ca/return-to-work/training-on-the-job.html>
- Worksight Magazine
 - <https://www.wcb.ab.ca/about-wcb/whats-new/worksight-magazine/>
- New Fact Sheet: Working from a designated workplace
 - <https://www.wcb.ab.ca/resources/for-employers/fact-sheets.html>
- Contacts:
 - Employers north of Red Deer
 - Sanjeev Bhagrath, 780-498-4748, sanjeev.bhagrath@wcb.ab.ca
 - Employers in Red Deer and Southern Alberta
 - Martinne Sykora, 403-517-6077, martinne.sykora@wcb.ab.ca

4. Partnerships Update – Shannon Thomas for Katherine Foster

- Maintain the Partnerships Standards for the COR program
 - Standards are developed in-conjunction with the Certifying Partners and approved by Partnerships
- Conduct program quality assurance:
 - On-Site Audit Review (OSAR)
 - Employer Review
 - Quality assurance audits of Certifying Partners
 - Approval of CP audit instruments, courses and exams
- Promotion of COR
- Continuous improvement of the program
 - <https://www.alberta.ca/get-certificate-recognition.aspx>
- COR Metrics
 - Please refer to PP attached for metrics dashboards.

- COR Holder Performance
 - Loss ratios compare the claim costs of a group of employers to the WCB premium they pay.
 - COR holders as a group, out-perform non-COR holders by the following percentages (as measured by comparing loss ratios):
 - 31.7 per cent lower in 2018, 33.3 per cent lower in 2019, 29.2 per cent lower in 2020, 26.5 per cent lower in 2021, 27.6 per cent lower in 2022.
- COR Program Highlights for 2023
 - Post COVID - 2023 COR Audit Plan
 - COR Auditing has returned to normal - three audit techniques are again required for audits (documentation, interview and observation)
 - Use of remote documentation review, on-line video interviews will continue
 - Use of remote observations may be allowed, but must be authorized by the Certifying Partner in advance
- Key Changes to the COR Audit Criteria
 - Allow applicable legislation (Alberta or Federal) to be used to answer legislation based questions
 - Hazard assessments will be reviewed on pre-determined frequency instead of a "regular" basis
 - Updated and simplified the element for Joint Health and Safety Committee/ Health and Safety Representative to align with new legislative requirements
 - Reduced the number of questions on violence and harassment to simplify requirements and align with new legislative requirements
 - Clarified cascade scoring requirements for questions linked to the hazard assessment element (Identification of Jobs - Tasks - Hazards)
- COR Future
- COR Strategic Plan
 - Developed in-conjunction with the SSC and CPs and finalized December 2019
 - Vision: COR is a nationally recognized and harmonized health and safety program that drives improvement in health and safety performance in Canada
- COR Strategic Plan Implementation
 - Three industry-led COR Working groups were formed to began implementation of the COR Strategic Plan in early 2020.
 - Complexity Based and Scalable Audit (CBSA)
 - Auditor Qualifications, Training and Certification (AQTC)
 - COR Harmonization and Measurement
- New Approach for CBSA starting in 2023
 - New Resources from Partnerships:
 - Partnerships to chair the meetings going forward
 - Monthly meetings - starting in June 2023
 - More information can be found through this link: [OHS Resource Portal. Complexity-Based Scalable Audit \(CBSA\) Info Sheet \(alberta.ca\)](#)
- CBSA Future Direction
 - Adopt the *Plan - Do - Check - Act* Model for the CBSA
 - Keep the audit instrument and questions guidelines
 - Keep interview and worksite sampling tables
 - Keep three validation techniques - documentation, interview and observation
 - Keep audit scoring - the method is under development
 - Keep the CBSA accessible to internal and peer auditors

