

2022 COMMITTEE OF REVIEW STATUS UPDATES - Q1 2025 Status Update

Outstanding Recommendations:

- Recommendation #1 - Student Coverage
- Recommendation #4 - Death benefits when no dependants
- Recommendation #6 - Excluded industries and occupations.
- Recommendation #7 - Excluded industries and occupations.
- Recommendation #9 - Youth safety programs
- Recommendation #13 - Out of province – psychological injury treatment
- Recommendation #15 - WCB staff training
- Recommendation #16 - Psychological injuries presumption & policy
- Recommendation #17 - Chronic pain policy
- Recommendation #18 - Customer Service training
- Recommendation #19 - Designated adjudicator
- Recommendation #20 - Communications – Care providers – RTW
- Recommendation #21 - Communications – adjudication visual aids
- Recommendation #25 - Communications – enhancements
- Recommendation #26 - Communications – RTW programs
- Recommendation #29 - Communications – Care providers
- Recommendation #30 - Communications – Employers
- Recommendation #31 - WCB Board Member
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Completed Recommendations:

- Recommendation #2 – PFI
- Recommendation #3 - Transportation of body
- Recommendation #5 - Dependent children benefits extension.
- Recommendation #8 - Directors – Executive Officers
- Recommendation #10– Privacy
- Recommendation #11- Penalty for breach of privacy
- Recommendation #12 - Employer’s ability to request claim file
- Recommendation #14- Partnership for proactive psychological prevention
- Recommendation #22 - Communications – Info for worker
- Recommendation #23 - Communications – clear language
- Recommendation #24 - Communications – COR status updates
- Recommendation #27 - Medical Review Panels
- Recommendation #28 - Communications – Medical Review Panels
- Recommendation #33 - Communications – Appeal Decisions
- Recommendation #34 - Communications – Publish Tribunal Decisions

Recommendation #1 - Student Coverage

Make legislative changes to cover work-based learning programs providing workers' compensation benefits to students.

Status update – Complete. Amendments to the Act are set to be enforced January 1, 2025. With respect to student coverage, there was a repeal and replacement of Section 2 (g)(ii) to update the definition of worker to include “a secondary or post-secondary student who is enrolled in a program recognized by the minister in which the student is given training or work experience”. Employer Services, Legal and Policy continue to work towards updated MOUs with the various ministries.

Recommendation #4 - Death benefits when no dependants

Provide death benefits such as a one-time payment to the estate of a deceased worker who has no dependents, no parents or who has parents, no dependent child.

Status update – Ongoing. This recommendation did not lead to proposed legislative amendment. Burial expenses are already covered by the WCB regardless of whether there are dependants. This recommendation contradicted the purposes of the workers' compensation system by providing a financial award without dependants to support.

Recommendation #6 - Excluded industries and occupations.

Review section 3 of the Regulations to update industries and occupations currently included or excluded from the Act that should be considered for inclusion.

Status update – Analysis of opportunities has begun.

Recommendation #7 - Excluded industries and occupations.

Encourage employers to advise workers employed in the excluded occupations that they are not covered by the provisions of the Act.

Status update – Ongoing. A future state risk-based service delivery model is under development. Services may include education, support, and partnership to support customers' understanding of their rights and obligations.

Recommendation #9- Youth safety programs

Encourage the continuation of safety programs for youth and to be made available throughout high schools in Saskatchewan. The safety associations should be involved in joint efforts with WorkSafe Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Safety Council in these youth safety programs.

Status Update – Ongoing. WCB prevention engaged partners to participate in the development of a New Worker Program – a provincial approach to young/new worker injury prevention. The first meeting was held in Q1 2025. A coordinated approach including the WCB, safety associations, Saskatchewan Safety Council, and Saskatchewan Federation of Labour will gain further alignment in 2025, and document a coordinated-provincial approach to reduce duplication and address emerging gaps/opportunities.

Recommendation #13- Out of province – psychological injury treatment

Fund out of province treatment options when recommended by a medical practitioner for public safety personnel with psychological injuries who have no specific medical programs to access in Saskatchewan.

Status update - Ongoing. WCB currently considers out of province treatment options when the recommended care is not available in Saskatchewan. This is not limited to public safety personnel. Opportunities for occupational awareness training for mental health providers was offered in 2024 and planned for again in 2025.

Recommendation #15- WCB staff training

Provide more trauma informed training including communication tools for Saskatchewan WCB staff who deal with psychological injury claims.

Status Update – Ongoing. WCB has incorporated training in trauma-informed practices for all staff handling claims, including those who manage psychological injuries. Trauma Informed Practice is a portion of the training now being delivered. A full listing of updated training for staff is included in #18 below.

Recommendation #16 - Psychological injuries presumption & policy

Clarify and adjust the legislation for psychological injuries to further address the issue of presumptive coverage in order to provide quicker supports. The Policy and Procedure Manual needs to support the intent of the Act.

Status Update – No legislative change proposed. Policy review completed and updated policy effective May 1, 2025.

