

POLICY NUMBER: POL-03

Summary of Proposed Amendments

Amendments to the policy, Travel and Related Expenses (POL-03), are proposed to ensure that injured workers are reimbursed for expenses that result from workplace injury or illness in a fair and equitable manner. Highlights include an increase to meal allowance rates and a revised approach to reimbursement of accommodation costs. Additional revisions are proposed to improve readability and to align with other Workers Compensation board policies.

The proposed amendments are described in the policy document below. New content is bolded and content to be deleted is shown with a strikethrough.

Chapter:
CLAIMS

Subject:
TRAVEL AND RELATED EXPENSES

Effective Date:
September 1, 1993

Last Update:
~~July 25, 2017~~ — **DRAFT October 24, 2017**

PURPOSE STATEMENT:

The purpose of the policy is to provide direction with respect to reimbursing workers for travel and related expenses incurred as a result of their workplace injuries.

REFERENCE:

Workers Compensation Act R.S.P.E.I. 1988, Cap. W-7.1, Sections 18 (4), (5), (11), 59(4).

DEFINITION:

In this policy:

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“Expenses” means the cost of transportation, meals, accommodation and miscellaneous charges ~~associated with medical aid considered necessary by the Workers Compensation Board~~ as a result of a compensable injury.

“Medical aid” includes medical, surgical and dental aid, hospital and nursing services, chiropractic services provided by a registered chiropractor, occupation therapy and physiotherapy services provided by a licensed practitioner, x-ray and other treatment, drugs, dressings, appliances, apparatuses, transportation and other goods, services and things the Board may authorize in promoting the medical rehabilitation of an injured worker.

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

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

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

POLICY:

1. The Workers Compensation Board will reimburse injured workers for travel and related expenses. To receive reimbursement for eligible expenses the worker must:
 - obtain pre-approval by the Workers Compensation Board prior to incurring the expense; and
 - submit a **Worker’s Expense Claim** (CL-08) form and attach receipts for all expenses, other than kilometer reimbursement and meal allowances.

Expenses will be reimbursed ~~only~~ when the expense **is reasonable**, has been verified and **is in accordance with Workers Compensation Board policy and legislation** ~~it is determined to be necessary and appropriate by the Workers Compensation Board.~~

To be considered for reimbursement, expense requests must be received by the Workers Compensation Board within six months of the worker incurring the expense.

Travel Advance

2. The Workers Compensation Board may issue an advance to a worker to cover reasonable travel expenses for approved out-of-province medical aid, ~~or~~ assessments **or vocational rehabilitation programs.**

3. When a travel advance has been issued to a worker, no further expense reimbursements or travel advances will be issued until the worker submits a **Worker's Expense Claim** (CL-08) and applicable receipts, reconciling the previous travel advance and it has been processed by the Workers Compensation Board.

One additional travel advance may be issued prior to the submission of the **Worker's Expense Claim** (CL-08) and applicable receipts for the first advance if a worker has consecutive out-of-province appointments.

Mileage and Commercial Transportation

4. Reimbursement of mileage will be made at the same rate per kilometer as Workers Compensation Board employees, when travel is required for the following:
 - medical aid or assessment ~~if determined necessary and appropriate by the Workers Compensation Board;~~
 - vocational rehabilitation programs **if the travels costs are necessary and appropriate. to a maximum of \$175.00 per week, except where** ~~For out-of-province programs, the Workers Compensation Board may determines it is more cost effective to pay for living expenses room and board costs to attend the program in lieu of mileage to commute, with reimbursement for travel home limited to one trip per semester transportation to and from the program;~~
 - return to work 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, only if they are required by the Workers Compensation Board.

5. The Workers Compensation Board will reimburse for mileage based on the most direct route between the point of departure (i.e., the worker's residence, or place of employment if the worker is at work) and the appointment, **service provider or program.**

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The Workers Compensation Board will not reimburse for mileage where a worker chooses to travel to a distant location when similar treatment or service is available closer to their place of residence.

The Workers Compensation Board will not reimburse for mileage if a worker chooses to temporarily stay in a different location (for example, cottage or campground) that is further away from the place of treatment **or service** than the worker's place of residence for reasons unrelated to a workplace injury.

6. Where personal use of a motor vehicle is not possible, the worker is required to use the most appropriate and cost effective mode of transportation. The mode of transportation must be pre-approved by the Workers Compensation Board.

If the Workers Compensation Board determines commercial transportation (e.g., bus or taxi) is the most appropriate and cost effective mode of transportation, the Workers Compensation Board will make best efforts to have the commercial transportation company invoice the Workers Compensation Board directly.

7. Where transportation is provided by means other than by commercial transportation, reimbursement will not exceed the maximum kilometer rate in place for the use of a private motor vehicle.