- Communication and Info Sheets for Employer and Auditors
- Drive for results - CBSA Journey Map
- Links for additional information:
- [OHS Resource Portal. Frequently asked questions: Complexity-Based Scalable Audit \(CBSA\)\(alberta.ca\)](#)
- [OHS Resource Portal. Complexity-Based Scalable Audit \(CBSA\) Info Sheet \(alberta.ca\)](#)
- Growing the COR Program – New Employer Initiative
- COR Program Promotion
 - Newly Registered WCB Employers
 - Reaching out to an average of over 1000 per month by e-mail
 - Partnerships Consultants to conduct individual visits starting in the fall 2023
- 2022-2023 OSAR Summary
- OSAR Summary for AMHSA
 - Allocation of OSARs for the 2022-2023 year were determined based on the percentage of CORs held by each Certifying Partner (as of April 1, 2022).
 - There was a target of 75 OSARs for the fiscal year, with 2 of the 75 being sampled for AMHSA.
 - One representative audit and one directed audit were sampled and an OSAR was completed on the directed OSAR.
 - The OSAR included follow-up around “Audit Findings not Verified” for OHS Policy, Formal Hazard Assessments, Competency and Inspections.
 - The auditor had been used by this employer for all audits over the last 6 years.
- OSAR Summary Overall
 - The percentage of OSARs requiring follow-up (63%) nearly doubled from the last two OSAR years (32% in 20/21 and 21/22)
 - The April 28, 2022 approval and roll out of the newly revised Partnerships Standard “1.15 Auditor Notes” may have resulted in this increase as auditors and Certifying Partners acquainted themselves with the new note requirements. OSA Reviews were conducted with a focus on auditor notes.
 - “Top 3 Areas of Audit Findings Not Verified” continue to be the same over the last few years. They include:
 - Formal Hazard Assessments
 - Qualifications
 - Workplace Violence/Harassment Review
- OHS Prevention Initiatives OHS Resource Portal
 - Clarify the priorities of the OHS system based on evidence and consultation
- Contact:
 - Katherine Foster: Katherine.foster@gov.ab.ca

5. AMHSA Auditing – Shannon Thomas

- PIR Participation
- 2022 Refund Summary
- External peer audit process cooperation
 - Member auditing larger employer: City of Leduc (Rhonda) – City of Red Deer
 - Volunteers: City of Airdrie assisted City of Leduc (Shawn)
- 2023 Timelines: Quality Assurance
 - **COR Certification:** 2 weeks

- **COR Maintenance:** 4 weeks
- **Auditor Qualification:** 5 weeks
- **Revisions:** 2-3 days.
- *Remember 90-day deadline overall regardless of number of rounds of revisions are required*
- The CBSA Working Group (WG) Roadmap
 - Review attached PP for details.
- Complexity-Based Scalable Audit
 - COR Certification: 2 weeks
 - COR Maintenance: 4 weeks
 - Auditor Qualification: 5 weeks
 - Revisions: 2-3 days.
 - Remember 90-day deadline overall regardless of number of rounds of revisions are required
- Auditor Updates
 - <https://www.amhsa.net/cor-auditing/audit-tools-resources/>
- Upcoming 2024 Training
 - **Health and Safety Management Systems**
 - February 6,7 & March 5,6
 - **Health and Safety Auditing**
 - February 20, 21 & March 19,20
 - **Audit Refresher**
 - February 8 & April 11
 - Email audits@amhsa.net to register!
- 2024 Changes
 - Training
 - PHS – supplemental training for HSMS and HS Auditing (online)
 - Developing extended HS Auditing course to 3 full days of training for new auditors – implementation in 2025
 - Process
 - Approval of sampling plans in advance of auditing will be mandatory
- Contact:
 - audits@amhsa.net
 - Shannon@amhsa.net 780 691 6449
 - Jessica@amhsa.net 780 965 4601

6. AMHSA Update – Olana Todoruk

- The Working Mind First Responder Group
 - <https://ruralfirstresponder.ca/>
 - Email safety@amhsa.net to register!
- Cognitive–Psychosocial Job Demands Analysis
 - **Many WCB processes still focus on physical injury/illness.**
 - Physical Demands Analysis
 - ***NEW*** Cognitive–Psychosocial Job Demands Analysis workshop
 - **Change in process was required given psychological injury claim:**
 - Increased - number, duration, claim costs, etc.
 - Challenges - Return to Work (RTW), Traumatic Psychological Injury (TPI) wait times, etc.

