

COVID-19

Most instances of COVID-19 are not work-related and do not need to be reported to WCB-Alberta. However, there are a few exceptions.

When COVID-19 may be work-related

When a worker contracts COVID-19 as a direct result of their employment, they are entitled to compensation if the following conditions are met:

- The nature of employment involves sufficient exposure to the source of infection,
- and-**
- The nature of employment is shown to be the cause of the condition,
- or-**
- The nature of employment creates a greater risk of exposure for the worker.

Work-related example
Acute care hospital worker: Worker has patients coming in for treatment of COVID-19. Thus, they are at a greater risk than the general public of contracting the disease.
Non work-related example
Cafeteria worker at a hospital: Job is not directly related to looking after sick people even if workers sometimes come in contact with them.
Grocery store clerk: Job puts workers in contact with many people but not specifically with sick people.

Reference: Policy 03-01: Part II - Occupational Disease

In every case, WCB-Alberta adjudicates work-relatedness and benefit entitlement based on the specific and unique circumstances of each case.

Questions and answers

When do I report a case of COVID-19 to WCB-Alberta?

Report it if it meets the specific criteria. Like in the examples provided, if you are at greater risk than the general public of contracting the virus while at work, and you lose time from work after contracting the virus, report the claim to WCB.

However, if you are not at greater risk than the general public of contracting the infection, do not report. Examples include people who believe they caught the COVID-19 virus from a co-worker or client.

A co-worker sneezed or coughed on me. If I catch COVID-19 am I covered or do I report it?

No. COVID-19 and particularly a pandemic coronavirus like COVID-19 can be caught through many different contacts in the community, home or work. This case is not considered work-related.

Do I report if I had COVID-19 but then develop a problem related to my treatment?

Yes, if your COVID-19 infection is work-related due to greater risk at work (e.g., you are a health care provider), any treatment complications are also considered work-related.

If I'm sent home to avoid getting sick, do I need to report it to WCB-Alberta?

No, if there is no illness, there is no claim. There's no need to report this to WCB-Alberta.

What happens if I was performing modified duties and my employer shuts down due to COVID-19?

You will be paid during the shut down. You won't suffer any loss of benefits due to work disruptions. If your employer does not pay you during the shut down, WCB will provide your wage replacement benefits during this time.

Will WCB accept COVID-19 claims where there are symptoms present but no medical reporting that confirms a diagnosis of COVID-19?

Yes, if it meets the specific criteria. If you think you have COVID-19, please call Health Link at 811 and follow their advice. Early in the pandemic, they may instruct you to seek medical attention and undergo testing to confirm the diagnosis.

If you are not severely ill, 811 may instruct you to remain at home (in self isolation), until your symptoms fully resolve. If your symptoms persist or worsen, you should seek medical treatment and ask to have that reporting forwarded to WCB-Alberta.

What happens when I submit a COVID-19 claim?

Like any other claim, WCB-Alberta must determine whether your exposure to the disease arose out of the course of your employment and was caused by an employment hazard (in this case, workplace exposure to the virus).

We have a team of people who specialize in the adjudication of infectious disease claims and can appropriately apply policy and legislation. If your illness meets the conditions for coverage, WCB-Alberta will cover medical aid costs and any time lost due to the condition.

