

# 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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## **Access to Information**

Members of the ITF Executive met with representatives from the Canadian Association of Counsel to Employers (CACE) Privacy Committee on May 23<sup>rd</sup>. A letter to Trevor Alexander from the Chair of the CACE Privacy Committee has been drafted. The letter summarizes the issues of concern and requests a meeting to discuss this issue in greater detail.

The CACE view is that in circumstances where information deemed sensitive (e.g. psychological information) is relevant to the claim, it is inappropriate to withhold that information simply because it is sensitive. The duty of fairness requires that all information relevant to the claim be disclosed to the employer. Having full information for the purposes of an appeal is critical. Also having all information relevant to a worker's claim assists employers to ensure the needs of worker's are properly met in planning any return to work.

In preparation for the meeting with the WCB, we are still looking for some specific claim examples to support our case. In particular, we are looking for 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.

## **Remote Work Policy Consultation Follow-up**

A stakeholder follow-up session was held on May 24<sup>th</sup> to discuss ITF feedback on the draft WCB policy. The WCB reaffirmed that compensation principles remain the same and it was not their intention to make any changes to the foundational concepts of WC coverage or to provide any additional coverage than currently exists. WCB will be revising the draft to clarify this and to emphasize that workers and employers have a shared responsibility. It is recognized the employer has less control when employees are working remotely from home, but workers are covered for injuries that arise out of and occur in the course of employment. The importance of a written agreement was discussed but the agreement cannot result in a worker signing away their right to workers compensation coverage.

WCB asserts that a consolidated policy is the best approach from a policy development perspective. Their intention is to bring together and highlight that time, place and hazard are all relevant factors that must be

considered in adjudication. WCB will develop fact sheets that provide specific scenarios and examples, and will expand employer seminars to address best practice with respect to working remotely from home. Requirements for workers who permanently reside out of province will also be revisited and expanded information for employers will be developed.

## **Physiotherapy Services**

The ITF subcommittee is meeting on June 6<sup>th</sup>, in preparation for a working group meeting later in June. The purpose of the meeting is to identify the issues related to physiotherapy services that still need to be addressed. A wide range of issues were identified prior to the physiotherapy contract changes, and the intention was always to regroup after the new contract has been in place for a period of time to identify areas that still need work. If you would like to join this discussion, or provide input, please let Melanie know.

## **WCB Updates**

A few ITF requests were discussed at the March meeting that WCB has responded to. The G040 form is now available on their website as a fillable and saveable PDF form. A date field will also be added to the Emotional Injury Questionnaire (we are waiting for confirmation of the effective date). In an April system update WCB was able to build in an automatic c.c. to the employer on all entitlement letters. The adjudicator or case manager would need to manually make the change if there are situations where copying an employer may not be appropriate.

## **Upcoming ITF Association meetings**

The guest presentation webinar is on June 8<sup>th</sup> starting at 1:30. The agenda will include the annual update from Occupational Health & Safety, an education session presented by Kevin Drake with Millard Health on Cognitive Psychosocial Job Demands Analysis, and a session on psychological safety and best practices presented by Dave Elniski with AMTA.

The next quarterly membership meeting is on Wednesday June 14<sup>th</sup>. This will be a hybrid in-person and virtual meeting (in-person is at the Holiday Inn Edmonton Airport in Nisku).

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