

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, Prescription Eyewear (POL-06), will allow more frequent prescription eyewear replacement for workers who require it as a result of a workplace injury.

The proposed amendments to POL-06 include:

- Change in frequency of replacement of prescription eyewear from the current every four (4) years to every two (2) years. This increase in frequency is consistent with current Canadian Association of Optometrists recommendations regarding the frequency of eye exams. (2)
- Removal of redundant information on wage loss benefits. This is covered in detail in Temporary Wage Loss Benefits (POL-86). (8)

In addition to the proposed amendments, the policy has been updated and re-organized in accordance with WCB's client-centred approach to policy design. This approach is meant to enhance clients' understanding.

The attached draft policy is presented with the non-substantive changes applied. The proposed amendments are tracked, new content is **bolded** and content to be deleted is shown with a ~~strikethrough~~. A copy of the current policy is attached for comparison.

POLICY NUMBER: POL-06

Chapter:
CLAIMS

Subject:
PRESCRIPTION EYEWEAR

Effective Date:
January 20, 1994

Last Update:
DRAFT – September 13, 2022

PURPOSE STATEMENT:

The purpose of the policy is to explain how the Workers Compensation Board determines a worker's entitlement to prescription eyewear and to outline the reimbursement rates, if accepted.

REFERENCE:

Workers Compensation Act R. S. P. E. I. 1988, Cap. W-7.1, Section 18
Workers Compensation Board Policy, POL-86, Temporary Wage Loss Benefits

DEFINITION:

In this policy:

“Prescription eyewear” means a device, prescribed by a health care provider, used to correct or modify an individual's vision.

POLICY:

Prescription Eyewear Resulting From An Injury

1. The Workers Compensation Board (WCB) will pay for new prescription eyewear for a
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worker who requires prescription eyewear as a result of a workplace injury or due to a change to the worker's existing prescription as a result of a workplace injury.

2. Where a worker requires new prescription eyewear as a result of a compensable eye injury, the WCB will pay for replacement every ~~two~~ **four** years or when a change to the prescription is required, whichever occurs earlier.

Damaged Prescription Eyewear

3. The WCB will pay to repair or replace prescription eyewear worn at the time of an accident and damaged as a result of a specific external force, arising out of and in the course of employment. This includes prescription safety glasses if they were originally paid for by the worker.
4. The WCB will not pay to repair or replace prescription eyewear resulting from damage or loss because the eyewear fell off the worker's face (for example, ill-fitting) or as a result of normal wear and tear.
5. The WCB will consider repairs first. However, if repairs are not feasible, the WCB will replace the prescription eyewear on a one time basis.

Reimbursement Rates for New or Replacement Eyewear

Reimbursement rates for the new or replacement prescription eyewear are subject to the following limits:

Lenses:	Actual cost
Contact lenses:	Actual cost
Frames	\$250

6. In addition to the limits listed above, the cost of enhancements (for example, tinting) will also be covered if such enhancements were present at the time of the accident.
- ~~8. Where there is objective medical information which demonstrates the worker has been prevented from earning income while waiting for the replacement of the damaged prescription eyewear, wage loss benefits may be paid pursuant to the Workers Compensation Board policy POL-86, Temporary Wage Loss Benefits.~~

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Eye Examinations

- 7. The WCB will pay for eye examinations only when required as a result of a compensable workplace injury.**
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HISTORY:

December 10, 2020 - Non-substantive changes to reflect revisions to policy, POL-86, Temporary Wage Loss Benefits.

March 26, 2015 - Amended to clarify entitlement for prescription eyewear and increase the reimbursement rates. Also, the name of the policy was changed from "Visual Aids" to "Prescription Eyewear".

September 27, 2007 - The policy was updated as a result of the 60 month policy review process.

December 13, 2001 - Replaces Policy and Practice Visual Aids dated January 20, 1994.

Board of Directors Approval Date: January 20, 1994

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POLICY:

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1. The Workers Compensation Board will pay for new prescription eyewear for a worker
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who requires prescription eyewear:

- (a) as a result of a compensable workplace injury; or
- (b) due to a change to the worker's existing prescription as a result of a compensable workplace injury.

Reimbursement rates are subject to the following limits:

Lenses:	Actual cost
Contact lenses:	Actual cost
Frames:	\$250

- 2. Where a worker requires new prescription eyewear as a result of a compensable eye injury, the Workers Compensation Board will pay for replacement every four years or when a change to the prescription is required, whichever occurs earlier.

Damaged Prescription Eyewear

- 3. The Workers Compensation Board will pay to repair or replace prescription eyewear worn at the time of an accident and damaged as a result of a specific external force, arising out of and in the course of employment. This includes prescription safety glasses if they were originally paid for by the worker.
- 4. The Workers Compensation Board will not pay to repair or replace prescription eyewear resulting from damage or loss because the eyewear fell off the worker's face (for example, ill-fitting) or as a result of normal wear and tear.
- 5. The Workers Compensation Board will consider repairs first. However, if repairs are not feasible, the Workers Compensation Board will replace the prescription eyewear on a one time basis.

Reimbursement rates for the replacement or repair of prescription eyewear are subject to the following limits:

Lenses:	Replacement cost of the existing eyewear.
Contact lenses:	Replacement cost of the existing eyewear.
Frames	\$250

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6. In addition to the limits listed above, the cost of enhancements (for example, tinting) will also be covered if such enhancements were present at the time of the accident.
 7. The Workers Compensation Board will pay for eye examinations only when required as a result of a compensable workplace injury.
 8. Where there is objective medical information which demonstrates the worker has been prevented from earning income while waiting for the replacement of the damaged prescription eyewear, wage loss benefits may be paid pursuant to the Workers Compensation Board policy POL-86, Temporary Wage Loss Benefits.
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