



Stakeholder Feedback

Online consultation on the topic below was posted from July 6 to October 4, 2021. The verbatim comments received by WCB-Alberta during online consultation are reproduced below.

Reimbursement of housekeeping expenses prior to December 1, 2013

<i>Stakeholder</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Individual	Elected official	Any info helps our workers
ITF Association	Employer Association	<p>The ITF Association does not have a concern with respect to the proposed change re: paying a housekeeping allowance for expenses incurred prior to December 1, 2013 based on meeting criteria in the policy.</p> <p>However, members feel it is imperative that WCB actually verifies that housekeeping services were obtained by the worker for all claims where housekeeping allowance is being paid. Policy is silent on this issue, and amending the policy to include the pre-2013 change also provides an opportunity to clarify overall policy requirements for any housekeeping allowance going forward..</p> <p>The proposed policy reads: *Although receipts from the service provider are preferred, WCB understands that workers may not have kept their receipts. WCB will consider other independent evidence, such as confirmation from the housekeeper or cleaning company".</p> <p>We would like to see the language strengthened to include a separate statement that some form of proof that outside help was hired will be required for all claims where the allowance is being paid. This revision to the policy would clarify that going forward workers may be required to periodically provide proof that housekeeping services were retained so they do obtain a contract or keep receipts for housekeeping services. This aligns WCB practices with other insurance plans and is necessary to prevent fraudulent claims and payment of an allowance where outside services were never hired. Note, we are not proposing that workers just be reimbursed for expenses, only that there be a periodic verification process that housekeeping services were actually hired..</p>

<i>Stakeholder</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Comments</i>
BCL Consulting Group Inc.	Other	<p>As with our submission related to the policy development process, we would have liked to see an opportunity to pose questions around how employer experience rating may be impacted by the retroactive payment of essentially, housekeeping allowances, prior to December 2013.</p> <p>Should the policy proceed as documented, we believe that employer experience rated accounts should be untouched/not impacted negatively by this retroactive payment, through cost relief or similar cost protection provisions for employers.</p> <p>Further, we do not believe that employer WCB statistics should be impacted as related to the implementation of the policy proposed and associated retroactive payments.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>
Workers Edge	Paid Advocate	<p>Some of the changes are minor word changes with no effect on the overall intent of the policy; however, under #5, with the change noted as:</p> <p>"The housekeeping allowance came into effect on December 1, 2013; consequently, WCB does not pay the allowance for periods before that date"</p> <p>from "consequently" onward should be deleted to be in keeping with the actual intent of the Policy and to be in keeping with years of decisions handed down by the Appeals Commission and in keeping with the Schumaker case in the Court of Appeal of Alberta: Docket #: 0403-0318-AC / Edmonton / Date: 2005-07-08 in which the Court of Appeal of Alberta Justices (The Honourable Madam Justice Constance Hunt, The Honourable Mr. Justice Ronald Berger, The Honourable Mr. Justice Peter Costigan) concluded that the WCB is required to use the policy that is in place when the decision was made.</p> <p>It would seem with the adding of the above line (from consequently onwards) that the WCB is attempting to undermine the 3 Justices and their decision. It also goes against the intent of the WCB - The Workers Compensation Board - and purposes of same.</p> <p>The WCB is there for Injured Workers and to provide all the assistance required to minimize the effects of work-related injuries and should not be adding lines into Policy to Disentitle Injured Workers.</p> <p>All those who come to Alberta for work and live & work in Alberta should be protected with assistances provided following work-place injuries.</p> <p>That line in the policy seems to only take away rights from those who have suffered injuries.</p>

<i>Stakeholder</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Individual	Worker	<p>I can appreciate changes going forward from an effective date, but this policy application change appears that it will apply to all retroactive allowances applied for after 2013 regardless if such retroactive allowances were approved under the policy in force at the time of retroactive payment.</p> <p>For an worker with severe injuries and has been left with permanent restrictions that has and will forever lessen income that would have been obtainable absent the injury, to now go back retroactively and apply different qualifications for the acceptance of an allowance after they have been approved is an extremely worrisome precedent. A precedent that would allow WCB to "change the rules, qualifications, etc." after the fact and to call back sums already approved and paid.</p> <p>In some cases, this could be a substantial sum that the injured worker would have to pay back if they were unable to provide the objective evidence that would now be required. I can't imagine there is a single injured worker that has previously received a retroactive allowance payment that has parked it away for availability just in case WCB changed the rules, which means they would have to draw down on their other assets to pay WCB back for expenses they were reimbursed for but may not have the ability to prove under the new rules of evidence. The ability to obtain such objective evidence from the distant past that would be qualify for approval today may be very well impossible for worker to obtain, even though they legitimately incurred those expenses.</p> <p>This is where I land . I am not in the financial position to repay the retroactive benefits I received, and having kept no receipts for the time and have doubts that I can track down the individuals that performed those services is doubtful as it was so long ago.</p> <p>This is already causing significant anxiety with the thoughts of perhaps having to come up with a significant amount of money that I do not have to repay WCB for retroactive allowance for expenses I incurred but lack the ability to prove to WCB's satisfaction.</p>