



Workers' Compensation Independent Review Board

Activity Plan 2026-2029



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This document is available in alternate formats, upon request.

Message from the Chief Review Commissioner

Pursuant to the **Transparency and Accountability Act**, I am pleased to present the 2026-29 Activity Plan for the Workers' Compensation Independent Review Board for the planning period April 1, 2026 to March 31, 2029. As the Chief Review Commissioner, I am accountable for the preparation of this Plan and the achievement of its objectives.

The Workers' Compensation Independent Review Board is an independent, quasi-judicial body that reviews final decisions of WorkplaceNL and reports to the Minister Responsible for WorkplaceNL. As a Category 3 entity, this plan has been developed in alignment with the board's mandate, which includes contributions to improve the overall workers' compensation system in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The review process is a critical component of the services provided to injured workers, their dependents, and employers in Newfoundland and Labrador, and represents the final level of appeal within the worker's compensation system. The board is committed to ensuring fairness in the process through accurate, consistent, and transparent decision-making, principles that underpin all our work.

I look forward to working with review commissioners and staff to implement this plan and welcome ongoing feedback from stakeholders throughout the 2026–2029 planning period.



Suzanne Hollett
Chief Review Commissioner

Overview

The Workers' Compensation Independent Review Board is an independent, quasi-judicial body that reviews final decisions of WorkplaceNL to ensure they are made in accordance with the **Workplace, Health, Safety and Compensation Act, 2022** and regulations and policies as approved by WorkplaceNL's Board of Directors and reports to the Minister Responsible for WorkplaceNL.

The following are examples of issues that may be reviewed by the board:

- entitlement to wage loss benefits,
- provision of medical aid,
- assignment of an employer to a particular group or industry rating,
- worker's estimated earning capacity,
- employer's assessment rating; and
- obligations of an employer and a worker in relation to the return to work and rehabilitation provisions of the Act.

The board is located in Mount Pearl, Newfoundland and Labrador where fourteen staff coordinate the caseload work for the Chief Review Commissioner and panel of review commissioners.

The board's annual caseload is approximately 500 cases. Reviews are conducted in-person by review commissioners at centres throughout the province including St. John's, Gander, Grand Falls-Windsor, Corner Brook, Labrador City and Happy Valley-Goose Bay. Reviews are also conducted via video and teleconference. Reviews can also be done by way of a document-only review.

Upon completion of the hearing process, a review commissioner will provide a written decision in relation to the application and WorkplaceNL's decision. The board's decisions are final and may only be reviewed by the courts under limited and specific grounds. For more information, please visit www.gov.nl.ca/wcirb.

Financial Information

Funding for the operations of the board is provided by WorkplaceNL's Injury Fund and the board's budgetary allocations are contained within the overall budget of the Department of Government Services. As per the Estimates of the Program Expenditure and Revenue of the Consolidated Revenue Fund April 1, 2026 – March 31, 2027, the annual budget for the board is \$1,633,300.

Mandate

The mandate of the board is to review final decisions of WorkplaceNL to ensure they are made in accordance with the **Workplace, Health, Safety and Compensation Act, 2022** and regulations and policies as approved by WorkplaceNL’s Board of Directors. The board is also mandated to direct appropriate remedies, where necessary.

Lines of Business

The board offers the following services to its clients:

1. Review of WorkplaceNL decisions: The board processes review applications for injured workers, their dependents, and employers in the province and coordinates the review process itself including a hearing before a review commissioner.

2. Information services: The board provides information services to its clients by providing web-based distribution of decisions; researching workers’ compensation issues; and collecting and maintaining statistical information relative to the review process.

Values

The following values guide the board’s behavior and decision-making with clients and stakeholders:

- Independence** Each person will provide services to clients in a manner that is fair, equitable, and free of bias.
- Respect** Each person will treat clients and each other with courtesy and understanding, while recognizing other views and opinions.
- Professionalism** Each person will demonstrate the highest level of conduct by serving clients in a manner that is timely, competent, and objective.
- Quality** Each person will consistently provide services to clients in an ethical and proficient manner.

Primary Clients

Clients of the Workers' Compensation Independent Review Board are people and organizations involved in the workers' compensation review process. This includes injured workers, their dependents, employers, and representatives such as union officials, consultants, worker and employer advisors, and lawyers.

Vision

The board's vision statement articulates its sense of purpose, while defining its priorities.

- The vision of the Workers' Compensation Independent Review Board is an environment where workers and employers participate in an independent, timely, and fair review process anchored in a culture of exceptional client service.

Issues

A decision issued by a board review commissioner represents the final level of appeal available to an applicant within the workers' compensation system.

The process by which an application is reviewed and concluded with a written board decision involves both administrative and adjudicative components.

Administrative responsibilities are carried out by staff under the direction of the manager of operations, while adjudicative responsibilities are performed by the Chief Review Commissioner and the board's panel of review commissioners.

