

ITF (Industry Task Force) Association

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

Appeals Commission Update

Members of the ITF Executive met with Dale Wispinski and the leadership group of the Tribunals Team on May 5th. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the Appeals Commission Tribunals team to the ITF Executive and provide an overview of the current state. The Appeals Commission hired 3 new Hearing Chairs and 19 part time Commissioners in the last year and all are now trained and fully onboard. There are no staffing changes anticipated in 2021 and the Appeals Commission has taken steps to stagger terms so there will not be the potential for a large number vacancies in any given year going forward. The AC continues to look at various strategies to streamline front end processes and shorten the timeline from notice of appeal to the hearing date. This will be discussed in greater detail at the May 31st meeting.

Joint OHS/WCB Reporting Project

ITF wrote Myles Morris, Assistant Deputy Minister in April outlining our concerns with the project and requesting some specific information. He replied on May 28th. Myles advised that the joint reporting project is not proceeding, and there are no current plans to resume work on the project. If this is to be revisited in the future, government will engage with the ITF and have further dialogue.

Policy Consultation on Legislative Changes

The WCB convened a meeting of stakeholder representatives from ITF and the Labour Coalition to discuss implementation of the Bill 47 policy changes. On the agenda for discussion were the Duty to Cooperate and Egregious Conduct policies.

The participants shared that they have limited experience with either policy at this point. Small breakout groups discussed each policy, example scenarios and were asked to provide feedback on questions that WCB should be considering in order to ensure appropriate claim decisions. WCB has committed to ongoing regular meetings with this stakeholder group to gather feedback on policy implementation.

ITF will be sending a formal request for the WCB to share anonymous case examples related to both policies with stakeholder representatives. This will allow us to monitor consistency of policy application, understand types of cases occurring and educate stakeholders on outcomes.

Notice Only Claims and CAPS Processes

The subcommittee met with the WCB on May 28th to review progress. There were four priority areas identified in the initial discussion that the WCB is working on.

- To address a gap in communication with employers because Registration Letters are no longer sent, WCB has designed a weekly report which will be available through LCR in June. The report lists all claims registered during the week, along with the name of the Claim Owner, status and reports on file.
- A check box will be added to the C040 where an employer can indicate they have a concern with the claim. This will automatically create a task in the WCB system that flags a file for review. The current reliance on comments in a text box does not allow for automation of the referral for review.
- WCB is in the process of consolidating necessary data to review experience regarding progressive injuries/RSI's which have been retained by the CAPS team to be used for an in-depth process review.
- WCB is placing greater emphasis on reducing the number of claims without a completed C060. Ease of reporting through the Worker App is discussed with the worker if a C060 is not on file. WCB is also reviewing options for formally documenting what is initially reported by the worker as the mechanism of injury which would be shared with the employer.

Psychological Injury Working Group

In follow-up to discussions with the Modified Work task team, the WCB has designed new primary psychosocial demands analysis forms for use by clinicians and employers. The clinician form is undergoing clinical review and feedback is expected by June 10th. This tool is intended to support the "job jar" model which can be used early in the claim to support modified work and assist employers in creating appropriate modified work offers that can be present to treating providers. The WCB has also continued work on designing a more informative Psych Injury Dashboard. Depending on the number of adjustments needed, we should be able to see the new dashboard for September reporting.

Upcoming ITF Association meetings

Our next meeting is on **Wednesday June 2nd starting at 8:30 am.**
May 2021