

ITF (Industry Task Force) Association

Effecting positive change in Workers' Compensation through the views of Alberta employers

ITF ASSOCIATION BACKGROUNDER

"The Industry Task Force on Alberta Workers' Compensation" was established in 1983 to represent the concerns and positions of Alberta's employers on matters involving workers' compensation. A formal Association was formed in 1990 and the ITF (Industry Task Force) Association was incorporated under the Societies Act in 1999.

The vision of the ITF Association is *"To effect positive change in programs, practices, policy and legislation by representing the views and interests of Alberta employers who are members of the Association on matters related to Workers' Compensation in Alberta"*.

The ITF Association currently has 13 'Association' and 49 'Corporate' members. The 2019 annual premiums paid by Corporate members and employers who belong to one of the Association members represented in excess of 55% of the premiums collected by the Workers' Compensation Board. Salaries paid by ITF member organizations represented more than 42% of the WCB-Alberta insurable earnings.

The ITF Association has established itself as an interested and very knowledgeable stakeholder, and an active participant in all matters involving Workers Compensation in Alberta. Creating meaningful, viable and respectful relationships with the WCB Executive and Board of Directors, Appeals Commission and the Ministry of Labour has been a key focus of the ITF Association. Ensuring the perspectives of Alberta employers are respected and considered in matters ranging from legislative and policy changes through to policy implementation and practical application remains the ultimate goal.

ITF meets four (4) times each year, alternating the meetings between Edmonton and Calgary. Meetings generally include WCB and Appeals Commission executive, members of the WCB Board of Directors and other government representatives. In addition, members gain valuable networking opportunities through interaction with others in the Association, with extensive knowledge and expertise in WCB matters.

Priorities include initiatives in the following areas:

- *Participation in review of WCB legislation, as well as policy and procedures*
- *Review quality of service impacts, costs and implications of legislative, policy and operational changes arising from the WCB review*
- *Collaborate with WCB to revisit policy, procedures and processes related to adjudication and management of psychological injuries*
- *Termination of Employment while on Modified Work – policy and legislation review*
- *WCB Funding Policy & Funded Position*
- *Workplace Health & Safety levies – funding model and accountability*
- *Continued dialogue with the Minister and Deputy Minister responsible for WCB, Chief Appeals Commissioner, WCB Board of Directors Chair and members, the WCB Medical Director and Alberta Medical Association representatives.*
- *Exploration of a working relationship with the WCB Labor Coalition*
- *Raising employer awareness WCB account management/ cost containment strategies*
- *Initiate dialogue on a 3-day grace period for LTC recording*
- *Personal Coverage for Directors of Corporations*
- *Physician Accountability and employer reporting*
- *Quality of Service - quality, timeliness and consistency of WCB decisions in all areas*
- *WCB Data Integrity – reliability and usefulness for OHS and WCB audit processes*
- *Employer Appeals Consulting (EAC) Service – promotion and effectiveness*

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- *Appeals Commission Statistics and Administrative Processes*
- *Occupational Cancers and other Diseases*
- *Monitor WCB strategic business plan and performance measures*

ITF Association Successes:

- Members of the ITF Association were asked to serve as the representatives of the employer community on the WCB Policy Consultation Advisory Group (PCAG). The PCAG works with the Board of Directors and provides input and advice on policy priorities for the year. This group is made up of four members from the organized labour community and four members of the employer community.
- ITF made it a priority for several years to secure WCB appeal advisory services for Alberta employers, which led to introduction of the Employer Appeals Consulting Service (EAC). ITF continued advocating for improved services during the 2017 review and employers and workers are now be provided with equal access to services through the Fair Practices Office. As a direct result of our continued advocacy and discussions, the initial restriction of services to employers with 100 or fewer workers has recently been lifted.
- The ITF Association was an active participant in the 2017 WCB Review. As a result of ITF efforts, government did not adopt the review panel recommendation to discontinue the WCB surplus distribution to employers. ITF was also instrumental in influencing several other changes including the selection of members for the WCB Board of Directors, ongoing WCB engagement with and accountability to stakeholders, improved services for employers, and improvements to the practice for deeming earnings.
- Contrary to policy and past practice, the WCB Board of Directors did not approve distribution of the 2016 WCB surplus to employers in early 2017. ITF was very vocal in expressing the view that this represented "employer money" and should be returned to employers as per policy. The Board of Directors approved the surplus distribution in November 2017.
- Following concerns raised by the ITF Association regarding the impact on modified work and claim costs arising from the evacuation of Fort McMurray during the Wood Buffalo fire, the WCB initiated a policy consultation and proposed amendments to two policies. The ITF was successful in advocating for the policy to include both provincially as well as locally declared states of emergency and for the application of cost relief.
- ITF initiated discussion and worked collaboratively with the WCB to introduce a new model for establishing the employer experience rating claim cost threshold that increased the 2016 threshold amount and achieves a better balance between employer ability to effectively manage WCB claim costs and WCB experience rating principles. The proposal includes annual adjustment going forward.

Member Testimonials

Ken Gibson: *"The 2000 member companies of the Alberta Construction Association benefit tremendously from our membership with the ITF; through the ITF we access a wealth of industry expertise on the impacts of WCB on employers, we obtain regular meetings with the Minister responsible for the WCB and with senior staff of the WCB, and we see first-hand how the scrutiny and recommendations of the ITF positively impact the policies and accountability of the WCB"*

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Joe Cust: *"Being a member of the ITF has been an immensely valuable experience. I have enjoyed having the ability for an open forum discussion with WCB Senior Management on Policy, Procedural and Legislative changes, and the opportunity to voice our opinions and concerns in a collaborative setting. The knowledge and experience of fellow members around the table, all working together as a group to understand and address the various inconsistencies in the worker's compensation system has provided significant learning opportunities"*

Sandra Smale: *"ITF provides me with the opportunity, not just as an individual organization, but as part of an industry association, to have both insight and input to the workers' compensation system. I value the ITF's relationship with the WCB's senior management and the exchange of ideas and information with the WCB and my fellow members"*

For additional information on membership feel free to contact our Association Administrator, or one of the following ITF Executive Committee members:

President:	Michael Johnstone	(780) 434 - 8555
First Vice-President:	Darren Ferleyko	(403) 220 - 8101
Second Vice-President:	Rebecca Arling	(403) 268 - 3746
Treasurer:	Craig Hrynchuk	(587) 952 - 2267
Past-President:	Len Bourdin	(780) 486 - 8200
Association Administrator:	Melanie Goroniuk	(587) 987 - 6938