WCB Work-Related COVID-19 Investigation Questions

*Based on our communications, we would like to offer the following information that the WCB is sharing with employers:*

The WCB Alberta has put together Fact Sheets for [employers](https://www.wcb.ab.ca/assets/pdfs/employers/EFS_COVID-19_at_work.pdf) and for [workers](https://www.wcb.ab.ca/assets/pdfs/workers/WFS_COVID-19.pdf) and further information can be found on the [WCB Alberta website](https://www.wcb.ab.ca/search.html?q=covid).

The WCB, as an organization, is trying to gather as much information as possible on these files and have committed to employers that they will work through these questions with workers:

1) Do they work in an essential service where there is greater risk of infection through contact with the public? Or, in a place with a confirmed workplace outbreak? Who were you in direct contact with ie: a resident / co-worker / inmate that had tested positive?

2) Do you have confirmation of a COVID 19 Diagnosis? Yes/No Variant? Yes/No Rapid testing or AHS testing: Rapid or AHS Text message or telephone call received? Text or phone call Email received? Yes/no Date tested results received: When did you start experiencing symptoms? Type of symptoms?

3) Did you work in the 14 days prior to developing symptoms or testing positive (includes any periods of required isolation due to contact tracking from work)

4) Is there any firm evidence today that infection may have occurred elsewhere? (for example, worker has been on vacation and has not worked in >14 days, worker has not had a shift/or has not come in to work in >14 days, AHS contact tracing information confirms worker was infected while travelling, etc....). "Possible" alternate sources of contact may be documented but are not "firm evidence" of this contact.

5) Living conditions. How many people in your home have tested positive? Who was the first? Timeline?

6) Commuting to work? Do you travel with people from home, coworkers, etc. that have positive?

7) Exposure to someone from out of country? Timeline?

8) What was the last day they worked?

9) What was the first official day they missed work due to their illness?

10) Shift cycle start date prior to date of accident

11) When are they expected to RTW? If they RTW what is the date?

12) What date were they medically cleared of COVID to be able to return to work/out of isolation?

The WCB goes on to say:

If we are not able to find any outside source of positive contact for a worker and there is a declared outbreak at the worker site we would be accepting those files as work related as there is an increased risk in exposure.

Here is the Policy that we are using when we are adjudicating these files.

Covid is not a disease that would be caused by employment or process within an industry itself as outlined in Section 20(1) of the WCB Act so would not be listed in Schedule B. However it is an infectious disease and is captured under our policy 03-01, part 2 for occupational disease - infectious diseases Q4, and would be similar to other infectious diseases covered by WCB such as H1N1 and Norwalk virus. What is different now is not the policy or our approach but the vast number of workplaces impacted due to this particular disease's infectious rate.

Here is some information around our Policy as it relates to infectious diseases.

Policy 03-01, Part II, App3, Question 4:

What, if any, special conditions apply to infectious disease claims?

When a worker contracts an infectious disease as a result of employment, the worker is entitled to compensation if the following conditions are met:

* the nature of employment involves sufficient exposure to the source of infection, and
* the nature of employment is shown to be the cause of the condition, or
* the nature of employment creates an increased risk of exposure for the worker.

If a worker, as a result of contracting a compensable infectious disease, is forced by the terms of the Public Health Act to lose time from work, the time loss is compensable, whether or not the worker is disabled.

When immunization is required for the prevention of a work-related disease or infection and as a result of a reaction to this compulsory immunization a worker experiences a loss of earnings, WCB will consider the reaction and its consequences to be compensable.

This policy approach has been in place since at least 1999, so it does not represent a change in how we adjudicate infectious disease.

The disease is not in itself caused by employment; however, if the work situation/circumstances put a worker at a greater risk of contracting the disease, it would then be an acceptable claim. This is consistent with the approach taken by other WCB Jurisdictions in Canada.

*This information is offered as a resource for employers and workers in an effort to help facilitate entitlement decisions by the WCB on COVID-19 infection claims. The intent is to provide assistance in obtaining the relevant information the WCB will be looking for so it is readily available when requested. In turn, this will allow the WCB to make a determination about entitlement in a timely fashion and ensure that the worker, or their family, is in receipt of benefits and assistance from the appropriate source.*

*How this information is gathered, shared and stored is up to individual organizations and compliance with their own confidentiality policies.*

*As always, we strive to answer your questions or address your concerns to the best of our ability. If you require assistance regarding a potential or existing WCB COVID-19 claim or you wish to discuss the above questions in further detail, you can reach us directly at BCL.Calgary@bclconsulting.ca , BCL.Edmonton@bclconsulting.ca, by phone at 1-844-377-9545 or you can connect with us on* [***Facebook***](https://www.facebook.com/bclconsultingcanada)*,* [***Twitter***](https://twitter.com/BCL_Consulting)*, or* [***LinkedIn***](https://www.linkedin.com/company/bcl-consulting-group-inc.?trk=top_nav_home)*.*