

ITF (Industry Task Force) Association

Effecting positive change and ensuring sustainability of the workers' compensation system through the views of Alberta employers

Policy Consultation Advisory Group

The Policy Consultation Advisory Group met on February 18th. Adrienne Lozinski (Vice President, Employer Account Services & Claims Management Support) and Sara Schmidt (Vice President, Client Services & Disability Management) are the new co-chairs.

The February update to the 2024-26 Policy Project Plan was discussed. The update incorporates a review of access and privacy policies due to Bills 33 and 34. WCB indicated this would be an internal review rather than formal consultation, but ITF can submit comments if we deem relevant. Additional items of note include removal of the cost relief changes previously proposed by ITF and review of the Funding Policy scheduled for 2026. There were also some minor changes suggested to update the Terms of Reference.

OHS Levy

The Order in Council was signed on February 5th directing a transfer of \$48,480,000 from the WCB for the 2024-2025 fiscal year for the purpose of defraying part of the Crown's costs for administering the Occupational Health & Safety Act. The approved OHS transfer for 2023/24 was \$44,574,000. Transfers were \$39,857,000 for 2022/23, \$42,139,000 for 2021/22, \$46,256,000 for 2020/21 and \$45,153,000 for 2019/20.

Cost Relief Subcommittee

The subcommittee held their first meeting on February 18th. The focus was on identifying next steps, data needs and a framework for future discussions.

As a first step, the subcommittee will look at legislation, policy and underlying philosophy pertaining to cost relief. The goal is to identify issues that might warrant further review and gaps in the current cost relief framework. In addition, there was discussion of data needs to assess the current and potential impact of cost relief on the overall compensation system. Recommendations will be discussed with ITF members in advance of making a policy consultation submission.

Subcommittee members also identified additional issues that warrant discussion with WCB (e.g. length of time to apply cost relief once it is approved). If anyone would like to join this discussion, or has suggestions for consideration, please contact Melanie.

ELP Subcommittee

The ELP Psych Injury project team met on February 12th. Given the nature of the pilot proposed for this cohort of claims, it was decided to transition the pilot to the Psychological Injury Working group to ensure alignment with processes involving psychological injury claims.

The ELP Working Group as a whole met on February 19th and discussed implementation of the pilot for the cohort of workers aged 50 and over. This will be initiated April 1st with members of the subcommittee participating. The pilot will be evaluated in 6 months and if effective in reducing new ELP claims will be rolled out to all ITF members. The group also identified several policy and procedural issues that WCB will investigate and bring back for discussion at the next working group meeting.

Psychological Injury Working Group (PIWG)

The PIWG met on February 25th and reviewed 2024 metrics. There were fewer psych injury claims continuing for more than 3 months, and average duration has decreased. The target for increasing use of cognitive demands information was exceeded, and the 45-day target for claim registration to entitlement decision was met. The group also discussed priorities for 2025. These include educating stakeholders to increase the accurate identification of barriers and restrictions, making more detailed data on psych injury claims available to individual employers and the ELP psych injury pilot.

Egregious Conduct

In follow-up to the December 5th meeting with Suzanne Harbottle (Assistant Deputy Minister, Labour and Workforce Strategies Division) and Stephanie Davidson (Executive Director Workplace Policy and Legislation Branch) the ITF wrote to ADM Harbottle asking whether direction has been obtained from Minister Jones. We are awaiting a response. Minister Jones and ADM Harbottle will be invited to the June ITF meeting.

Upcoming ITF Association meetings

The next quarterly meeting is on Wednesday March 5th. The meeting starts at 8:30 am and the in-person meeting is at the Manufacturers' Health & Safety Association in Rocky View. The next guest presentation webinar is confirmed for May 28th, starting at 9:30 am.

February 2025

Additional information can be found on the ITF website - <http://www.itfassociation.ca>