

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

What is PTSD?

PTSD is an emotional and psychological response to directly experiencing a traumatic event (or a series of traumatic events).

The traumatic events may be life-threatening, very disturbing or stressful. The resulting symptoms can be debilitating and require treatment to resolve.

PTSD may be work related. Each claim considered on a case-by-case basis. Compensation benefits are provided when it is confirmed through medical diagnosis and WCB's follow-up information gathering that the PTSD diagnosis is work related.

Presumptive coverage for specific occupations

The *Workers' Compensation Act* identifies certain occupations where a worker is eligible for presumptive coverage for PTSD. These occupations are:

Effective Dec. 10, 2012:

- Firefighters (both full-and part-time)
- Emergency medical technicians
- Police officers appointed under provincial regulation but excluding the RCMP
- Peace officers

Effective April 1, 2018:

- Correctional officers (i.e., Correctional peace officers and Correctional service workers who are directly involved in the care, custody and control of youth or adult inmates lawfully detained or confined.)
- Emergency dispatchers

What is presumptive coverage?

If you are employed in the occupations listed above and diagnosed with PTSD by a physician or a psychologist, it will be presumed to have risen out of and occurred during the course of employment, unless the contrary is proven.

You are able to access workers' compensation coverage and treatment for PTSD as soon as possible.

Filing a claim for PTSD

The reporting process for submitting a claim to WCB is simple. If you are injured at work:

1. Tell your employer

After receiving notice, your employer must report your injury within 72 hours if:

- You need medical treatment beyond first aid.
- You cannot do your job beyond the day of accident.

2. Tell your health care provider

Your doctor or psychologist must report your injury to WCB within 48 hours. To diagnose PTSD, your health care provider will use a standard diagnostic criteria from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM). It is important to confirm the diagnosis of PTSD.

How WCB applies presumptive coverage

When WCB receives information indicating you may have experienced a traumatic event at work and may have a related psychological injury, WCB can help you start treatment immediately.

In the meantime, whether you have presumptive coverage or not, WCB will confirm both the nature and source of the traumatic incident at work and the psychological diagnosis, confirmed by your treatment provider using the criteria established in the most current version of the DSM.

How WCB can help you recover

Your care and recovery is WCB's priority. WCB-Alberta works with a number of community psychologists throughout the province to help workers with their recovery. You can select the provider for the treatment you receive, and WCB will cover the costs of treatment and progress reporting on your claim.

For more information on WCB's treatment of traumatic psychological injury, please see the [Traumatic Psychological Injury Fact Sheet](#).

Additional link:

[Workers' Compensation Act](#)

