

## Overview

WCB-Alberta’s multi-year, rolling plan reflects internal and external feedback. Policies are reviewed for a variety of reasons, but always with the goal of building understanding and clarity. Quarterly updates are used to reflect changes in priorities, keeping the plan current. In working through the policy plan, we are committed to ensuring our policies reflect current legislation, research, and feedback. We use our online consultation process to formally gather feedback every two years and that feedback is reflected in the rolling plan.

## Policy Projects

Policy projects are divided into current projects, projects on the horizon, annual updates, and completed projects. As this is a multi-year plan, status updates range from initial scoping through to expected completion dates. For example:

- **Policy/issue identification** – project is defined and scoped; opportunities are reviewed and identified
- **Information gathering** – this stage varies with the size and scope of the project; it includes research, data gathering, interjurisdictional scanning, and analysis. It isn’t a linear process and may be done simultaneously
  - **Data gathering & analysis** – looking internally to determine policy impacts and effectiveness
  - **Research** – looking externally at other jurisdictions and sources of information to understand other practices and approaches
  - **Academic/expert research underway** – for topics requiring specialized research
- **Policy drafting** – draft policy is prepared for review; if the project goes ahead, most policy drafts will go through the online consultation process
  - **Drafted** – pending approval
- **Consultation** – consultation is usually online but may include in-person/hybrid sessions
- **Review of feedback** – feedback is analyzed and policy drafts are updated as necessary to reflect feedback
- **Approval underway or complete** – final policy draft recommendations are brought forward for approval

### Current projects

Topic	Description	Status
Reconsiderations, Reviews, and Appeals (formerly New Evidence)	Review Policy 01-08 to ensure the intent is clear – to allow reconsiderations of previous decisions when there is valid new evidence that may change the outcome of the original decision.	Posted for consultation (closes March 11/24)

Topic	Description	Status
<b>Industry Custom Pricing</b>	Feedback from the 2021 online policy project plan consultation suggested areas for review.	Posted for consultation (closes March 11/24)
<b>Permanent total disability definition review</b>	Section 43(2) of the <i>Workers' Compensation Act</i> lists several injuries that are presumed to result in permanent total disability. We would like to consult to define parameters for determining additional catastrophic injuries or injury outcomes that result in permanent total disability. (Policy 04-04)	Policy drafting
<b>Home modifications for severely injured workers</b>	Severely injured workers are living longer and relocating more. A review of WCB's Policy 04-07, Part II, Application 2, on home modifications is timely to ensure compensable needs are being met.	Data gathering & analysis
<b>Occupational hearing loss</b>	Review Policy 03-01, Part II, Application 5 to ensure it reflects current knowledge to provide appropriate guidance for the adjudication of hearing loss claims.	Research

### On the horizon

Topic	Description
<b>Services for severe and seriously injured workers</b>	Under Policies 04-07 and 04-10, workers may be eligible for assistance if, due to their injury, they have functional restrictions that no longer allow them to perform necessary tasks related to their independence, activities of daily living, personal care, or home maintenance. Review to see if there are opportunities to streamline and simplify the process through which workers receive the benefits to which they are entitled.
<b>Cost relief for back injuries</b>	Review Policy 05-02, Part II, Application 3, to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Review the threshold for relieving claim costs (currently eight weeks), and</li> <li>○ Review of base earnings for cost relief application</li> </ul>
<b>Cost relief: No-time loss (NTL) threshold impact on experience rating</b>	Review impact on the employer's experience record when cost relief brings the claim cost under the NTL threshold.
<b>Cost Relief: unrelated psychological treatment</b>	Review options for cost relief for psychological treatment unrelated to the work injury/pre-existing psychological conditions.
<b>Funding</b>	Policy was effective January 2023. Next review scheduled for 2026.

## Annual updates

Topic	Description	Status
Cost-of-living adjustments (COLA)	Annual update of various benefits to which cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) is applied, including annual compensation tables. (All associated policy documents)	Annual review Q4
Annual reviews	Allowance rates, funeral costs, and the clothing allowance for severely injured workers who use assistive devices are completed annually. (All associated policy documents)	Annual review Q4

## Projects completed in the last 12 months

Topic	Outcome
Policy planning	Updated plan published <a href="#">Jan 2024</a>
Working remotely	Revised policy published <a href="#">Sept 2023</a>
Firefighters' primary site cancer presumptions	New policy published <a href="#">July 2023</a>
Apprentices	Revised policy published <a href="#">Feb 2023</a>

## Engagement

### Policy project planning

As part of the policy planning process, every two years, we do an online consultation to gather information on priorities for the Policy Project Plan. When submissions focus on issues outside the policy process, they are shared with the relevant operating areas.

### Consultations

The following consultations are underway or have been completed as part of the Policy Project Plan:

Consultation dates	Topic
Dec 12, 2022, to Mar 11, 2024	<a href="#">Industry custom pricing (ICP) automatic re-polling</a>
Dec 12, 2022, to Mar 11, 2024	<a href="#">Policy 01-08: Reconsiderations, reviews, and appeals</a>