

Client Services Procedure

Procedure: 60.00
Subject: Health Care Fees and Expenses

60.00 Emergency Vehicle Transportation

Day of Injury or First Treatment

When a worker is so seriously injured that they are taken from the workplace by emergency vehicle (e.g., ambulance, airlift) on the day of the accident, the employer will be directly responsible to pay for transportation to the first available hospital which can treat or stabilize the compensable injury. An employer-based first aid station or medic is not considered first treatment. For the purpose of this procedure all hospitals within provincial Regional Health Authorities are recognized by WorkplaceNL (see Appendix A).

Where the medical care available at the initial hospital is not adequate to treat or stabilize the worker's injury, the employer will be directly responsible for the expense of transportation to a more appropriate facility, including the cost of a travel attendant or companion where required. Costs of transportation to a subsequent hospital are the responsibility of WorkplaceNL only where:

1. Appropriate and necessary medical treatment or stabilization has been received at the initial location; and
2. The recommendation to transport the worker is made by a treating physician, or a person qualified to act in that capacity.

All emergency vehicle transports initiated directly from the employer's premises will be the direct responsibility of the employer.

Subsequent Emergency Vehicle Transport regarding Ongoing Claim

The cost of subsequent emergency vehicle travel will be the responsibility of WorkplaceNL where medical evidence supports the urgency of the circumstance as a result of the compensable condition. For example, where there is a medical requirement to transport the worker as quickly as possible, or where it is critical that the worker be monitored or immobilized during transportation.

The opinion of WorkplaceNL's Medical Consultant may be obtained where there is any question regarding the medical urgency of the transport or the relatedness to the compensable condition.

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60.01 Health Care Fees

Medical Record Transfer Fees

WorkplaceNL will cover the costs of patient record transfer fees incurred by injured workers where:

1. The change in a health care provider is a requirement of the worker's Labour Market Re-entry plan (e.g., worker relocates to another community for retraining purposes); or
2. The worker's request to change health care provider is reasonable and benefits the medical treatment plan.

If the change was as a result of the worker's health care provider leaving the community, or any circumstance other than those noted above, transfer fees will not be covered.

Out of Province Service Fee

Where WorkplaceNL authorizes medical treatment or assessments outside the province, health care fees will be paid according to the actual rate in the appropriate currency.

Where workers travel or relocate outside of Newfoundland and Labrador for reasons unrelated to the compensable injury, health care fees incurred related to the compensable injury will be covered to the lesser of:

1. The rates approved for similar services in Newfoundland and Labrador in Canadian currency; or
2. The actual rates charged in the worker's area.

60.02 Transportation, meals and accommodation expenses

General

For the purpose of this procedure, 'home community' is defined as the community of the worker's primary residence at the time of injury.

Workers are encouraged to submit travel claims within three months of the costs being incurred, and the necessity for all trips must be confirmed by the provider to the satisfaction of the decision maker. Where expenses incurred are under \$20 per trip, the travel claim may be submitted on a less frequent basis but within the three month period.

Transportation

Transportation expenses may be paid when a worker is required to travel outside of their home community to attend medical appointments or assessments, or for other approved appointments/meetings connected with the management of their claim.

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Expenses will be covered based on the most economical and suitable means of travel available. Travel options may include bus/public transportation, private vehicle, taxi, air travel or ferry service.

If there is no public transportation available or if a private vehicle is the most economical and suitable option, expenses will be paid as per the Travel Expense Schedule for the use of a private vehicle.

Transportation expenses to visit a health care provider outside the home community are not covered if there is a general practitioner in the home community. Where a doctor is not available in the community, transportation may be paid to the nearest doctor.

If an injured worker has been seeing a health care provider for an extended period of time, additional transportation expenses resulting from relocation of that health care provider will be covered under the following criteria:

1. Care cannot be reasonably provided within the community by another health care provider; and
2. The medical care necessary to treat the compensable injury can only be reasonably provided by the relocated treating physician.

Taxis

WorkplaceNL will cover the cost of travel by taxi where any of the following circumstances exist:

1. It is the most medically suitable means of transportation; or
2. No vehicle is available (where worker's vehicle is inoperative there will be a limited authorization period not to exceed one week) or the worker does not have a valid driver's license; or
3. No public transportation available and insufficient notice was received from the health care provider to make alternate arrangements.

WorkplaceNL may enter into agreements with taxi service providers. Where agreements exist, injured workers shall be directed to these providers, wherever possible.

Travel Advance

An advance can be given to the worker to cover reasonable anticipated expenses where:

1. WorkplaceNL arranges or approves out-of-province travel; or
2. The worker would otherwise be unable to make the trip for financial reasons.

The worker must submit actual receipts within 30 days of the travel. Once received, the decision maker will process the actual allowable expenses incurred. Where receipts are not received within the prescribed timeframe an overpayment will be established.

