

# Independent Medical Examinations (IME)

## 1. What is the purpose of an Independent Medical Examination?

It answers specific medical questions about your work-related injury or illness.

For example:

- Is there anything else that should be done to confirm your diagnosis or to determine further treatment?
- Do you have any medically measurable impairment (also termed Permanent Clinical Impairment or PCI) from your injury/illness?
- Is there a medical condition that would be affected by your return to work?
- Is your injury or illness permanent or temporary? (The examiner indicates whether he/she thinks your injury or illness will change or improve over a reasonable period of time.)

## 2. When does an Independent Medical Examination occur?

Any time during your recovery. It may take place soon after your injury or illness, a few weeks or months into the recovery, or after you have returned to work. An Independent Medical Examination to determine medical measurable impairment is usually done when your injury/illness has stabilized and you have reached maximum medical recovery at 24 months.

## 3. Who does the Independent Medical Examination?

Physicians will conduct your examination who are selected based on their expertise in the type of injury or illness you have experienced. The physician performing the exam will go over the history of your injury or illness and will examine you. A copy of the report will be sent to your family doctor and WCB-Alberta. The examiner will not treat you. However, any treatment suggestions will be shared with your family doctor who may review them with you.

## 4. How can a doctor who has never seen me examine me once and know what my physical condition is?

Independent Medical Examiners are trained to consider all of the medical information collected on a claim, and conduct a physical examination which provides objective (measurable) clinical information (e.g. range of motion). They apply their impartial clinical judgment to the questions asked.

## 5. What will happen during the examination?

As part of the Independent Medical Examination, the examiner will:

- review the medical records and reports that have been submitted to WCB-Alberta (this usually takes place prior to your appointment)
- take a medical history
- conduct a physical examination
- order additional tests, if necessary
- write a report to the WCB-Alberta (a copy will be sent to your treating physician)

## 6. May someone accompany you to the exam?

One individual may accompany you to the site of the examination. It is at the examiner's discretion whether that person is permitted into the exam room for some or all of the examination. When permitted, a consent form must be signed by both you and the person accompanying you to the exam.

Interpreters provided by WCB-Alberta will be permitted into the examination room.

## 7. Will anyone else be in the exam room?

Occasionally, an individual is present to assist the physician during the examination. This individual does not provide medical information to WCB Alberta.

## 8. How long after the examination will it be before someone from WCB-Alberta gets back to me?

Results from examinations are usually available within three to four weeks. If you are being assessed for a medically measurable impairment, it may take two weeks for the results and an additional two weeks for the case manager and medical advisor to interpret the results. If you have any questions in regards to the outcome of your examination, please contact your case manager directly.

## 9. What would happen if I decide to withhold or withdraw my consent to the Independent Medical Examination?

An Independent Medical Examination can only be done with your consent. However, should you refuse to have an Independent Medical Examination, there may be important consequences with regard to your claim including suspension or delay in obtaining compensation benefits and/or medical/rehabilitation services.