

SCHEDULE 2 EMPLOYERS' GROUP

Via email Consultation_Secretariat@wsib.on.ca

March 24, 2023

Consultation Secretariat - WSIB
200 Front St. West
Toronto, Ontario MSV3J1

Re: Draft Communicable Illnesses Policy

On behalf of the Schedule 2 Employers' Group (S2Eg), we appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft Communicable Illness policy. The Schedule 2 Employers' Group Executive is pleased to provide our input.

We agree that a policy and guideline is advisable and will assist in fair and consistent determination of entitlement to a suite of benefits and services intended to mitigate the impact of a work-related exposure, improve function, quality of life, and restore the preinjury earnings profile. As Schedule 2 employers, who pay full costs plus and Administrative Fees to the WSIB, this must be done in a financially responsible manner (as required by the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act (WSIA) purpose clause). It must be equitable and objectively based as a determinant for benefit entitlement.

Overall, the S2Eg Executive and members-at-large were favourably inclined to most of the provisions. However, several suggested improvements or changes are set out below.

Formatting

A definition of terms should be included at the start of the policy document, followed by "Entitlement Criteria" and Guidelines".

Definitions

"Significant Contribution", as referenced on Page 2 of the draft, needs be defined, including risk factors considered.

"Essential worker", referenced on page 4 of the draft document needs to be defined.

Employment Risk Factors

With reference to Page 4, it is our position that the term "suspected of having" is problematic as it is too vague and broad, especially in reference to illnesses such as cold & influenza. We recommend that this phrase be deleted from the policy. We note that the process of submitting a PEIR form in cases of "suspected" exposure, already exists.

Also, on Page 4 "Staying in employer-provided accommodations..." and "...in remote mining camps or accommodations provided to temporary foreign agricultural workers." needs to be amended to "*employer-required communal accommodations or transportation*" as this part of the policy has to do with group environments and not accommodations. Examples should read "communal housing or transportation such as, but not limited to...".

Re: Communicable Illnesses Policy Consultation

Public Health Emergency

Essential Worker needs to be clearly defined, as it pertains to the policy with clear distinction between frontline and essential workers.

Using COVID as an example, the draft policy does not, but should, reference information or direction from Public Health from the various levels of government. Reference to best practices of Public Health under its own heading.

The word “directive” should be added to “public health measures”.

We strongly oppose the inclusion of the APPENDIX, at least in its current form with the information proposed.

While practice documents are not part of the policy document, it may be helpful to either incorporate or make reference to current, more comprehensive resources, for example the WSIB’s ***Work-Related Communicable Illness, Adjudicative Support Document, Occupational Disease Policy and Research Branch, March 2011***. It would be of great assistance to WSIB staff, system partners and stakeholders (healthcare providers, worker and employer groups) to have this document updated and reissued during this consultation/review period.

Yours truly,



Laura Russell
Chair, Schedule 2 Employers' Group