- Impacts –Minimum staffing levels (first responders)
- Psychological Injury Working Group (PIWG)
 - The WCB-Alberta / Industry Task Force (ITF) Association have worked together to establish a pilot of a new Cognitive-Psychosocial Job Demands Analysis (JDA).
 - For ITF members only, but extended to municipalities – through AMHSA
 - **New** psychological injury claims only:
 - *On a case by case basis, the claim owner may also reach out on other active claims where a Cognitive-Psychosocial JDA could be helpful in the RTW process.
 - Complete fillable PDF and submit it with claim or to the claim owner.
 - Please direct any claim specific questions to the WCB Adjudicator.
 - <https://www.amhsa.net/resources/cognitive-psychosocial-jda-pilot/>
- Aquatic H&S Awareness Campaign – Rob Rosete
 - Incident – Lifeguard seriously injured – Fell into an empty pool basin
 - Creative Sentence – Aquatic Health & Safety Awareness Campaign
 - 2023 Achievements
 - Working Group, Draft Material: Posters, Safety Talks, Marketing Plan
 - 2024 Deliverables and your contribution
 - Communication of Campaign Launch
 - Use email signatures
 - Share AMHSA’s Newsletter containing Campaign information
 - Share Campaign information on social media
 - Website: <https://amhsa.devcogroup.com/aquatic-awareness/>
 - Password: amhsa-123
- Municipal Compliance Snapshot
 - Pleaser refer to the attached PP for details and snapshots.
- Strategic Partnerships
 - My Workplace Health
 - Ember Experience
 - Pacific Coast University
 - Mental Health Commission of Canada
 - Ergonomics Wellness Innovation (EWI)
 - RED The Agency
 - Northern Alberta Institute of Technology
 - CSA Group
 - BIS Safety Software
 - University of New Brunswick
 - Devco
- OnDemand Access to CSA Standards
 - Access to 26 standards and any updates to those standards.
 - Access code will be valid for 1 year from program launch, new code to be launched in 2024!
 - Each admin can sign up 10 user accounts.
 - Please refer to attached PP for discount codes!
 - Contacts:
 - AMHSA: safety@amhsa.net
 - CSA Group: sales@csagroup.org / Sophia.jaffer@csagroup.org
 - 1-800-463-6727 / 514-428-2441
- PHS eLearning Certificates

- Leaders Certificate – 5 Courses
 - Psychological Health and Safety Management
 - Be a Psychologically Safe Leader
 - Enhance Your Emotional Intelligence and Resilience
 - Managing Mental Health Issues in Your Workplace
 - Creating a Civil and Respectful Workplace
- Workers Certificate – 4 Courses
 - Staying Mentally Healthy & Resilient
 - Civility and Respect in Communication and Conflict
 - Common Mental Health Issues
 - Finding Work-Life Harmony
- Member Advocacy/Representation
 - COR Working Group – Industry Consultation
 - WCB-Alberta – Policy Consultation Advisory Group (PCAG)
 - ITF Association – Psychological Injury Working Group (PIWG)
 - Conference Board of Canada – Council for Safe Workplaces (CSW)
 - GoA – Injury Prevention Working Groups
- Temporary Traffic Accommodation Course
 - https://training.amhsa.net/v1/index.cfm?action=classroom.coursedetails&course=_79EDF18FBCC74785545ED3A8BEF20746&company=_F949695D3A547DBF208705E841BC4BEF&_ga=2.134798773.575804148.1701709402-906064255.1684868860
- SPARK – Supporting Psychologically Safe Workplaces
 - <https://sparkpsychological.ca/>

7. Member Roundtable

Members discussed trends, audits, statistics, initiatives, incidents, projects, and innovations.

- Psychological health and safety.
- Increase on aggressive customers towards municipal staff.
- Common incidents: motor vehicle and slips/trips/falls.
- Everyone currently working on audits both internal and external.
- Jump in mental health claims and their severity.
- Targeted inspections and orders.
- Peer support.
- Cognitive demands analysis.

8. ADJOURNMENT AND NEXT MEETING

- Next Meeting: May 28th Hybrid
- Volunteers needed to host and present health and safety moment
- Suggestions needed for Guest Speakers/Topics

- Meeting Adjournment: 1:37 pm

REPORTING PERIOD — July 1, 2023 – September 30, 2023

Significant Event Information

We have 1 PSI to report in the third quarter.

In the third quarter, 108 Incidents were reported, and 16 Good Catch/Near Miss reports were submitted.