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Out-of-Province Travel

WorkplaceNL will cover the cost of out-of-province travel, medical reports and visits for medical intervention related to a work injury where that assessment or treatment is medically necessary and not available in Newfoundland and Labrador. Requests regarding these referrals must be reviewed by the WorkplaceNL's Medical Consultant for an opinion regarding the medical necessity and appropriateness of the out-of-province service.

The most cost-effective and suitable means of travel and accommodation available will be utilized. For example, the decision maker will always inquire about the availability of on-site accommodations where the worker is visiting a treatment center or hospital. If on-site accommodations are not available, then reasonable accommodations in the vicinity of the center or hospital will be investigated. WorkplaceNL will make best efforts to have the transportation and accommodations costs for such travel invoiced directly to WorkplaceNL.

Meals for out-of-province travel will be covered at the standard rate, as outlined in the Travel Expense Schedule.

Where a worker who is out-of-province for reasons unrelated to the compensable injury must return for medical treatment associated with the compensable injury, WorkplaceNL will not be responsible for the worker's travel expenses.

For details on out-of-province health care service fees, refer to the Travel Expense Schedule.

Travel Attendant or Companion

Costs for an attendant or companion to travel with the worker will be covered (as per the Travel Expense Schedule where the attendant or companion is medically necessary. The most cost effective appropriate means of transportation must be utilized.

For non-emergency travel, prior approval for an attendant or companion is encouraged so that the injured worker is aware whether the costs will be covered by WorkplaceNL.

Attendant service fees will be paid only when the services of a health professional are medically required to accompany the worker to the medical appointment.

WorkplaceNL's Medical Consultant may be consulted to determine the necessity or appropriateness of companion or attendant travel.

Car Pooling

Only one person in a car pool will be covered for personal vehicle expenses when traveling to approved appointments.

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Parking

Parking expenses must be directly related to approved travel.

Metered parking expenses incurred will be covered up to the maximum rate as indicated in the Travel Expense Schedule.

Actual costs for parking at a parking garage or lot will be paid, where a receipt is provided for the time of the worker's appointment.

Parking tickets are the responsibility of the worker.

Meals

WorkplaceNL's coverage for meals is on a per diem basis as per the Travel Expense Schedule.

A meal allowance will be provided when a worker is required to travel over the period a meal would generally be consumed; and

1. Travel is in excess of 200 kilometers round trip; or
2. The worker attends an approved medical treatment or program that is five hours minimum, regardless of distance from home.

Meal allowance for a travel attendant/companion will be covered when the attendant/companion is medically necessary.

A meal allowance will be provided where meals are not included in the cost of accommodations. Where meals are included in the costs of accommodations, an amount equal to the meal provided may be deducted from the per diem otherwise payable.

Overnight Accommodations

Prior approval is required for overnight accommodations. Approved amounts are indicated in the Travel Expenses Schedule.

In special circumstances where vacancy is limited and a room is not available for the approved minimum rates for the geographic location, the decision maker may authorize a higher nightly rate.

Where the accommodations available do not meet the functional needs of the worker (e.g., not wheelchair accessible) the decision maker may consider authorization of a higher nightly rate.

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Where the worker chooses to rent accommodations more expensive than those available and suitable for their needs, WorkplaceNL will only reimburse the amount that would otherwise have been covered.

Receipts must be submitted for commercial accommodations.

Where a worker is pre-approved by the decision maker to stay at a private residence, coverage will be as per the Travel Expense Schedule. Receipts are not required.

Travel Expense Schedule

Mileage --- reimbursement made in accordance with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador automobile reimbursement rate applicable on the date of travel

Private Accommodations----- \$25.00 per night (no receipt required)

Hotel ----- based on minimum rates (with receipt)

Parking Permit----- as incurred (with receipt)

Parking Meter Costs----- \$12.00 per day flat rate (no receipt required)

Per Diem - Breakfast----- \$8.00 (no receipt required)

Per Diem - lunch ----- \$13.20 (no receipt required)

Per Diem - Dinner ----- \$21.70 (no receipt required)

Out-of-Province Per Diem ----- \$49.00 per day (no receipt required)

60.03 Merits and Justice

Where the individual circumstances of a case are such that the provisions of this procedure cannot be applied or to do so would cause an unfair or unintended result, WorkplaceNL will decide the case based on its individual merits and justice as outlined by Policy EN-22 Merits and Justice. Such a decision will be considered for that specific case only and will not be precedent setting.

Reference:

The Workplace Health, Safety & Compensation Act, Sections 2(1), 84-88

Policies:

HC-13 Health Care Entitlement

HC-07 Travel and Accommodation - Workers

EN-22 Merits and Justice

Amendment History

Original Effective Date 2004 01 01

Revision #5 2019 10 10

Revision #6 2022 07 01

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APPENDIX A – Hospitals Recognized by WorkplaceNL

1. All general practitioners licensed in the province
2. All Regional Health Authorities in the province.