

POLICY NUMBER: POL-03

Consultation Summary

The Workers Compensation Board (WCB) is always monitoring benefits to ensure that workers are compensated fairly. By reducing the financial burden associated with workplace injuries, the overall impact of workplace injuries is reduced.

Amending the policy, Travel and Related Expenses (POL-03), will bring reimbursement rates for worker motor vehicle travel more in line with current fuel prices.

The proposed amendment to POL-03 will change the mileage reimbursement rate for workers. Instead of using the previous calendar year's average, the reimbursement would be in line with Treasury Board's current rate for public sector employees. This amount is adjusted monthly based on the price change per litre of regular non-leaded gasoline. Using this reimbursement method rather than the previous year's annual average will better reflect changes in fuel prices and will more appropriately compensate workers for travel related to a workplace injury. (9)

The attached draft policy is presented with new content **bolded** and content to be deleted is shown with a ~~strikethrough~~. A copy of the current policy is attached for comparison.

POLICY NUMBER: POL-03

**Chapter:
CLAIMS**

**Subject:
TRAVEL AND RELATED EXPENSES**

**Effective Date:
September 1, 1993**

**Last Update:
Draft September 13, 2022**

PURPOSE STATEMENT:

The purpose of the policy is to explain how the Workers Compensation Board provides support to workers for travel and related expenses resulting from their workplace injuries.

REFERENCE:

Workers Compensation Act R.S.P.E.I. 1988, Cap. W-7.1, Sections 18 (4), (5), (11), 59(4)
Workers Compensation Board Policy, POL-27, Overpayments to Workers
Workers Compensation Board Policy, POL-73, Transportation Assistance

DEFINITION:

In this policy:

“Expenses” means the cost of transportation, meals, accommodation and miscellaneous charges as a result of a compensable injury.

“Health Care Provider” means both medical practitioners and other practitioners.

“Return to work” means modified duties, alternate duties or tasks, or ease back, including approved employer-initiated ease back. Return to work includes transition from light, alternative or modified duties and modified or alternative work.

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“Vocational rehabilitation programs” include Job Search, Work Experience, Formal Training, and Self-Employment Programs.

POLICY:

1. The Workers Compensation Board (WCB) provides support for workers to assist with travel and related expenses resulting from their workplace injuries.
2. This policy sets out the eligibility criteria and conditions for payment of expenses when travel is approved by the WCB to attend appointments, programs and meetings related to workplace injuries.
3. Support for workers who have significant functional restrictions and altered transportation needs as a result of their workplace injury is set out in WCB policy, Transportation Assistance (POL-73).

Conditions for Entitlement to Travel Expenses

4. To be eligible for support for travel and related expenses, the worker must have an approved WCB claim.
5. The WCB will provide support for necessary and appropriate expenses when travel is approved by the WCB and is required for the following reasons:
 - Obtaining health care for the workplace injury.
 - Participating in return to work and vocational rehabilitation programs only if the travel costs exceed what the worker would normally incur travelling to and from work.
 - Other meetings related to a worker’s claim.
 - Return travel for Prince Edward Island workers injured out of province.
 - Family support for seriously injured workers who are hospitalized.

If an out of province program requires extensive travel or a prolonged stay, the WCB may determine it is more appropriate to support living expenses in place of repeated commutes, with periodic support for return travel home.

6. Expenses associated with the following are not eligible for reimbursement:
- Pick-up of prescriptions or supplies.
 - Unscheduled visits to the WCB.
 - The worker's attendance at appeal hearings unless the decision is overturned at appeal in favour of the worker.
 - Return transportation to an out-of-province work site.

Travel Expenses

7. The WCB will pay the worker for kilometers travelled based on the most direct route between the point of departure (either the worker's residence or place of employment if the worker is at work) and the destination.
8. The WCB will not pay additional costs for travel to a distant location when similar treatment or service is available closer to their place of residence, or when the worker is temporarily staying in a different location (for example, cottage or campground) that is further away for reasons unrelated to a workplace injury.
9. **Reimbursement rates for the use of private motor vehicles will be based on the monthly rate established by Treasury Board in accordance with the Collective Agreement between the Union of Public Sector Employees (UPSE) and the Province of Prince Edward Island. This amount will be adjusted monthly based on the change per litre in the price of regular non-leaded gasoline.** ~~Payment will be made based on the distance travelled by private vehicle and the average rate per kilometer for WCB employees for the previous calendar year. The rate will be adjusted annually.~~
10. Where use of a private motor vehicle is not possible or reasonable, the worker is required to use the most appropriate and cost effective mode of transportation as approved by the WCB.

If using commercial transportation, such as a bus, taxi or airplane, the WCB will make best efforts to have the company invoice the WCB directly.

Out of Province Travel Allowance

11. For out of province travel, the WCB will pay the worker based on each kilometer of travel required and,

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- \$175 for the first day of travel to cover tolls, meals and other expenses for the worker and an informal attendant.
 - \$120 for each day for each additional day of travel.
 - \$200 for each night to cover accommodation costs, if the WCB determines that the trip cannot reasonably occur within one day.
12. Payment will be made in advance, when the WCB has approved the purpose for travel. Receipts and expense claims are not required. The worker may determine how the allowances are used.
13. If the allowance is paid but the worker does not travel, the WCB will determine whether repayment of the allowance is required as set out in WCB policy, POL-27, Overpayments to Workers.

