

# ITF (Industry Task Force) Association

*Effecting positive change in Workers' Compensation through the views of Alberta employers*

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## Government Engagement

On October 7<sup>th</sup> Lenore Neudorf, Assistant Deputy Minister Strategy and Policy spoke with Darren Ferleyko regarding a WCB initiative being undertaken at the request of Cabinet. She indicated a Request for Proposals would be issued shortly for a performance review of the workers' compensation medical and appeal functions. The RFP was posted on October 9<sup>th</sup> and closes October 29<sup>th</sup>. They hope to select a vendor in early December, and for the review to occur from early-January to early-April 2021. The RFP outlined the following objectives:

- streamlining the process and reducing variance for WCB claims that require a medical review or appeal to ensure simplicity, avoid red tape, and minimize the time and cost to resolve them;
- identifying opportunities to increase responsiveness of the system to worker and employer needs through early resolution or intervention;
- simplifying medical review and appeal policies, processes and procedures; and
- ensuring long-term system sustainability.

Lenore indicated the appeal process review includes the DRDRB and Appeals Commission. The medical system review will look broadly at various aspects including OIS, medical fees, documentation, etc. She believed the MPO would also be included. Early in the review, the contractor will engage agency stakeholders prior to drafting the performance review's project charter and project plan.

ITF was also asked by the Red Tape Reduction (RTR) office to provide a quote in response to the WCB Electronic Funds Transfer initiative for the RTR Annual report. The Executive considered the request, and Darren provided the following: *"The ITF Association supports the Workers' Compensation Board in their efforts to streamline processes and improve efficiency in claims administration. In addition to the projected reduction in administrative costs, many of our employees will benefit by receiving quicker payments from the WCB. Multiple small savings will make a difference in WCB premiums and benefit all Alberta employers, and we look forward to collaboration on future initiatives."*

We also received replies from Minister Copping to our letters regarding the Joint OHS/WCB reporting system and sustainability of the Accident Fund. Copies are posted on the Members Only website.

## Transfer of WCB Accident Fund to AIMCo

The meeting between the ITF Executive, the AIMCo CEO, the AIMCo Board Chair, Erna Ference, Trevor Alexander and Ron Helmhold is scheduled for November 17<sup>th</sup>.

## Policy Consultation Advisory Group (PCAG)

The PCAG met on October 21<sup>st</sup>. In August PCAG members were provided with a confidential draft of the Employers Policies which were to be presented to the Board for approval in September. Initial consultation on these took place in 2019. Concerns remained with three proposed revisions and the Executive raised these with Wendy King. Changes were made and these will now go forward for Board approval in November. Copies of this correspondence can be accessed from the Members Only website under the Subcommittees link on the left sidebar, then 2019 Policy Consultation.

(<https://www.itfassociation.ca/member-login>)

The PCAG also discussed the process going forward and the WCB indicated they will incorporate a final policy review by PCAG members into the consultation process prior to policies being sent to the Board of Directors for approval. The WCB had previously not committed to undertaking this additional step.

There have been no concerns raised with respect to Policy 04-04, Part II, Application 5 – permanent disability awards (pensions) for pre-1995 claims. Consultation closes December 1<sup>st</sup>. If there are no concerns raised by members, the ITF submission will support the changes.

## Employer Fact Sheet Updates

Over the past few months we noticed updates to WCB Fact Sheets are being posted without any notification to stakeholders. We asked the WCB whether a notification of changes to Fact Sheets could be provided to stakeholders, or at least to the ITF. WCB did not have a mechanism in place to provide notification of updates but their Communications area looked at options to make this happen. WCB has added a section to Worksight where they will reference updates to fact sheets or new fact sheets, along with links. This should help ensure all employers have the information they need to keep informed.

## Upcoming ITF Association meetings

Guest presentation webinar on **Friday November 20<sup>th</sup>** starting at 9:30 am. Minister Copping and Janet MacEachern will join at 10:00. A discussion regarding CAPS processes and an SIU follow-up Q&A will follow. Our quarterly meeting will be held virtually **Wednesday November 25<sup>th</sup> starting at 8:30 am**. The WCB will join at 10:00 am. In addition to the regular agenda items, James Wilson will provide the 2021 rate presentation.

October 2020