

## Overview

WCB-Alberta's multi-year, rolling plan reflects feedback from both internal and external stakeholders. Policies are reviewed for a variety of reasons, but always with the goal of building understanding and clarity for all stakeholders. 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 stakeholder feedback.

We use our online stakeholder consultation process to formally gather feedback from stakeholders every two years and that feedback is reflected in the rolling plan.

## Policy Projects

Policy projects are divided into current projects, 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 stakeholder consultation process
- **Stakeholder 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
<b>Working remotely</b>	The COVID-19 pandemic has changed patterns of work. More people are working from home and employers are re-examining physical location as a requirement for employment. Policy 02-01, Part I, and Part II, Application 1 to 3 are being reviewed to ensure policies reflect the changing environment.	Approval underway
<b>Reconsiderations, Reviews, and Appeals (formerly New Evidence)</b>	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.	Policy drafting
<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 engage stakeholders in defining parameters for determining additional catastrophic injuries or injury outcomes that result in permanent total disability. (Policy 04-04)	Policy drafting
<b>Policy project planning</b>	Use the online stakeholder consultation process to gather policy priorities from stakeholders.	Preparation for stakeholder consultation
<b>Firefighters' primary site cancer</b>	Develop a new application that reflects the legislative and regulatory direction for firefighters' primary site cancer.	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 it is meeting the needs of stakeholders.	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>Industry Custom Pricing</b>	Feedback from the 2021 online policy project plan consultation suggested areas for review. Review of the process is underway.

Topic	Description
Administration of Safety Association Grants	Feedback from the 2021 online policy project plan consultation suggested areas for review.
Cost Relief: unrelated psychological treatment	Review options for cost relief for psychological treatment unrelated to the work injury/pre-existing psychological conditions.
Cost relief for back injuries	Raised in the 2021 policy project plan consultation.
Cost relief: No-time loss (NTL) threshold impact on experience rating	Raised in the 2021 policy project plan consultation.
Payment of temporary total disability benefits during medical investigation	Raised in the 2021 policy project plan consultation.

### 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)	Completed Q4, 2022
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)	Completed Q4, 2022

### *Projects completed in the last 12 months*

Topic	Outcome
Apprentices	Revised policy published <a href="#">Feb 2023</a>
Opioids	Revised policy published <a href="#">Jan 2023</a>
Funding	Revised policy published <a href="#">Jan 2023</a>
Medical cannabis	New policy/addendum published <a href="#">Sept 2022</a>

## Stakeholder engagement

### *Policy project planning*

As part of the policy planning process, every two years, stakeholders are invited to submit their priorities for the Policy Project Plan.

Feedback from the 2021 consultation included the following priorities: reimbursement of housekeeping expenses; medical cannabis; work from home/remote work; and cost relief for psychological treatment unrelated to the work injury/pre-existing psychological conditions.

Some submissions focus on issues outside the policy process; these are shared with the relevant operating areas.

### *Stakeholder consultations*

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

Consultation dates	Topic
Dec 6, 2022, to Mar 20, 2023	<a href="#">Working remotely</a>
Jun 28, 2022, to Sep 26, 2022	<a href="#">Opioids</a>
Feb 15, 2022, to Jun 20, 2022	<a href="#">Funding</a>