



2019 Policy Project Plan

The 2019 Policy Project Plan reflects stakeholder priorities and input from the 2017 Review Report. As we begin working on these projects, we welcome your feedback on the topics in the current plan, your ideas for how to communicate our plans in the years ahead, and any concerns and suggestions you have for next year's plan.

WCB invites your input.

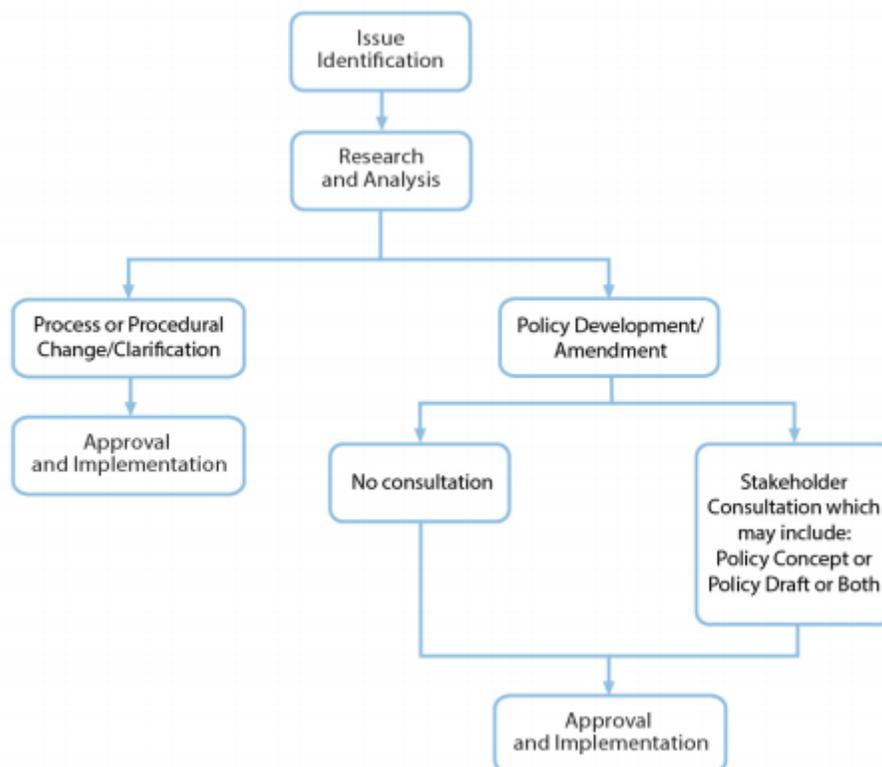
This posting will be open for comment until **March 12.**

Overview

Each year, WCB-Alberta sets a policy development plan to identify the issues we plan to address in the coming year. **We are committed to ensuring our policies reflect current legislation, research and stakeholder feedback.** To that end, the Board of Directors selects a number of policies for review—to update benefits, define services, modernize language, etc.

In 2018, the focus of the policy project plan was on policy changes arising from the legislative updates contained in Bill 30, [An Act to Protect the Health and Well-being of Working Albertans](#). For 2019, the policy project plan is designed to reflect the feedback contained in the 2017 [WCB Review Panel Report](#). Our process for reviewing and consulting on policies will be more open, transparent and inclusive of stakeholders.

At a high level, this is the policy development and consultation process* we follow (you can [read more about it](#) on our website):



We are committed to implementing this plan and keeping stakeholders informed. Check the [‘What’s new in policy?’](#) section of our website for updates throughout the year.

**The process will be updated after the first meeting of the Policy Consultation Advisory Group in Q1 2019.*

2019 Policy Reviews

<i>Policy Project Topic</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Policy Reference</i>
Medical cannabis	<p>Since 2002, requests for coverage of medical cannabis have been administered under Policy 04-06, Part II, Application 1, Question 11, which deals with non-standard, not generally accepted, or experimental medical aid. There is no specific reference to medical cannabis. As medical cannabis has become more common, we want to ensure our clients and their treatment providers have clear, evidence-based criteria for accessing coverage through our workers' compensation system.</p> <p>We would like to engage stakeholders in defining coverage parameters, using the <i>Canadian Family Physician</i> as a guide. This peer-reviewed medical journal published by the College of Family Physicians of Canada provides a guideline for prescribing medical cannabinoids in primary care.</p> <p>In addition, we now have clarity from the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta and other medical bodies regarding regulatory requirements for the authorization of medical cannabis, all of which will assist us in defining a fair and balanced process for coverage considerations.</p>	04-06, Health Care, Part II, new application
Medical assistance in dying	<p>We would like to develop a new policy in response to federal legislation passed in 2016, which legalized and regulated medical assistance in dying. In consultation with stakeholders, we will develop a simple policy to assure injured workers and their families that when the death is work-related, they have the same coverage we grant to other types of fatalities.</p>	04-06, Health Care, Part II, new application

<i>Policy Project Topic</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Policy Reference</i>
Medical assistance in dying, <i>continued</i>	We have published a worker fact sheet on our website; a dedicated policy will allow us to provide more transparency and support during what is a traumatic decision in an injured worker's life.	
Rate-setting	<p>In its 2017 report, the WCB Review Panel recommended (recommendation 41) that WCB commission an independent study of the rate-setting process. The desired outcomes are a clear, fair and transparent process that produces the necessary premiums to fund the system and an appropriate balance between collective liability and individual accountability for each employer.</p> <p>We will be sharing the results of the review and consulting on proposed changes to policy.</p>	<p>06-03, Premiums</p> <p>07-01, Classification</p> <p>07-02, Experience Records</p>
Stakeholder consultation – 2018 follow-up	These policies were developed following online and in-person consultation and we made a commitment to follow up with stakeholders in 2019 to evaluate the impact of each policy.	<p>Code of Rights and Conduct</p> <p>01-10, Interim Relief, Part I and Part II, Application 1</p> <p>04-04, Permanent Disability, Part II, Application 1</p> <p>04-05, Return-to-Work Services, Part II, Application 2 and Application 3</p>
Definition of permanent total disability	<p>Section 43(2) of the <i>Workers' Compensation Act</i> lists several injuries that are presumed to result in permanent total disability; workers who are presumed to be permanently totally disabled receive full benefits for life.</p> <p>Workers with catastrophic injuries not listed in section 43(2) also deserve access to the support they need throughout their lifetime.</p>	04-04, Permanent Disability, Part I and Part II - all Applications

<i>Policy Project Topic</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Policy Reference</i>
Definition of permanent total disability, <i>continued</i>	We would like to engage stakeholders in defining fair and balanced parameters for determining additional catastrophic injuries or injury outcomes that should receive lifetime permanent total disability benefits.	
Travel and subsistence	Legislation and policy provide that WCB may pay travel and subsistence allowances when an injured worker must travel from home to attend a WCB directed appointment. We review these allowances annually to ensure they remain current.	04-02, <u>Temporary Benefits, Part II, Addendum A, Allowance Rates</u>
Annual updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual update of various benefits to which COLA is applied, including annual compensation tables. • Annual review of funeral costs. • Annual review of the clothing allowance for severely injured workers who use assistive devices. 	All associated policy documents