

ITF (Industry Task Force) Association

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

Government Engagement

ITF received a response from Minister Shandro to our December 9th letter. He indicated he and department representatives will be available to meet with the ITF Executive regarding the review of the Accident Fund target range and lost time claim recording as these reviews progress. Regarding the review involving employer premium submissions, he indicated employer feedback in the 2020 review suggested there may be some confusion about the options available for employers in submitting WCB premium payments. The WCB was asked to provide an update on enhanced client education on this matter. Minister Shandro reaffirmed there are no plans to reinstate the Joint OHS/WCB reporting project and the commitment made by Minister Copping to engage the ITF in discussions on data sources and use will continue to be honoured. With respect to the transition of the Accident Fund to AIMCo, he indicated it is understood any loss of funds could have a detrimental impact to employers, and that government has not identified any risks with the transition.

Data Sharing Subcommittee

In follow-up to the Prevention Data Advisory Committee (PDAC) presentation on December 1st, a subcommittee was struck to review the Committee recommendations and issues related to data governance and develop an ITF position for member approval. The subcommittee met on January 10th. Two strategies for moving forward are recommended. ITF will engage with the WCB in addressing concerns about data integrity and accuracy. Given the wording in current legislation, some degree of data sharing will occur and it is critical that information provided to OHS be as accurate as possible. In addition, ITF will endeavor to engage in PDAC discussions regarding the data governance framework. ITF wrote to Rob Feagan on January 25th asking for some additional information regarding the PDAC and current initiatives.

Bill 47 Implementation Stakeholder Group

ITF and Labour Coalition representatives met with the WCB on January 12th to continue discussion of the egregious conduct and duty to cooperate policy implementation. Participant feedback was obtained by WCB on information outlined in several scenarios, as well as format and purpose of these meetings. Several recommendations will be implemented by WCB for the next meeting to occur at the end of March or early April.

WCB Update

Darren Ferleyko and Wendy King discussed the following items during a brief meeting in early January.

- Status of the Medical and Appeals Process Review
- Labour Minister transition
- COVID impacts (case volumes, approximately \$50M in cost relief granted, cost relief for COVID vaccine reactions, WCB AB staffing levels and PCR testing requirements)
- Transition of WCB Accident fund to AIMCo (importance of strong investment returns to ensure sustainable system and scorecard development)
- Average disability duration (importance of the working group and the need to reduce duration)
- OHS data sharing (relevance of data being used for insurance program purposes)

Lost Time (LT) Claim Recording Review

Following discussion at the December 1st meeting, ITF struck a subcommittee on this issue in preparation for future discussions with the WCB and Labour Coalition. The subcommittee met on January 24th and is proposing two broad issues be reviewed.

Criteria for classification of claims as Lost Time Claims within the WCB system – there are a number of claim codes that trigger a LT classification that do not involve time loss. A change to the definition of time loss claim is being proposed, along with a system review to look at issues impacting data accuracy.

Effective Date of a Lost Time Claim - There is no proposed change to the reporting requirements for WCB claims but consideration could be given to when the claim would actually be counted as a lost time claim for employer recording purposes. One example is reflecting the date the employer was notified of the injury as the start of the time loss period for LT claim recording purposes if this is something other than the date of accident. Another is allowing interested experience rated employers to continue salary for an additional 1 or 2 days, as they already do for the day of the injury (i.e. the employer continues salary, there is no loss of wages so there would be no time loss benefits paid and no LT claim recorded).

Upcoming ITF Association meetings

There will be a guest presentation webinar starting at 1:00 pm on Thursday February 24th. The next quarterly meeting is on Wednesday March 2nd at 8:30.

January 2022