

# ITF (Industry Task Force) Association

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

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## **Definition of "Trade" in WCB Reports**

In follow-up to the June 14<sup>th</sup> meeting WCB has confirmed "Trade" is a shortened term used for the sector Wholesale and Retail. This includes Automobile Body Repairs, Automotive Dealers, Automotive Repairs/Service Stations, Department/General Store Operations, Farm Equipment Dealers, Food/Alcohol Distribution/Sales, Grain/Seed Handling Operations, Home Improvement/Garden Centres, Industrial Supply Stores/Chemical Products, Industrial/Oilfield Equipment Rentals, Machinery/Safety Equipment Sales/Service, Mobile Equipment Sales/Rentals/Service, Office/Business Equipment Sales/Service, Petroleum/Propane Dealers, Recreational Vehicles Sales/Rentals/Service, Specialty Retail/Drug Stores and Wholesale Distribution.

## **Physiotherapy Services**

The stakeholder group met on June 20<sup>th</sup>. ITF (Boris and Craig represented ITF) requested that reports be adjusted to include year to year quarterly reporting to better assess successes and opportunities. Revised reports will be available prior to our September ITF meeting.

Virtual PT treatment is now less than 3% of all visits. It was agreed by those at the meeting the initial assessment and first treatment should always be in person. Unless virtual treatment services increase no further action is contemplated but members are encouraged to deal with concerns when they arise.

Attendance reporting on employer PT updates was removed because attendance was tied to invoicing in the WCB system and this could delay the WCB receiving reports and delay return to work. WCB will look into incorporating attendance in a future system upgrade. Claim owners are to be advised of physio appointment cancellations without a re-book but there is a gap in notification if the worker cancels and reschedules.

The increase in PT authorizations for old claims was discussed. WCB indicated that where this has occurred and a fitness for full duties was achieved the claim should be reviewed at the supervisory level. The general process around approval of extensions and the role of PT consultants was also discussed. PT consultants are to be involved after 6-8 weeks if additional extensions are submitted. WCB will communicate with the desk level regarding these issues and members are encouraged to monitor their experiences between now and September.

## **Psychological Injury Working Group**

The working group met on June 26<sup>th</sup>. WCB views regarding "barrier" versus "restriction" were discussed. WCB considers a restriction to be something medically defined that must be accommodated in order for a return to work. Barriers are factors that could impact the success of a return to work but are not restrictions related to the work injury. Examples of compensable bullying and harassment scenarios, as well as situations that would be deemed a threat to physical integrity were also discussed. WCB will be providing a written overview.

In follow-up to discussion at the June meeting, WCB has confirmed that Masters level Social Workers (MSW) have been used since 2019. Their utilization in the community has been focused on physical injuries and joint family counselling. They have not been used specifically for psychological injuries and cannot provide a DSM-V diagnosis. Should a worker be referred to a MSW and a diagnosis is required the worker would be transferred to a psychologist or clinical social worker.

## **Duration of Disability Working Group**

The working group meeting was rescheduled to July 20<sup>th</sup> at the request of the WCB. The ITF subcommittee utilized the time on June 28<sup>th</sup> to discuss current challenges impacting claim duration and identify actionable priorities.

## **Access to Information**

In preparation for the meeting with CACE and the WCB, we are still looking for some specific claim examples and excerpts from document packages where what was disclosed by the Appeals Commission contained relevant information WCB did not disclose. Please contact Melanie if you have information that may be useful.

## **Upcoming ITF Association meetings**

The guest presentation webinar is on August 30<sup>th</sup> starting at 1:00. The agenda includes an update from the Appeals Commission, a presentation by WCB on how they manage longer duration claims and a session on physiotherapy best practices and evaluation of PT effectiveness.

The next quarterly meeting and AGM is on Wednesday September 6<sup>th</sup> at the MHSA offices in Rocky View.

June 2023

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