

ITF (Industry Task Force) Association

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

Policy Consultation

The ITF submission on Working Remotely (Policy 02-01, Part I, and Part II, Applications 1 and 3) was sent to the WCB. We also sent WCB our previously submitted comments on cost relief for back injuries and asked for confirmation of when and how this will be addressed.

WCB was asked to confirm timing of consultation on the 2024-2027 policy plan. We were advised this consultation has not been added to the planning schedule yet. There are currently no open consultations, although discussions with WCB continue regarding the Industry Custom Pricing and Safety Association Funding policies.

Industry Custom Pricing

A meeting of the ITF subcommittee is scheduled for April 18th. WCB has asked for ITF suggestions on options or alternative methods for voting. Of particular interest is the way that non-responses to a poll are handled. Under the current approach, if an employer does not vote in an industry poll, their lack of response is considered by WCB as a vote to stay in whatever pricing program they are in at the time of the polling (i.e. staying in standard pricing on an initial poll and not joining ICP, or staying in the same ICP program option on subsequent repolling). There was also discussion regarding the definition of "the majority of the industry" being over 50% of assessable earnings represented by employers within the industry. In some industry sectors this means only one or two employers can determine the outcome of any vote.

ITF and WCB will meet in early May to discuss voting in greater detail. WCB will then be better able to identify what they can change process wise and what would require a policy change. If you have any comments or would like to join the discussions please let Melanie know.

Repolling of the first set of ICP participants will be initiated in May. This includes three sectors involving 85 industries in Municipal Government/Education/Health Services, Manufacturing, and Business & Professional Services.

Safety Association Grants (Policy 07-03)

This was discussed at the Policy Consultation Advisory Group meeting on March 1st. WCB has asked ITF to confirm the issue(s) of concern in order to determine any next steps. ITF had raised review of this policy as a priority

for the 2021-2023 policy plan in our previous submissions. After the last round of legislative changes WCB amended Policy 07-03 and created Application 1. Application 1 outlines a role for WCB in evaluation of safety association performance that was not previously there. ITF was seeking changes that clarify a more limited role for WCB that focuses primarily on collecting and dispersing the money, and verifying that the employers in the industry are fine with continuing to have the levy collected to fund the Safety Association. If you have comments or would like to join this discussion please let Melanie know.

Appeals Commission Recruitment

The Order in Council reappointing 11 commissioners and appointing 6 new commissioners was issued on March 14th. We subsequently asked Dale Wispinski whether these appointments will fill all vacancies and if we can expect these appointments will mitigate the concerns regarding hearing timelines discussed at our March 9th webinar. She indicated the Appeals Commission is still assessing the impact of the Order in Council on their workload and succession planning needs, and that she will be in a better position to answer this question when we meet in June.

WCB Board of Directors

A letter of appreciation was sent to Erna Ference thanking her for her leadership and engagement with the ITF Association during her time as a Board member and most recently Board Chair. ITF also sent a letter of congratulations to Dr. Ray Block who took over as Board Chair on March 21st. We have invited him to attend our future meetings, and noted the value we find from engagement of Board members in discussions with ITF.

Upcoming ITF Association meetings

The guest presentation webinar is on June 8th starting at 1:00. The agenda will include the Appeals Commission update and an education session on Cognitive Psychosocial Job Demands Analysis and the new WCB form. The final presentation is still being confirmed.

The next quarterly membership meeting is on Wednesday June 14th. This will be a hybrid in-person and virtual meeting (in-person is at the Holiday Inn in Nisku).
March 2023