

# Psychological injuries from traumatic event(s) at work

When you experience traumatic event(s) at work, this can result in a psychological injury or stress that can be personally devastating and require treatment to resolve. A claim for a psychological injury can be accepted when you develop a confirmed psychological injury after experiencing a traumatic event(s) at work.

Because we understand the impact of such event(s), the following provides information on how we can help you through the workers' compensation system.

## How does WCB make a decision to accept a claim?

We accept a confirmed psychological injury when it developed as a result of exposure to a traumatic event(s) at work.

A confirmed psychological or psychiatric injury is one that has been diagnosed by a physician, psychiatrist or psychologist as defined in the most recent version of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental disorders (DSM).

## What is a traumatic event?

A traumatic event at work is defined as direct personal experience of an event or directly witnessing an event that is:

- sudden/unexpected,
- frightening or shocking,
- having a specific time and place, and
- involves actual or threatened death or serious injury to oneself or others or threat to one's physical integrity (i.e. assault).

Interpersonal relations between a worker and co-workers, management or customers may be traumatic when they result in behaviours that are aggressive, threatening or abusive and satisfy the overall definition as listed above.

## What type of work events could result in a psychological injury?

WCB accepts psychological injuries arising out of a variety of work-related incidents or events such as:

- A store clerk who is the victim of a robbery.

- A warehouse worker who witnesses the death or severe injury of a co-worker.
- A truck driver who is involved in a motor vehicle accident involving fatalities.
- A social worker who was exposed to a series of cases involving child abuse.

## What you can expect when your claim is submitted

When we receive information indicating you may have experienced stressors at work over time and you have a psychological injury, we may help you start treatment immediately (as needed).

In the meantime, we will confirm both the nature and source of the stressors and the psychological diagnosis. This is confirmed by your treatment provider using the criteria established in the most current version of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM).

To confirm coverage, we may need to gather additional information like medical assessments, interviews with other stakeholders, witness statements, and/or any additional relevant information to support work relatedness and clarify the diagnosis.

We care about your wellbeing and will work with you to obtain this information as quickly as possible so we may begin supporting your recovery.

## What happens if my claim is not approved?

We may be able to offer help in other ways.

We will help you understand how you may qualify for help and what support is available to help you access treatment and achieve recovery.

## Helping you recover

Your recovery and success are important. WCB-Alberta works with a number of community psychologists throughout the province to help workers access the best care for their individual needs.

We can help you select the provider for the treatment you receive and WCB will cover the costs of treatment and progress reporting on your claim. Together, we will help you overcome the challenges that may be preventing you from participating in your day-to-day work.

For workers with complex care needs who may need a little more support, WCB clinicians developed a care model to help manage reactions to traumatic incidents. This support is designed to provide the skills and tools to help you move forward in a positive direction.

The traumatic psychological injury (TPI) care model provides an interdisciplinary approach to your care with specialized clinical professionals whose primary goal is your successful recovery. There are a handful of providers contracted to provide this specialized treatment in the province.

### Treatment and assessment

Your care and recovery is our priority. If you, your health care provider, or your case manager have concerns about your recovery, you may be referred for an initial TPI assessment at one of the contracted provider clinics.

This session will last up to two hours and involve an interview with a psychologist and the completion of some checklists. The outcome of the session may include confirmation your care is achieving positive results for you or recommendations for further assessment, treatment, and/or your safe return to work.

For example, a gradual return to modified work may be recommended, along with some counselling to assist you in the process. Further assessments may be required, depending on the progress of your recovery.

### The TPI care model provides:

#### Education

Participants receive important information about common responses to trauma and different ways to cope with them. With participant approval, family members may also be provided with education to understand and support the recovery process.

#### Personal attention

Based upon the results of an individual assessment, services are tailored to each participant's needs.

#### Improved recovery

With early intervention and access to an interdisciplinary team of specialists to help (including psychologists, occupational therapists, exercise therapists), a healthier return to regular activities and work is more likely to be achieved.

#### People who may be involved in the success of the TPI process

There are many people who want to help you succeed. This includes your family members, physicians, case manager and other health care providers. They may all play a role in your recovery.

### Have questions?

Please contact us toll-free at 1-866-922-9221.

### More information for you

You can find information about psychological injuries [here](#).

Information about modified work is found [here](#).