Recommendation #17 - Chronic pain policy

Create a stand-alone chronic pain policy which is similar to what most other provinces have done.

Status Update – This will be addressed through policy research & development.

Recommendation #18 - Customer Service training

Provide enhanced customer service training to staff which includes how to show compassion and understanding, how to listen, and how to deal with people who are experiencing difficult life situations and who may not get approval for an injury claim.

Status Update - Ongoing. Throughout 2023 and 2024, WCB rolled out a comprehensive training program that focused on upskilling claims staff in a variety of areas to improve communication, collaboration and customer relationships. Topics include mindset shifts, building relationships, leading the customer experience, goal setting and attainment, trauma informed practice, customer awareness, effective communication, conflict resolution, motivational interviewing, proactive communication, work recovery planning, and collaborative return to work. Opportunities to expand this training to other WCB staff are being explored for the future.

Recommendation #19 - Designated adjudicator

Create a dedicated team of adjudicators to deal with specific employers who submit a large number of injury claims. Dealing with a dedicated team will improve efficiencies and communication as they would be familiar with the employer on an ongoing basis.

Status Update – Ongoing. This is currently in place for a small number of employers. Review is currently underway and enhancements to be made as part of new technology solution.

Recommendation #20 - Communications – Care providers – RTW

Develop a communication strategy with the Saskatchewan Medical Association, the College of Physicians and Surgeons, and Chiropractors' Association of Saskatchewan on the important role of the primary practitioner in the process to help guide the injured worker to return to work including providing details on their functional abilities, restrictions, and limitations.

Status update – Ongoing. In Q4, stakeholders' RTW roles and responsibilities were drafted. In 2025, in collaboration with the WCB medical consultants, the RTW roles and responsibilities will be finalized, and an external communications plan will be developed and implemented.

Recommendation #21 - Communications – adjudication visual aids

Develop an easy-to-understand guide (the anatomy of a claim) which may include diagrams/flow charts for workers and employers to better understand the claim submission, and decision making and appeal processes within the Saskatchewan WCB.

Status update - Ongoing. Appeals process visual is complete. Additional visuals will be completed in the future.

Recommendation #25 - Communications – enhancements

Enhance communication methods and tools using traditional and non-traditional formats to focus on prevention and lowering time loss rates and serious injuries. These communication methods need to be directed at both the employer and the worker.

Status update – Ongoing.

- *The 2023-2028 Fatalities and Serious Injuries Strategy (FSIS) includes the implementation of learning collaboratives in targeted industries and priority areas of focus:*
 - *Motor vehicle crash prevention*
 - *City Transit (violence, mental health)*
 - *Saskatchewan Health Authority (violence prevention)*
 - *Construction (falls from heights)*
 - *First Responders (psychological safety)*
 - *Three musculoskeletal (MSI) learning collaboratives with healthcare affiliates*
 - *Youth Workers (violence, mental health)*
 - *Construction/ Mining (leading indicators/ contractor management)*
- *2024 FSIS report ([December 2024 Update](#)) published.*

Recommendation #26 - Communications – RTW programs

Develop a communication strategy to increase the understanding and use of return to work programs with injured workers, employers and WCB case staff. Use of this program would encourage an injured worker's continuous involvement at the workplace while complying with medical restrictions during their recovery.

Status update – Ongoing. Improvements to WCB return to work processes continued in 2024, focused on increased collaboration between, workers, employers, the WCB and health care providers. Return to work resources for employers to support prevention of work disability were updated in 2024, and training for employers was developed and piloted in Q1 2025.

Recommendation #29 - Communications – Care providers

Work with the Saskatchewan Medical Association and the Chiropractors' Association of Saskatchewan to create a better understanding for the primary practitioner on the importance of providing proper documentation in the medical assessment of the injured worker when they first present themselves.

Status update – Ongoing. This work is ongoing and will be completed in concert with work planned under recommendation 20. Care providers roles and responsibilities were drafted and reviewed with WCB medical consultants. New offer of modified duties form was drafted and reviewed with the WCB medical consultants. A plan is being developed to communicate the role and responsibilities and test the new offer of modified duties form in 2025.

Recommendation #30 - Communications – Employers

Increase communication to employers, especially smaller companies regarding the assistance that is available to them from the Employer Resource Centre.

Status update – Complete. Work is underway to further identify employer needs to continue the development of how-to videos. The Employer Resource Centre evolved into the Employer Advisory Centre in 2024. The new service went live in Q1 2025. This expanded service will balance the needs of workers and employers through education and support and provide new advisory services to help employers with appeals.

Recommendation #31 - WCB Board Member

Future appointments to the Saskatchewan WCB Board need to consider a more diverse selection of individuals to create a better representation of the Saskatchewan workforce.

Status update - At the discretion of the Minister and Government.

Recommendation #32 - WCB Board Members

Maintain the current model for the Board Appeal Tribunal as an internal structure within the Saskatchewan WCB.

Status update - No changes required at this time.