

**Alberta WCB  
Policies &  
Information**

Chapter:

**INJURIES**

Subject:

**GENERAL**

Authorization

Date:

**BoD Resolution 2018/01/06**

**February 21, 2018**

**APPLICATION 4: CARDIAC**

**1. *Under what conditions are cardiac claims compensable?***

To be compensable, the following conditions must apply:

- there must be evidence of occupational exposure to factors or events known or presumed to be associated with heart problems, and
- the time period between the occupational exposure and the onset of the cardiac condition is such that a relationship can be established.

If the compensable injury aggravates a pre-existing cardiac condition, compensation is subject to the provision of Policy 03-02, *Aggravation of a Pre-existing Condition*.

**2. *What are the occupational factors related to cardiac conditions?***

WCB accepts that occupational factors can cause cardiac conditions. Examples of occupational exposures which can cause cardiac conditions include:

- Physical Causes – a penetrating or non-penetrating injury to the heart, electric shock, hypoxia (i.e., the breathing of air with too little oxygen in it), an incident during or following significant physical exertion
- Chemical Causes – exposure to chemicals or inhalation of noxious gases known to cause cardiac conditions, for example, Carbon Disulphide, Nitroglycerine, Ethylene Glycol Dinitrate, and Vascular Reactive Aliphatic Nitrates; significant exposure to organic solvents (e.g., Trichloroethane, Methylene Chloride, Fluoromethanes) or other chemicals suspected of causing cardiac conditions
- Other Causes – infectious agents, heart disease secondary to occupational lung disease, e.g., cor pulmonale

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*Occupational Factors  
Related to Cardiac  
Conditions (continued)*

- Psychological Causes – involving exposure to significant and acute psychological stress.

Section 24.1(7) of the WCA includes cardiac presumptions specific to firefighters. [Section 24.1(7) of the WCA is effective December 1, 2005]

Section 24.1(7.1) of the WCA includes cardiac presumptions specific to paramedics. [Section 24.1(7.1) of the WCA is effective April 1, 2018.

**3. When does WCB accept responsibility for subsequent recurrence or complication?**

When a worker with an otherwise healthy cardio-respiratory system suffers a compensable cardiac condition, WCB considers any directly related recurrence or complication to be a compensable consequence of the work injury.

However, when a claim for a cardiac condition is allowed as an aggravation of a pre-existing non-compensable cardio-respiratory condition, entitlement for a recurrence, complication, or surgical procedure is considered only when:

- the recurrence, complication, or need for surgery occurs prior to the point of maximum recovery from the compensable aggravation (usually 12 to 18 months), or
- the functional post-aggravational disability is at least one "class" higher (as defined in "Cardiovascular System" in WCB's approved rating schedule, Appendix D) than what existed prior to the compensable aggravation.

**4. How is cost relief applied to cardiac claims?**

For the appropriate application of cost relief, see Policy 05-02, *Cost Relief*.

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**5. *When is this policy application effective?***

This policy application (Application 4 – Cardiac) is effective April 1, 2018, except when noted otherwise in a specific policy section(s).

**Previous versions**

- [Policy 0301 Part II - August 2015](#)
- [Policy 0301 Part II - December 2014](#)
- [Policy 0301 Part II - March 2006](#)
- [Policy 0301 Part II - January 2004](#)
- [Policy 0301 Part II - June 2002](#)
- [Policy 0301 Part II - June 2001](#)
- [Policy 0301 Part II - December 2000](#)
- [Policy 0301 Part II \(consolidated manual 1st Issue\) - February 1997](#)