

Hearing loss

The Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board uses regular occupational medical guidelines including evidence-based information for its decisions about hearing loss injuries.

Hearing loss

Hearing loss can happen from:

- a work-related injury
- age
- a non-work injury or illness

We accept claims for work-related, noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL), but do not accept claims for age-related or non-work injury hearing loss or illness.

Work-related noise exposure is defined as: "continuous or uninterrupted exposure to occupational noise levels of 85 dB or higher for eight hours a day, for a minimum of two years." This exposure must occur in Saskatchewan.

Hearing tests (audiograms)

Hearing tests show hearing loss. We recommend getting a hearing test done when a worker is exposed to occupational noise. We suggest that workers get a hearing test when they first start working and at regular intervals from then on. It is important to do a hearing test when employment ends. Hearing tests should also be done within five years of a worker retiring or ceasing to be exposed to occupational noise. NIHL does not progress after exposure ends.

When submitting a claim for NIHL, please send in or advise of all hearing tests that have been completed. If no hearing test has been completed, please book an appointment as soon as possible and have the test completed. We require a hearing test to review NIHL claims, and claim acceptance is dependent on NIHL being the dominant cause of hearing loss as shown in the audiograms available at the time of adjudication.

Acoustic trauma hearing loss

In the event of a traumatic hearing loss or acoustic trauma, such as an explosion, an immediate audiogram is required to determine extent of damage if any.

Out-of-province exposure

If a worker has not met the two-year continuous or uninterrupted exposure requirement in Saskatchewan and there is noise exposure in other provinces, a separate application could be made to the WCB of that province, as the worker may not qualify for benefits with the Saskatchewan WCB.

Benefits

When a claim is accepted for NIHL, WCB provides benefits for standard hearing aid instruments, batteries and ear molds. General maintenance is covered, as are repairs or replacements of hearing aids. Hearing accessories are not covered.

At the time of claim acceptance, the claim will be reviewed for a permanent functional impairment (PFI) award depending on the severity of the loss.

This policy supports Mission: Zero, and the injury prevention work and training that you are already doing in your work places.

For more information, visit our websites at wcbask.com or worksafesask.ca.