

ITF (Industry Task Force) Association

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

Government Engagement

Following up on his July 22nd reply, Minister Madu's office has confirmed that Assistant Deputy Minister Suzanne Harbottle is available to attend our November 30th meeting on behalf of the Ministry. Topics for discussion will be provided to her in advance of the meeting and will include ITF concerns regarding access to information submitted as part of the Medical & Appeals Process Review as well as the gap in mandate and role as a result of the Fair Practices legislation being repealed.

OHS Levy

The Order in Council directing a transfer of \$39,857,000 from the WCB for the 2022-2023 fiscal year for the purpose of defraying part of the Crown's costs for administering the Occupational Health & Safety Act was signed on September 16th. The approved OHS transfer for 2021-2022 was \$42,139,000, 2020-2021 was \$46,256,000 and for 2019-2020 it was \$45,153,000.

Psychological Injury Working Group

The group is meeting on October 12th to review current processes for primary and secondary psychological claims. Several ITF members are also participating in a pilot of the new cognitive/psychosocial job demands form WCB has developed. The plan is for the new form to be rolled out to all employers in October. In response to member concerns about the size of file attachments, effective September 28 the attachment size for the C040, C606 and C545 has been increased to 5MB to allow employers to more easily attach a JDA to a claim file.

WCB Decision Letters

Concern was raised at the September meeting about claim owners sending email updates instead of letters for significant changes such as a change in work status, further investigations, surgical interventions, and entitlement decisions. WCB has confirmed their standard is that decisions need to be communicated through a letter format. This will be reinforced to all staff and will be monitored to see if there is improvement. WCB has also advised that a decision communicated via email is appealable. It represents a decision communicated to a party in writing (email) and it is therefore reasonable to request a review of that decision.

Lost Time Claim (LTC) Recording

A meeting was held on September 26th with members from ITF, the Labor Coalition and WCB. WCB provided confirmation of payment codes that trigger a time loss claim. WCB is looking into not including long latency hearing loss claims as LT claims starting as early as 2023.

In 2020 there were 1456 LT claims paid solely based on coding where the worker did not miss at least a full day (5% of all LT claims). Seventy one percent had wage replacement benefits issued due to modified work scenarios, reemployment benefits or fatality benefits. The remainder involved permanent impairment, mainly hearing loss. In terms of next steps, further discussion will be held regarding handling claims of short duration in the coming months.

WCB Board of Director Appointments

Brian McConkey, Shawna Miller, Mike Boyle and Mary Phillips-Rickey have all been reappointed to the Board for terms expiring March 20, 2026.

Other Subcommittee Updates

Industry Custom Pricing - The ITF subcommittee will be meeting with WCB on October 13th to discuss concerns identified by ITF members and identify issues that can be addressed relatively quickly through process and procedure change.

WCB/OHS Data Sharing - Members of the subcommittee and Executive will be meeting with WCB (Adrienne Lozinski, James Wilson and Erik Soderstrom) and OHS (Rob Feagan and Dejan Ozegovic) on October 20th to discuss member concerns and facilitate better understanding of current processes.

Upcoming ITF Association meetings

The next guest presentation webinar is being arranged for the afternoon of Thursday November 24th.

The final quarterly membership meeting of 2022 is on Wednesday November 30th. The 2023 WCB Premium Rate presentation will take place at this meeting. This will be a hybrid in-person and virtual meeting. The in-person meeting is at the Holiday Inn Edmonton Airport in Nisku.

September 2022