

Occupational Disease Claims with WorkSafeBC (WCB) Guidance for BCTF Members

You may not have to use sick leave if you have an occupational disease

If you have one of the following diseases or conditions and believe it is due to your work, file a claim with WorkSafeBC (WCB) by calling the Teleclaim service, 1-888-967-5377 (1-888-WORKERS), Monday to Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Make sure to report this to your employer and your union local. When you make an appointment with your physician, let them know it is related to a WCB claim. You must file a claim within one year of the date of diagnosis.

Under WCB policy, a disease may be recognized by regulation of general application or under Schedule 1 of the WCB policy manual. Under Schedule 1, in some circumstances, it may be presumed that a worker acquired an occupational disease due to the nature of their work. Importantly, communicable diseases including COVID-19, have recently been added to Schedule 1.

The following are recognized as occupational diseases under regulation of general application:

Bronchitis
 Bursitis
 Campylobacteriosis
 Carpal Tunnel Syndrome
 Chicken Pox
 Cubital Tunnel Syndrome
 Disablement from vibrations
 Emphysema
 Food poisoning
 Giardia Lamblia Infestation
 Head lice (Pediculosis Capitis)
 Heart Disease
 Hepatitis A
 Herpes Simplex
 Hypothenar Hammer Syndrome
 Legionellosis
 Lyme Disease
 Meningitis
 Mononucleosis

Mumps
 Plantar Fasciitis
 Radial Tunnel Syndrome
 Red Measles (Rubeola)
 Ringworm
 Rubella
 Scabies
 Shigellosis
 Staphylococci infections
 Streptococci infections
 Tendinopathy, including:

- Epicondylopathy
- Stenosing Tenosynovitis

 Thoracic Outlet Syndrome
 Toxoplasmosis
 Typhoid
 Vinyl Chloride induced Raynaud’s Phenomenon
 Whooping Cough
 Yersiniosis

In addition to this list, many diseases and conditions are recognized under Schedule 1 where there is exposure during a particular process or industry. This includes (non-exhaustive): poisoning, pneumoconiosis, some bacterial infections, cancer, asthma, acute respiratory infection, and infection caused by communicable viral pathogens.

<p>Important COVID-19 Update: COVID-19 is now recognized under Schedule 1 as an occupational disease during a state of emergency or under notice given under the <i>Public Health Act</i>.</p>	<p>Where there is a significant risk of exposure to COVID-19 in the work environment during a state of emergency or public health notice, it will be presumed that the worker's COVID-19 infection is compensable under WCB policy*.</p>
<p>*Please note, the worker must have a confirmed positive diagnosis of COVID-19 to be compensable; simple exposure is not sufficient to establish a claim.</p>	
<p>For further information on WorkSafeBC claims or prevention, please contact the BCTF at: benefits@bctf.ca or call 604-871-1921 or toll free 1-800-663-9163, ext. 1921.</p>	

<p>Adjudication of Occupational Disease (COVID-19) Claims at WorkSafeBC (WCB)</p>
<p>The occupational disease adjudication always starts with checking to see if a Schedule 1 presumption applies.</p>
<p>1. First, the claims adjudicator (case manager) will check to see if the Schedule 1 Presumption for Communicable Viral Pathogens can be applied:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teachers in a classroom environment who are diagnosed with COVID-19 when there is an accepted workplace exposure, will be presumed to have a work-related infection (i.e., the member does have a WCB claim). 2. Classroom teachers who diagnose with COVID-19 where there has been no accepted workplace exposure, will have no presumption in favour of coverage. 3. Teachers working from home who get COVID-19 will have no presumption in favour of coverage. 4. Teachers who are not diagnosed with COVID-19 do not have a claim, there must be a confirmed diagnosis.
<p>2. If the presumption does not apply, the claims manager will then look at the individual facts on a case-by-case basis to see if the elements of an occupational disease claim have been met.</p>
<p>Members are advised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you are quarantined but do not have COVID-19, you cannot get wage loss (i.e., financial compensation for your lost wages), from WCB during your quarantine period. • If you are quarantined and you do have a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19, a member should call WCB to file a claim by calling Teleclaim Service 1-888-967-5377 (1-888-WORKERS), Monday to Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. If your claim is denied, please call Luke Olver, Assistant Director, WCB Advocate, for assistance 604-871-1890 or toll free 1-800-663-9163, ext. 1890, or email wcbadvocate@bctf.ca.