Year to date, there have been 294 Incidents reported, with 54 Good Catch/Near Miss reports.

- A heavy metal gantry lifted off the ground due to high wind gusts and the banners not being perforated. The gantry fell over and hit an employee's arm on the way down. Field Level Hazard Assessment and collaboration with all departments at the tailgate meeting will help in future events.

Trends

In the third quarter of 2023, claims cost \$9,991.00, compared to \$15,145.00 in the third quarter of 2022.

Third Quarter Injury Trends:

- Primary injury type: Sprains/Strains with varied causes and affected body parts.
- The City's WCB Rate has increased due to WCB increasing their rates for 2023 from \$1.77 to \$2.02. The City's WCB rate is now \$1.60, which increased from \$1.25 in 2022.

Third Quarter Health and Safety Trends:

- The most common incident types involve violence and harassment by the public towards City staff, totalling 26 incidents, marking a five-incident increase from the previous quarter.
- In addition to Mental Health Awareness and De-escalation training, we've introduced ARETE for Workplace Violence Prevention and De-Escalating Training, focusing on front-line staff and a less enforcement-centric approach.
- The second most frequent incident type involved Vehicle/Equipment Accidents/Damage, accounting for 16 incidents, Operator error has been a contributing factor to these incidents.
- To address this issue, we've included reminders for supervisors to consider additional corrective actions in incident reports, such as advanced Defensive Driving, Fatigue Management, Fit for Duty, and the Backing Up Safe Work Procedure.

Projects / Initiatives

- Developed and implemented Cash Handling Safe Work Procedure, which includes a review of safes and lock combinations being changed after staff leave or annually.
- Collaborated with weed inspectors from Parks to create a Kayaking Safe Work Procedure.
- Implemented Water Safety Safe Work Procedure.
- Formulated Facility Security A416 and Facility Access A415 policies based on the Corporate Security Advisors Committee's recommendations after conducting site audits of various city facilities.
- Occupational Health and Safety is conducting OHS site visits as part of the Municipality Initiative to assess safety in each department throughout the city over the next year. Health and Safety will notify the departments when a visit is scheduled. Thank you to the Transportation Asphalt crew for participating in the last site visit. Job well done, crew.
- Trauma Informed Care, a 2-part certificate program, was introduced and will continue in 2024 as part of our 2023 Mental Health goals, offering quarterly sessions.

Innovations

- Introduced "Thank You" cards in August to acknowledge and appreciate outstanding Health and Safety efforts throughout the organization, promoting a culture of safety appreciation.
- In July, Health and Safety conducted a survey and used the results to enhance organizational safety. These improvements incorporated expressing gratitude in our updates, diversifying safety topics beyond work-related matters, revising the reporting process for Field Level Assessments, and incorporating engaging quizzes and activities into Cygnet for safety talks.

Impairment in the workplace

OHS information for workers and employers

This bulletin looks at impairment in relation to occupational health and safety (OHS).

KEY INFORMATION

- Impairment can be caused by a number of factors, many of which cannot be tested for.
- Worker impairment (regardless of the cause) can create a work site health and safety hazard.
- Workers, employers and supervisors need to understand the effect of impairment on workplace health and safety. Safety-sensitive work must not be performed by an impaired worker.

Understanding impairment

Impairment can affect a worker's ability to pay attention, think clearly, or make good decisions. Impairment can also affect a worker's physical ability to do a work task.

Because of this, impairment can negatively affect a worker's ability to perform a job or task safely.

Impairment causes

A number of factors can cause or contribute to impairment, including:

- [Fatigue](#), sleep disturbances or extended work hours.
- Medical conditions or mental health concerns.
- Prescription or non-prescription medications such as antihistamines, decongestants or [opioids](#).
- Alcohol or recreational drug use (for example, [cannabis](#)).
- Temporary, situational stressors.

Signs of impairment

Possible signs of impairment include:

- Physical changes in health.
- Slurred speech.
- Clumsiness.
- Altered depth perception.
- Slowed reaction times.
- Yawning, excessive sleepiness, or falling asleep on the job.

