

Young worker/student rate adjustment

Young workers or students in the workforce are often working in minimum wage jobs and/or are not yet at the full earning potential of their working lives. When a young worker or student has a significant loss of function due to an injury, they may not be able to gain the work experience necessary or to complete the education required to reach their earnings potential.

In most cases, these earnings reflect the appropriate level needed to set short-term workers' compensation rates. However, in cases where there has been a significant loss of function, this scenario may lead to financial hardship. To lessen this hardship, WCB may adjust the compensation rate to more accurately represent their earning potential. **This change applies to accidents/injuries that occur on or after September 1, 2018.**

Who is a young worker/student?

A young worker is anyone younger than 25 years of age at the time of their injury, OR over 25 years of age who, at the time of their accident, is enrolled in a vocational or academic program that is expected to result in increased earnings.

Examples of vocational or academic programs that are expected to increase earnings include:

- Full time or part time university or college programs (e.g. degree, diploma and certificate programs), post-secondary school and upgrading.
- Apprenticeship programs if the injury occurs during the period the worker is attending the mandatory training portion at an educational institution.

What is a significant loss of function due to an injury?

A significant loss of function due to an injury is when a worker has a [Permanent Clinical Impairment \(PCI\)](#) of 50% or more on the current and previous claims combined.

A PCI is the loss (amputation), loss of use (nerve damage), or permanent change of any body part, system or function. The degree of impairment – expressed as a percentage, may be measured through a PCI exam by a physician once the point of maximum recovery is reached. This will typically be two years

after the injury unless the nature of the injury allows the PCI to be assessed earlier.

How is the rate adjusted?

When a worker:

- Who was under 25 or a student at the time of the accident is assessed to have a PCI of 50% or more, and
- Whose rate is set on earnings that are less than the Alberta average weekly earnings,

The compensation rate will be adjusted to 90% of net earnings based on the Alberta average weekly earnings for the year prior to the date of accident.

The new rate will take effect on the date the PCI is assessed or two (2) years after the date of accident/injury, whichever is first.

Alberta average weekly earnings information

The Alberta average weekly earnings can be found on the Statistics Canada website: <https://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/l01/cst01/labr79-eng.htm>

