

**Alberta WCB
Policies &
Information**

Chapter:
BENEFITS

Subject:
TEMPORARY BENEFITS

Authorization:
BoD Resolution 2008/09/27

Date:
October 28, 2008

APPLICATION 2: ALLOWANCES

1. *Under what circumstances does WCB consider paying allowances?*

In keeping with s.137.1 of the *WCA*, when WCB or the Appeals Commission directs* a worker to travel to a place other than where the worker resides, WCB may pay one or more of the following: a wage loss allowance, a travel allowance, a subsistence allowance. WCB may also pay a travel or subsistence allowance as part of a vocational plan (see Policy 04-05, *Return-to-Work Services*).

* Travel that is approved by WCB is considered to be directed. Approval may be given before or after the travel takes place.

2. *When is a worker eligible for a wage loss allowance?*

To be eligible for a wage loss allowance, the worker must have a loss of earnings as a result of leaving work to attend a WCB-directed appointment. WCB does not pay a wage loss allowance if the worker’s employer pays the worker for the missed work time.

3. *How does WCB determine the amount of a wage loss allowance?*

The wage loss allowance amount is equal to 100% of the worker's net earnings loss* for the period of work missed.

If a worker who is entitled to a wage loss allowance had personal coverage in effect at the time of the accident, WCB calculates the worker’s net earnings loss as follows:

- if personal coverage is still in effect on the day of the appointment, WCB calculates the worker’s net earnings loss as explained in Policy 04-01, Part II, Application 2, Question 2
- if personal coverage is no longer in effect and the worker is now an employee, WCB calculates the worker's net earnings loss* based on the worker's current rate of pay

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***Wage Loss Allowance
(continued)***

- if personal coverage is no longer in effect and the worker is *not* an employee, WCB calculates the net earnings loss* based on the verified earnings the worker lost because of the missed work time

*Net earnings loss is calculated in accordance with Policy 04-01, *Establishing Net Earnings*, with the exception that the wage loss allowance is not limited by any maximum compensable earnings in effect on the date the wage loss occurred.

4. *What costs do the travel and subsistence allowances cover?*

The purpose of the travel and subsistence allowances is to make sure that workers do not incur additional expenses when they have to travel away from home for Board-directed appointments.

The mileage rate under the travel allowance is based on the average cost for operating a vehicle. Average costs for a wide range of vehicles are considered when the rate is set.

The subsistence allowance is based on average costs of meals and accommodation.

See Addendum A for the allowance rates.

5. *When is a worker eligible for a travel allowance?*

To be eligible for a travel allowance, a worker must:

- take the most reasonably direct route available to the place of examination or treatment, and
- use the most economical means of transportation available.

If a worker travels by regularly scheduled public transportation, WCB will pay for the actual cost, including incidental transportation by taxi-cab.

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*Eligibility for travel
allowance (continued)*

If regularly scheduled public transportation is unavailable or inconvenient, the worker may use a private vehicle and WCB will reimburse the worker at the rate per kilometre set out in Addendum A.

WCB usually considers the worker's normal place of residence to be the point of origin when calculating the travel allowance amount.

Unless required by medical or other special circumstances, a travel allowance is not paid when:

- a worker's place of residence and place of treatment are in the same locality, or
- a worker chooses to travel to a distant location when adequate treatment is available in a local community.

Except for incidental transportation, taxi-cab services will only be covered by WCB if required by medical necessity or extraordinary circumstances.

WCB may limit the amount paid for travel when the travel is for a long-term course taken as part of a vocational plan. In these cases, WCB will compare the travel costs with the cost of temporarily relocating the worker to the centre where the course is held.

The worker will still have the choice whether to relocate, even if relocation is more cost-effective. However, if relocation is a reasonable option and the worker prefers to travel to and from the course, WCB will only pay travel costs up to the estimated cost of relocation.

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6. *When is a worker eligible for a subsistence allowance?*

When a worker is required to be away from home due to WCB-directed examination or treatment, WCB will pay the worker a subsistence allowance in an amount set out in Addendum A for each 24 hour period away from home. If WCB or some other person provides or pays for all or part of a worker's board or lodging, WCB may reduce or cancel the subsistence allowance as appropriate.

WCB may pay a meal allowance in an amount set out in Addendum A when a worker is required to be away from home for less than 24 hours for a WCB-directed examination or treatment and does not need lodging or overnight accommodation.

In exceptional circumstances when the worker is required to travel to a location where the meal allowance is not enough to cover the cost of an average meal, WCB may pay the actual cost of meals. The amount will be based on receipts supplied by the worker and will include tax and gratuities, but not include alcoholic beverages.

7. *What allowances does WCB pay when it directs a non-Alberta resident to report to a place in Alberta?*

When WCB directs a non-Alberta resident to report to a place in Alberta, WCB will, unless special circumstances exist, consider any expense which might result from travelling to or from the worker's place of residence and the Alberta provincial boundary to be the worker's own responsibility. WCB may, however, consider the payment of any reasonable expenses resulting from necessary travel within Alberta.

When a worker who has stopped being a resident of Alberta is directed by WCB to report to an agent or agency of WCB outside of Alberta, WCB may consider the reimbursement of any reasonable and necessary expenses which might result from essential associated travel.

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October 28, 2008**APPLICATION 2: ALLOWANCES****8. *How does WCB set the allowances in Addendum A?***

WCB established and amends allowance levels from time-to-time. Allowances reflect additional expenses (i.e., expenses workers would not otherwise have) incurred when a worker is required to be away from home for a WCB-directed appointment. Allowances are based upon average costs of the most economical form of accommodation, travel or meal. Consequently, an individual's choices may mean the allowance does not fully reimburse actual expenses (but see Question 6). Periodic market reviews by WCB guide the "average costs" reimbursed by WCB.

9. *When is this policy application effective?*

This policy application (Application 2 – Allowances) is effective January 1, 2009, except when noted otherwise in a specific policy section(s).

Previous versions

- [Policy 0402 Part II - April 2018](#)
- [Policy 0402 Part II - August 2015](#)
- [Policy 0402 Part II - January 2009](#)
- [Policy 0402 Part II - January 2007](#)
- [Policy 0402 Part II - March 2006](#)
- [Policy 0402 Part II - January 2, 2004](#)
- [Policy 0402 Part II - January 1, 2004](#)
- [Policy 0402 Part II - June 2002](#)
- [Policy 0402 Part II - January 2002](#)
- [Policy 0402 Part II - September 2001](#)
- [Policy 0402 Part II - June 2001](#)
- [Policy 0402 Part II - March 1999](#)
- [Policy 0402 Part II \(consolidated manual 1st Issue\) - February 1997](#)