- Deterioration in hygiene.
- Difficulty focusing on tasks.
- Forgetfulness.
- Inappropriate behaviours.
- Mood fluctuations.
- Change or deterioration in workplace performance.

However, how impairment shows is unique in each situation and for each individual. Likewise, the impact of impairment on the workplace can vary widely. Learn more at Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) [Impairment at Work – Policy and Recognition](#).

Responsibilities under Alberta's OHS legislation

Alberta's OHS Act and Code don't address impairment specifically. However if impairment is or could be a workplace hazard, employer, supervisor and worker responsibilities to ensure a healthy and safe workplace apply.

Here are some examples of what employers, supervisors and workers must do, in relation to impairment.

Employers:

- Assess impairment-related hazards and put appropriate controls in place for their workplace.
 - This may include stopping work to determine whether impairment could be creating a danger for workers.
- Ensure that workers are trained regarding the risk and control measures in place.
- Address and resolve health and safety concerns related to impairment in a timely manner.
- Report and investigate workplace incidents.

Supervisors:

- Report concerns about worker impairment, unsafe or harmful work site behaviour or conditions to the employer.

Workers:

- Do not work impaired.
- Report health and safety concerns relating to impairment to the employer or supervisor. Workers who report health

and safety concerns are protected under the OHS Act from disciplinary action.

- Understand workplace policies and participate in related training.

Best practices

Responding to impairment

Contact emergency services immediately if there is an incident requiring acute medical care.

Employers and supervisors can create a culture of health and safety by adhering to policy and helping workers seek assistance if necessary. If possible, discuss behaviors privately, and be clear that the intention of these conversations is to ensure the health and safety of the worker and others. Employers and supervisors should focus on the safety issues related to the impairment, rather than its cause.

Policy and procedures

Having an impairment policy and procedures in place can help remove stigma, build understanding, clarify expectations, and create a culture of health and safety. Policies may include a [fitness-to-work approach](#) that clearly communicates responsibilities and expectations related to addressing impairment as a workplace hazard. Employers may choose to reference external guidance, for example [CSA Standard Z1008:21, Management of impairment in the workplace](#), when developing their policies.

Factors to consider

Some key factors to consider when developing or revising a workplace policy are:

- Current legislation and laws (OHS, employment standards, privacy, human rights).
- Privacy and confidentiality.
- Applicable collective bargaining provisions.
- Other workplace policies and procedures (for example, those related to [alcohol and drug use](#), fatigue, fitness to work, or a duty to accommodate).
- Workplace environments and specific job duties.
- Size of the organization.
- Work hours and shift scheduling.
- Operations in multiple jurisdictions.

What to include

The CCOHS gives a [list of elements](#) that you should include in a workplace impairment policy. Here are some excerpts from that list:

- Statements of:
 - the policy's purpose and objectives,
 - who the policy applies to, and
 - applicable confidentiality rights.
- A definition of impairment as it applies to the workplace.
- A mechanism for employees to confidentially self-report when they feel they might be impaired (for instance, if taking a prescription medication that may cause impairment).
- Statement regarding what, if any, medical/therapeutic or non-medical substances are allowed on the premises, and if so, under what circumstances.
- Steps that will be taken when there are concerns about behaviour that might have an impact on the workplace or puts the safety of the worker or others at risk.
- Processes for accommodation, return to work/remain at work, and/or sick leave or benefits, as appropriate.
- Provision for a hierarchy of disciplinary actions.
- Statement about how workers, supervisors and other applicable work site parties will be trained about impairment (general awareness), the workplace impairment policy, and any other applicable policies or programs.

Duty to accommodate

If impairment arises from or is related to a protected human right, the employer may have other obligations under the *Alberta Human Rights Act*. Some causes of impairment (for example, medical conditions or alcohol/drug dependency) may activate a duty to accommodate under human rights legislation.

The Alberta Human Rights Commission provides information about [the duty to accommodate](#) and guidance on [obtaining and responding to medical information in the workplace](#).

Testing for impairment

Alberta laws do not address testing for impairment or drug and alcohol testing. Employers who choose to test workers in safety sensitive positions should seek legal advice on human rights, employment standards, privacy, and occupational health and safety issues before implementing a testing program.