Return of Injured Workers to Prince Edward Island

8. Workers who are injured out of province while working for a Prince Edward Island employer may be eligible for travel expenses to return to Prince Edward Island, if the following criteria are met:
- the worker is eligible for compensation in Prince Edward Island and has elected to claim compensation in Prince Edward Island;
 - initial medical care has been provided prior to travel;
 - transportation is the most economical means available and appropriate to the condition of the worker.

Expenses Not Eligible for Reimbursement

9. The Workers Compensation Board will not reimburse a worker for expenses associated with the following:

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- medical treatment on the day of the accident if the treatment was sought directly upon leaving the workplace, unless the worker’s private motor vehicle was used. It is the responsibility of the employer to comply with its obligation to convey the worker to a place where the worker may receive medical treatment;
- ~~pick-up of prescriptions or~~
- unscheduled visits to the Workers Compensation Board;
- the worker’s attendance at appeal hearings unless the decision is overturned at appeal in favour of the worker;
- ~~r~~Return transportation to an out-of-province work site.

Meals and Other Expenses

10. For in-province travel, the Workers Compensation Board will reimburse meal costs if a worker attends a medical assessment, treatment or a meeting arranged by the Workers Compensation Board that is in excess of four hours. The timeframe begins at the departure from the worker’s residence or place of employment, if the worker is at work, and ends when the assessment, treatment or meeting has concluded.

The four-hour timeframe relates only to direct travel to the medical treatment or meeting.

11. The Workers Compensation Board will reimburse a worker for meal costs when they are required to be out of province for treatment **or program related to** ~~of~~ a compensable injury. Meal costs will be reimbursed at the following rates:

Breakfast	\$ 10.00 8.50
Lunch	\$ 15.00 9.50
Dinner	\$ 25.00 22.00
Full Day (out of province)	\$ 50 40.00

To be eligible for reimbursement for all three meals, the start of travel must be required prior to 8:00 am and end after 5:00 pm on the same day by reason of the appointment times.

12. If overnight ~~travel accommodations~~ **are** required, **the Workers Compensation Board will reimburse for reasonable costs of accommodations** ~~other than for vocational rehabilitation programs, the worker will be reimbursed to a maximum of \$120.00 per night (inclusive of taxes).~~ Receipts are required.

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13. Accommodations in a private residence will be reimbursed at a rate of ~~\$10.00~~ **\$50.00** per night. -Receipts are not required for reimbursement of private residence accommodation costs.
14. Where travel, outside of the Atlantic Provinces, for **approved** medical treatment is **required for a compensable injury** ~~is determined to be necessary by the Workers Compensation Board~~, best efforts will be made to have the transportation and accommodation costs invoiced directly to the Workers Compensation Board.
15. Where a worker is travelling outside of Canada for personal reasons and requires medical treatment or medications, ~~which are approved determined by the Workers Compensation Board to be necessary~~ **which are approved** for a compensable injury, the worker may be reimbursed in Canadian dollars at the rate that payments would be made for similar treatment or medications in Prince Edward Island under existing Workers Compensation Board policies or agreements.
16. Appropriate travel costs for a non-health care attendant to travel with a worker may be reimbursed by the Workers Compensation Board. For a non-health care provider attendant's travel costs to be considered for reimbursement, the Workers Compensation Board must pre-approve the costs and determine there is a documented medical need or a reasonable necessity.

The Workers Compensation Board will not pay for loss of wages or other expenses (for example, temporary dependent care) for a non-health care provider attendant.

Prior approval for a non-health care attendant to travel with a worker may be waived in situations where the injury is life threatening and the treatment is required on an emergency basis.

17. Health care provider attendant fees will be paid only when ~~the Workers Compensation Board determines~~ **the evidence supports that** the services of a health care provider are medically required to accompany the worker to a medical appointment.

Annual Review Adjustments to ~~of~~ Travel Reimbursement Rates

19. **Meal allowance rates and the rate per kilometer of travel reflect the rates established for travel by Workers Compensation Board employees and will be adjusted accordingly.** ~~The Workers Compensation Board will review the accommodation rate and the meal allowance paid to workers on an annual basis. For the purpose of this review,~~

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~~the Workers Compensation Board will use the relevant Statistics Canada indices for the following categories:~~

~~accommodation allowance — Traveller Accommodation Services Price Index.~~

~~meal allowance — Consumer Price Index, food, by province (Food purchased from restaurants).~~

~~Each of these indexes provides a percentage change from the previous year. The Workers Compensation Board will adjust the travel reimbursement rates (if applicable) based on the average percentage change for New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island.~~

~~20. — If the average percentage change from the previous year is a positive percentage, the reimbursement rates will be increased to reflect this percentage.~~

~~21. — If the average percentage change from the previous year is a negative percentage, the reimbursement rates will remain unchanged until such time as the application of annual adjustments results in a travel allowance rate increase.~~

~~22. — Any increase that results from the review of travel reimbursement rates will become effective August 1st of that year.~~

HISTORY:

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.

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

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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 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).

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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