



Alberta Construction Association

18004-107 Avenue NW
Edmonton, AB T5S 2J5
t:780.455.1122/f:451.2152
www.albertaconstruction.net
info@albertaconstruction.net

March 20, 2020

Honourable Jason Copping
Alberta Minister of Labour

Dear Minister Copping:

Re: Request COVID-19 costs be assumed by Accident Fund

Thank you for your Government's leadership and hard work on responding to the COVID-19 outbreak.

In the March 2020 special COVID-19 edition of the Alberta WCB Worksight magazine, the issue of claims costs stemming from pandemic-related closures and the inability of modified work was raised:

"Your workers will not suffer any loss of benefits due to work disruptions. If employers do not pay workers during a shutdown, WCB will provide wage replacement benefits for any workers who were working modified duties as a result of a previous workplace injury. You may have questions about claims costs stemming from pandemic-related closures and the inability to offer modified work. Your 2020 claims costs will begin to impact premium rates in 2022, so we have time to investigate options related to any costs incurred as a result of these events."

We are requesting that costs being charged to an employer account as a result of a major business disruption related to the COVID-19 state of public health emergency, be reallocated to the Accident Fund.

The Province has declared a state of public health emergency and many employers cannot provide temporary modified work as a result of major business disruptions. Construction employers will be significantly impacted as irrespective of severity of injury, all workers are required to go on modified duties. In addition, the nature of construction work is such that it is infeasible to relocate workers away from construction sites. As per the attached WCB Policy 07-02, Part II, 2, Question 14, ACA is requesting WCB reallocate costs associated with an employer's inability to continue providing temporary modified work during this state of emergency.

In 2016 WCB was very responsive to apply this policy to assist employers through the Fort McMurray wildfire, we trust WCB will be as responsive to assist workers and employers through this crisis.

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In this unprecedented time we will also be seeing delays in worker's recovery as a result of restrictions put on the healthcare system as well as limited access due to closures. These delays will also have a negative impact to workers and employers that should be considered.

Sincerely,

Frederick Vine, Chairman

Attachment

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