Impairment in the workplace

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Contact us

OHS Contact Centre

Alberta toll-free

- 1-866-415-8690

Edmonton region

- 780-415-8690

Deaf or hard of hearing (TTY)

- 1-800-232-7215 (Alberta toll-free)
- 780-427-9999 (Edmonton region)

Notify OHS of health and safety concerns

alberta.ca/file-complaint-online.aspx

Call the OHS Contact Centre if you have concerns that involve immediate danger to a person on a work site.

Report a workplace incident to OHS

alberta.ca/ohs-complaints-incident.aspx

Website

alberta.ca/ohs

Get copies of the OHS Act, Regulation and Code

Alberta King's Printer

alberta.ca/alberta-kings-printer.aspx

OHS

alberta.ca/ohs-act-regulation-code.aspx

For more information

Alberta Human Rights Commission: Duty to accommodate
albertahumanrights.ab.ca/employment/employer_info/accommodation/Pages/duty_to_accommodate.aspx

Alberta Human Rights Commission: Obtaining and responding to medical information in the workplace
albertahumanrights.ab.ca/employment/employer_info/accommodation/Pages/obtaining_med_info_employers.aspx

Canadian Model – Alcohol and Drug Policy (COAA and ESC)
coaa.ab.ca/document/canadian-model-version-6-0/

CSA Standard Z1008:21, Management of impairment in the workplace
csagroup.org/store/product/CSA%20Z1008%3A21/

CCOHS: Impairment at work – Policy and recognition
ccohs.ca/oshanswers/hsprograms/impairment.html

CCOHS: Impairment at Work – Reporting and Responding
ccohs.ca/oshanswers/hsprograms/impairment_reporting.html

CCOHS: Opioids in the Workplace
ccohs.ca/oshanswers/hsprograms/opioids.html

Fatigue, Extended Work Hours and Workplace Safety (ERG015)
ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/erg015

Workplace Strategies: Risk of Impairment from Cannabis
ccohs.ca/products/publications/cannabis_whitepaper.pdf

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Impairment in the workplace

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Classification: Public



Working from a designated workspace (including home)

Working from home, hybrid work, telecommuting and telework are all terms for work arrangements where a worker performs employment duties outside their employer's premises or specific worksite. We call this working from a *designated workspace*.

Whether working from an employer's premises, a specific worksite or from a designated workspace, the foundational principle for adjudication remains the same: **Did the accident arise out of and occur in the course of employment?**

Arise out of and occur in the course of employment

To be compensable, an accident must:

1. **Arise out of employment:** An accident arises out of employment when it is caused by an employment hazard, and
2. **Occur in the course of employment:** An accident occurs in the course of employment when it happens at a time and place consistent with the obligations and expectations of employment.

Designated workspace

When making decisions on coverage for injuries that occur while working from a designated workspace, we consider the following main questions to determine if there is a connection between the work duties and the accident:

- **Where** did the accident occur and, if you have a work agreement (i.e., an agreement with your employer about where you will work in your designated workspace), is the location of the accident consistent with the work agreement?
- **When** did the accident occur and, if you have a work agreement, is the time of the accident consistent with the work agreement?
- **Why** did the accident happen and what were you doing at the time of your accident (i.e., was there a work-related hazard that caused the accident)?

We take all this information into consideration when making decisions.

For travel, there are special considerations (see below).

Work agreements

Your employer may ask you to sign a work agreement specifying when and where work is to take place when you work from a designated workspace (e.g., you'll work from an agreed-upon room/space when working from home). Coverage generally only extends to the time and place specified in the agreement. However, there may be times you're covered outside the agreement, provided the time, place and hazard are consistent with the obligations and expectations of employment. If, for some reason, you're unable to work within the agreed-upon time or place, it's best practice to discuss this with your employer prior to starting work at a new location or outside of your normal working hours.

Work agreements help us confirm that the time and place of your accident are work-related. However, it's only one piece of information we consider; we also look at what you were doing at the time of your accident, whether your accident was caused by a work-related hazard, and why you were working in that place at that time.

