

Physiotherapists as First Reporters

Effective Feb. 1, 2013, Physiotherapists have First Reporter status as is the case with Chiropractors and Physicians.

What does this mean?

This means that a WCB Adjudicator can adjudicate a claim (Time-Loss and No Time-Loss) based on the physiotherapist's diagnosis and fitness for work status provided in their assessment report (soft tissue injuries only). If the worker goes to a physiotherapist before a physician, the Adjudicator does not have to request or necessarily wait for a physician's report to adjudicate the claim.

Because of this change, the following paragraph has been removed from the WCB Physiotherapy contract effective Feb. 1, 2013.

In the event the patient has not seen a Physician, the Contractor shall inform the patient that the WCB requires them to attend a Physician within five (5) days of the PT visit.

The following definition outlines the parameters for this change:

For soft tissue injuries (sprain / strain) and in the absence of a physician's or chiropractor's first report, the physiotherapist's assessment report may be sufficient medical evidence to adjudicate a claim. That is assuming that the physiotherapist's assessment report includes a diagnosis and information about the worker's level of fitness for work based on objective findings.

This change applies only to the adjudication of a claim. All other processes that currently require a physician's involvement or opinion are not affected by this change. (eg. referrals to specialists, diagnostic testing, etc.)

If the physiotherapist suggests that a worker is not fit for work and the adjudicator believes that the opinion of a physician is necessary, or an employer requests the opinion of a physician, the Adjudicator still has the option of asking the worker to see a physician, or referring the worker for an MSE to obtain a second opinion on fitness for work.

