

Fall 2011 Newsletter

Commission seeking a Fair Practices Specialist

The deadline for applications was October 31, 2011.

Injured workers get fairness in clothing allowance process restored

A legal clinic asked the Fair Practices Commission for help for injured workers who receive an allowance to pay for clothing alterations they need to accommodate back supports.

These workers had back supports approved before 1996. WSIB policy 17.07.03 requires workers to submit an annual report from their doctor supporting the allowance; however, the policy contains an exception for the pre-1996 workers. The WSIB had started asking these workers for an annual doctor's report.

The commissioner and a specialist met with senior WSIB staff about the new process. In response to the Commission's inquiries, the WSIB reverted to its former practice.

The legal clinic wrote to the Commission to say "the Fair Practices Commission helps 10,000 injured workers," the number of clothing allowance recipients potentially affected by the practice.

Working at reducing delays in appeals

The Commission is receiving complaints about the length of time it takes the Appeals Division to schedule oral hearings. The commissioner reviewed the complaints with the Executive Director of the Appeals Division and the Chief Corporate Services Officer, who confirmed there is a backlog of appeals. It takes an average of five months before an appeals resolution officer (ARO) is assigned to an appeal and a hearing can be scheduled. The commissioner raised the issue with the WSIB's Board of Directors at their September meeting. The Chief Corporate Services Officer told the Board the WSIB is adding 10 new AROs and expects to have new processes in place to reduce the delays by the end of the year.

The Commission will continue to monitor the issue.

Complaints by email coming in January

The Fair Practices Commission will begin accepting complaints by email in January, 2012.

We are developing specific software to ensure complaints to our office remain confidential.

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