Coverage

There are times when similar scenarios may be treated slightly differently depending on whether you're working from a designated workspace or at your employer's premises. The difference relates to the nature of the hazard. To be covered, the hazard must be a **hazard of employment**. When working from a designated workspace, you are not covered for:

- accidents that happen before you enter your designated workspace or after you leave it, or when you go for breaks or lunch, and
- accidents caused by personal hazards (e.g., toys left in your work area)

Travel

When you work at your employer's premises or worksite, you are not covered for accidents that occur when travelling to and from work unless you have a task or errand that's related to your work **during the journey** (e.g., your employer asks you to pick up something on your way to the office or you stop to meet with a client on the way to a jobsite). It's no different when you work from a designated workspace — you are not covered for accidents that happen when you travel to and from your employer's premises or worksite, even if you primarily work from home and you only come into the office occasionally (e.g., for a team or client meeting), unless you are doing some specific errand, task or duty that's related to work while you travel (e.g., you pick up a client on your way to attend a meeting at the office).

Working outside Alberta

If you work from a designated workspace outside of Alberta for an Alberta employer, you may be covered. The accident must be compensable under Policy 02-01, and the employer must have coverage for you under Policy 06-01. Check with your employer if you have questions about your workers' compensation coverage while working out-of-province.

After an injury

Modified work can play an important part in your recovery and successful return to work. If you have a claim with us and you work from a designated workspace, we will work with you and your employer to find suitable modified work options.

Example scenarios

These scenarios give examples of how we consider all the available facts when making entitlement decisions. They also show how *different facts alter entitlement decisions*. Remember, for an accident to be compensable, the hazard, time and place must be work-related.

Scenario 1:

Margaret and her employer agreed that she will work from a spare room in her basement. On the way to her basement office to start work, she slipped on the stairs and hurt her back. Is she covered?

No, her coverage doesn't begin until she enters the room where she is supposed to do her work.

What if Margaret slipped because she was carrying a box of supplies that her employer instructed her to take home to use in her office, which obstructed her view of the stairs? Is she covered?

Probably. It's likely that her accident was caused from performing work-related duties (carrying the box her employer told her to bring home), even though she had not yet entered her spare room in her basement.

Scenario 2:

Margaret does not have a work agreement with her employer specifying where she will work within her home. She typically works in the spare room in her basement but decided to work from her dining room. While in her dining room, she tripped over the laptop's power cord and hit her shoulder on the dining room table. Is she covered?

Probably. In this case, the power cord is the employment hazard. As there is no agreement specifying where she should work in her home, she is covered for work-related injuries that take place anywhere it might be reasonable for her to work (i.e., the time and place are consistent with the expectations of her employment).

What if Margaret tripped on her dog's toy and not the laptop power cord? Is she covered?

No. The toy is not an employment hazard, it's a personal hazard.

Scenario 3:

Margaret has worked out of a home office for three months using her own personal desk and chair. She started to have wrist and neck pain and her doctor diagnosed a repetitive strain injury as a result of her chair and desk being at the wrong height. Is she covered?

Probably, as long as she needed to use her own desk and chair to do her work duties because her employer did not provide a desk and chair to her.

What if Margaret worked most of the time from her couch in her living room, despite her work agreement indicating that she would work from her spare room, and working from her couch is likely the cause of the wrist and neck issues? Is she covered?

Probably not. Her injury was likely caused from working for a prolonged period (three months) from a place that was not consistent with her work agreement.

Scenario 4:

Margaret left her home office and drove to her employer's office to attend a mandatory team meeting. On the way home, she was involved in a motor vehicle accident and injured her neck. Is she covered?

No, workers are not covered travelling from their designated workspace to and from the employer's premises. This is true even when employers direct their workers to come in or they need to pick up equipment and supplies necessary to work from home or to perform other work duties.

What if Margaret's employer asked her to pick up toner and paper from a store on her way into the office to attend a team meeting when she was involved in the motor vehicle accident? Is she covered?

Probably, as long as Margaret didn't make a personal deviation enroute. She was directed by her employer to travel to the store for work-related purposes, so she would likely be covered, even though she was also travelling from her designated workspace to the employer's premises at the time.

For more information about:

- employment hazards, time and place, see [Policy 02-01, Part II, Application 2](#)
- work-related travel, see [Policy 02-01, Part II, Application 3](#)
- working outside of Alberta, see [Policy 06-01, Part II, Application 5](#), or our [out-of-province accidents](#) fact sheet

