

WORKERS' COMPENSATION BOARD (WCB) MAXIMUM COMPENSABLE EARNINGS

Every province and territory in Canada sets a maximum compensable earnings (MCE) limit for workers receiving WCB benefits while off due to an occupational injury or illness.

With one of the lower caps in Canada, Alberta leaves Fire Fighters and Paramedics without full wage coverage when injured.

HOW THE MAX IS ESTABLISHED

Under the Workers' Compensation Act, the WCB Board of Directors sets the maximum compensable earnings to ensure at least 90% of Alberta workers receive full wage coverage.

The maximum is only adjusted when coverage falls below that 90% threshold.

THE ISSUE

Alberta's Fire Fighters typically serve 30+ years on the front lines. Their work is physically demanding and dangerous, making the likelihood of a time-loss WCB claim over the course of a career very high.

Routine exposure to carcinogens, violence, hazardous materials, and ill patients is routine, and these risks do not lessen with age. Occupational presumptions for cancer and post-traumatic stress further add to the burden of the job.

When a Fire Fighter is off work and receiving WCB remuneration, the current wage cap often results in reduced earnings. For first responders, the last thing they should have to do is shoulder the financial burden of their own occupational exposures or injuries.

No Fire Fighter or Paramedic injured in the line of duty should ever be forced to earn less through WCB.



THE SOLUTION

Of our over 5,000 members:

- 85 % are the primary income earners in their households
- 87 % work full time hours
- 98 % intend to work 30+ year careers with the same employer

Primary income support for our members and their families while on a compensable claim should not alter their quality of life.

Many Alberta Fire Fighters are hired in their 20's and work for the same employer until retirement at age 55-65. Over those decades of service, the physically demanding nature of the profession, combined with a high risk of musculoskeletal injury and cumulative exposure, makes a time-loss claim almost inevitable.

We believe there is some uniqueness in these three details that lend themselves to why Fire Fighters and Paramedics should be exempt from a wage cap.

THE ASK

We, the APFFPA, are asking the WCB Board of Directors, either at their discretion, or by way of Ministerial Order, allow exemption from WCB's MCE for Alberta's fire fighters and paramedics. This exemption would ensure fire fighters and paramedics receive their full wages when off work due to an occupational injury or illness.

Fire fighters and paramedics are at a higher risk for occupational injury, job related cancer and PTSD than the general public. Our earnings should not be less than the risks we accept.

