

COVID-19

The situation around COVID-19 is constantly evolving and WCB is truly committed to providing reliable coverage for workers with a work-related COVID infection. Workers who contract the COVID-19 illness in their workplace as a result of their regular job duties will get the coverage and support they need.

Here's what to expect if you contract COVID-19 and believe your infection is work-related:

- First tell your employer, then report it to us.
- We can accept a positive PCR test or rapid antigen test (RAT) result or a doctor's diagnosis. We do not require a photo of your test result.
- If you are symptomatic and testing or obtaining a diagnosis is unavailable to you, you can still report your illness. We will work with you to confirm your COVID-19 illness and adjudicate your claim.

When COVID-19 may be work-related

In every case, we adjudicate work-relatedness and benefit entitlement based on individual workers' circumstances.

In order to confirm whether an illness is work related, we will assess your risk of exposure in the workplace. Specifically, we look to ensure the following conditions are met:

- The nature of your employment involves sufficient exposure to the source of infection,
-and-
- The nature of your employment is shown to be the cause of the condition,
-or-
- The nature of your employment puts you at a greater risk of exposure.

Reference: [Policy 03-01: Part II - Occupational Disease](#)

Some occupations are known to create greater risk of exposure to COVID-19, including those who **provide direct care to patients with the condition**. Examples may include but are not limited to:

- Nurses
- Nursing home staff
- EMTs and paramedics

- Homecare aids
- Hospital cleaning staff
- Prison infirmary staff

In addition, workers who **provide direct service to the general public** are at an increased risk of exposure. Examples of these types of occupations may include, but are not limited to:

- First responders
- Correctional officers
- Grocery workers who interact directly with the general public (e.g., cashiers)
- Bus drivers
- School janitors
- Restaurant staff such as waiters, table cleaners, hostesses, etc.
- Hotel staff who provide direct client service and/or clean rooms where an infected person has stayed
- Other occupations which require direct extended contact with the general public

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

If you're not sure whether your COVID-19 infection is work related, report it to us. We will evaluate your claim based on specific criteria for exposure, cause and risk outlined in this document and in [Policy 03-01, Part II – Occupational Disease, Q4](#).

Do not report if:

1. You were on vacation or away from work at the time of infection.
2. You are not ill but must quarantine due to a suspected or confirmed exposure.
3. You tested negative.

WCB will investigate all cases reported to determine coverage.

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

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

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

Typically, we look for a confirmation of a positive test (PCR or RAT) or a physician's diagnosis. Due to extraordinary circumstances, we recognize you may not be able to easily access testing and it may not be safe to visit your doctor if you are symptomatic. We are committed to ensuring that does not prevent you from receiving the support you need.

If you are symptomatic and believe you contracted COVID-19 at work, but you are *unable to access diagnostic resources*, you can contact us directly to report your illness. We can begin the claim process based on your self-report of symptoms that are known indicators of COVID-19. In some situations, we may arrange and pay for a private PCR test if it is safe and practical to do so.

What happens when I submit a COVID-19 claim?

Like any other workplace illness or injury claim, we 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 dedicated teams of people who specialize in the adjudication of COVID-19 claims. If your illness meets the conditions for coverage, we will cover medical aid costs and any time lost due to the condition.

