

# ITF (Industry Task Force) Association

*Effecting positive change and ensuring sustainability of the workers' compensation system through the views of Alberta employers*

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## **AIMCo Renewal**

AIMCo has responsibility for managing over \$160 billion in funds, including the WCB Accident Fund, pension funds and the Heritage Savings Trust Fund. At the December 4<sup>th</sup> ITF meeting, Ron Helmhold noted he had a positive first meeting with Ray Gilmore, who has been appointed interim CEO. In terms of future direction, AIMCo will focus on four key pillars: investment returns, cost control, a client focus and concentration on the core business. These align well with WCB imperatives. The size of the AIMCo Board is expected to stay the same, so there will be additional appointments in the new year.

With respect to the impact of these changes on the Accident Fund, the investment team at AIMCo remains intact. WCB has no concerns regarding day-to-day management of the Accident Fund and continues to monitor AIMCo performance. WCB acknowledged AIMCo costs did increase dramatically since the transition and with these changes it is expected their fees will be reduced.

## **Egregious Conduct**

Members of the ITF Executive met with Suzanne Harbottle (Assistant Deputy Minister, Labour and Workforce Strategies Division) and Stephanie Davidson (Executive Director Workplace Policy and Legislation Branch) on December 5<sup>th</sup>. This meeting was in follow-up to the ITF letter outlining member concerns regarding the application of egregious conduct provisions. Thank you to the members who provided examples of how the legislation and policy are being applied.

Following an overview of the challenges and themes related to member examples, discussion focused on the lack of a definition for "egregious" in the WC Act. Whether the current application of the Supreme Court definition is the appropriate standard was discussed. The parties agreed that maintaining balance in the workers compensation system and compliance with other governing processes such as Human Rights legislation and Collective Bargaining Agreements was important.

Government expressed concerns with changes that would jeopardize workers compensation benefits for severely injured workers. ITF highlighted the alignment with termination of employment when a worker is on temporary modified work, which excludes benefits for severely injured workers.

ADM Harbottle will brief Minister Jones on the discussion and ask for direction from him regarding next steps.

## **Access to Information**

This was discussed at the December 4<sup>th</sup> quarterly meeting. However, Bill 33 (Protection of Privacy Act) as well as Bill 34 (Access to Information Act) were passed on December 4<sup>th</sup> and subsequently received Royal Assent.

ITF did receive a reply from CACE (Canadian Association of Counsel to Employers) regarding the potential for an exemption. Their view is that government was not planning on being receptive to any/much feedback given the speed with which this moved. Realistically the opportunity for a WC Act exemption was not there. Based on their review of the new legislation, there are not any substantial changes that would affect employer access to WCB claim file information. There are no major changes to the disclosure provisions and most of the changes in the legislation were directed at data matching, data anonymization, increasing fines for wilful misconduct, breach notification and requiring public bodies to put more policies/procedures in place with respect to privacy.

The ITF subcommittee will be meeting to discuss next steps and will continue to monitor the roll out of the new process for cost relief requests to all employers and employer representatives in the new year.

## **Upcoming ITF Association meetings**

The next guest presentation webinar will be on Wednesday February 26<sup>th</sup> beginning at 9:30 am. The first session will be an update from Dr. Cho on the WCB's physician/health care provider engagement activities. If you have any specific questions for Dr. Cho please let Melanie know. The second session is a discussion on the 2024 ICP repolling. James Wilson will provide information on repolling results, key learnings and considerations going forward, as well as the 2025 repolling plan. Members involved in 2024 repolling are encouraged to provide their feedback. The third presenter will be confirmed early in January.

The next quarterly meeting is on Wednesday March 5<sup>th</sup>. The meeting starts at 8:30 am and the in-person meeting is at the Manufacturers Health & Safety Association in Rocky View.

December 2024