In-Province Travel Expenses

14. For approved in-province travel, the worker is eligible for reimbursement for the kilometers required to travel.
15. For each return trip of 100 kilometers or more, a meal allowance of \$15 will be provided to the worker.
16. The worker must submit an expense claim for in-province travel. A form is available on the WCB website. To be considered for reimbursement, expense claims must be received by the WCB within six months from the date of the expense.
17. To assist workers who may not otherwise be able to attend treatment or programs, the WCB may issue advance travel payments.

Family Support

18. Where a worker has a life-threatening or serious injury that results in out of province hospitalization with a critical or serious condition, the WCB will provide a payment of \$1,000 to assist with travel costs for family members to be with the worker immediately following the injury.
19. For any worker who is hospitalized for one week or longer due to a workplace injury, the WCB will provide a payment of \$500 to assist with costs associated with family support for the worker.

20. Family support is paid directly to the worker, where possible. Receipts are not required.

Exceptional Circumstances

21. If there are exceptional circumstances where additional support for travel and related expenses may be required, the WCB may consider payment for additional costs on a case by case basis.

HISTORY:

September 2022 – TBD

July 22, 2021 – Amended to provide advance allowances for out of province travel, increased support for hospitalized workers, adjustments to eligible travel supports and consideration of exceptional circumstances.

September 24, 2020 – Amended to provide assistance with family support expenses for workers who require out-of-province hospitalization immediately following a life-threatening or serious injury.

June 20, 2018 – Non-substantive changes to definitions.

December 12, 2017 - Amended to reflect changes to the meal, accommodation and mileage allowance rates and the types of expenses eligible for reimbursement.

July 25, 2017 – Amended to reflect a \$0.50 increase to breakfast and dinner meal allowance rates effective August 1, 2017.

November 22, 2016 - Amended to reflect a \$0.50 increase to lunch and dinner meal allowance rates, and to define limits for travel advances and the submission of receipts. Content from WCB policy, POL-34, "Return of Injured Worker to PEI," has been incorporated into this policy.

December 18, 2014 – Amended to reflect the increase in the lunch allowance from \$8.50 to \$9.00 effective August 1, 2014. Also, amended to reflect that the worker will be reimbursed for travel costs, while participating in a return to work program, that exceed what the worker would normally have incurred travelling to and from work.

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August 1, 2013 – Effective August 1, 2013 the meal reimbursement rate for dinner increased from \$19.50 to \$20.00.

March 29, 2012 - Amended to provide clarity to a number of sections and to address non-health care provider attendant care.

August 1, 2011 - Effective August 1, 2011 the meal reimbursement rates were increased as follows: Breakfast - \$7.00 to \$7.50; Lunch - \$8.00 to \$8.50; Dinner - \$18.50 to \$19.50; accommodation allowance - \$110.00 to \$120.00.

August 1, 2010 - Effective August 1, 2010 the meal reimbursement rate for dinner increased from \$18.00 to \$18.50.

September 30, 2009 - Effective October 1, 2009 transportation costs will be reimbursed at the same rate per kilometer as Workers Compensation Board employees.

July 23, 2009 - Amended to reflect an increase to the meal reimbursement rates effective

August 1, 2009. The increase was made as a result of the annual review of travel reimbursement rates.

July 31, 2008 - Amended to reflect increases to the travel reimbursement rates and the addition of an annual review of travel reimbursement rates.

September 22, 2005 - Amended to increase the reimbursement rate from \$.22 cents/km to \$.27 cents/km, changed the name of the policy from “Travel Allowance” to “Travel and Related Expenses”, and made revisions to streamline the process for reimbursement.

January 23, 2003 - Modified to include two (2) travel claim forms (one (1) for travel less than four (4) hours and one (1) for travel more than four (4) hours or out of province travel) and added accommodation allowance amount of \$80.00.

October 24, 2002 - Modified length of time worker has to submit travel claim from one (1) month to six (6) months.

May 16, 2002 - Clarified policy with respect to attendance at appeal hearings.

March 28, 2002 - Claimant Travel Allowance (POL04-01) policy: (1) renamed to Travel Allowance (POL04-01); (2) revised to replace following policies – “Companion Expenses” dated

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November 15, 1994; “Medical Coverage for Workers Travelling Outside Canada for Personal Reasons”, dated October 14, 1993; “Medical Care - Out of Province Referrals” dated April 16, 1996; and “Medical Care - Out of Province Travel Advances and Expenses” dated November 15, 1994; and (3) revised to include a standard form (Worker Travel Claim, CL-02).

November 27, 2000 - Travel allowance for rehabilitation programs clarified to specify that reimbursement is to be provided only in circumstances where the worker suffers a wage loss. Reviewed by the Board of Directors and revised policy implemented effective December 14, 2000.

November 8, 2000 - Travel allowance for rehabilitation programs clarified to include a maximum rate of \$150.00 per week. This rate has been increased by 20% to reflect an increase equivalent to the mileage rate increase. Reviewed by the Board of Directors and revised policy implemented effective November 20, 2000.

May 18, 2000 - Travel & Meal Costs Claimant Reimbursement policy revised. Revisions included title, format, rates and removal of all references to an “Early Return to work program”. Reviewed by the Board of Directors and revised policy implemented effective May 18, 2000.

July 14, 1994 - Travel & Meal Costs Claimant Reimbursement policy revised. Reviewed by the Board of Directors and revised policy implemented effective July 14, 1994.

August 19, 1993 - Travel & Meal Costs Claimant Reimbursement policy revised. Reviewed by the Board of Directors and policy implemented effective September 1, 1993.

Board of Directors Approval Date: August 19, 1993

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