Objectives and Performance Indicators

Review Application Processing

Prior to an application being referred to the adjudicative branch, the review process is initiated and managed by the board's administrative team. This includes application intake, client service support, collection and preparation of records, hearing scheduling, preparation of statistical reports, and publication of decisions.

The following objective applies across all three years of this plan.

Objective 1: By March 31 of 2027, 2028, and 2029, the board will have collected all information on the status of review applications for reporting to the public and all other relevant parties.

Indicators

- Number of review applications carried over from previous year;
- Number of new review applications received;
- Number of review applications closed; and
- Number of reconsideration applications received.

Hearing Review Applications

Using the record of information assembled by the administrative team, review commissioners conduct hearings for review applications through in-person proceedings, via video or teleconference, or by way of a document-only review. On occasion, applicants may request postponements due to circumstances beyond the board's control. In these situations, the board makes every effort to reschedule hearings as promptly as possible.

The following objective applies throughout all three years of this plan.

Objective 2: By March 31 of 2027, 2028, and 2029, the board will have collected all information on the status of hearings for reporting to the public and all other relevant parties.

Indicators

- Number of review applications scheduled to be heard;
- Number of review applications waiting to be heard;
- Number of review application hearings rescheduled; and
- Number of review application hearings held by region.

Decisions Rendered

Review commissioners rely on the complete evidentiary record, including the hearing proceedings, to undertake a comprehensive review and analysis of the issues before them, and are required by legislation to provide a written decision within 60 days of a completed hearing. After this, decisions are redacted by administrative staff and published on the board's website.

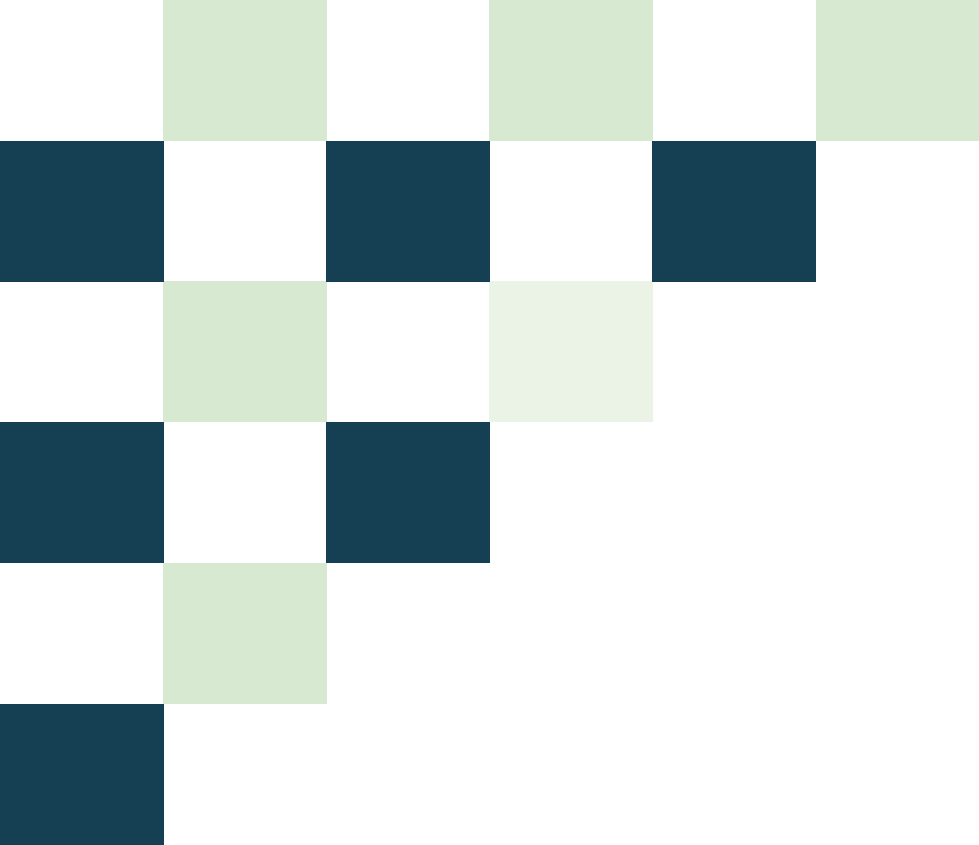
In addition, the board identifies several noteworthy decisions each year to highlight cases involving new or emerging issues or matters that may be of particular interest to stakeholders and the public.

The following objective applies throughout all three years of this plan.

Objective 3: By March 31 of 2027, 2028, and 2029, WCIRB will have collected all information on the standing of its decisions for reporting to the public and all other relevant parties.

Indicators

- Number of decisions rendered;
- Number of decision outcomes; and
- Number of noteworthy decisions.



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