

From: Wurmman, Heidi <Heidi.Wurmman@gov.mb.ca>

Sent: Friday, 22 May, 2026 11:39 AM

To: Legislative Review [REDACTED]

Subject: Submission for WCA review

Hello,

I'm writing in relation to the current review of The Workers Compensation Act (WCA) to offer a friendly reminder to consider accessibility, including the experiences and rights of people with disabilities, as part of this important work. I know the official deadline has passed – I am hopeful that you will still be able to receive this submission.

Workers' compensation legislation plays a critical role for individuals who acquire injury-related disabilities, whether temporary or permanent, mental or physical. Incorporating accessibility and disability perspectives into the review can help ensure that both the WCA and its administration reflect Manitoba's commitments under The Accessibility for Manitobans Act and support the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, particularly dignity, inclusion, equity, and full participation.

The Accessibility for Manitobans Act is grounded in a broad, barriers-based understanding of disability that includes both physical and mental disabilities. This approach reflects a shift away from a purely medical model, which focuses primarily on impairment or diagnosis, toward a social model of disability that recognizes how environmental, systemic, and attitudinal barriers can disable individuals.

In this spirit, we encourage the WCA review to consider disability broadly, including psychological injuries, and to focus on identifying and removing barriers that may limit participation and recovery.

The WCA review also presents an opportunity to consider alignment with section 13 (Return to Work Process) of the Accessible Employment Standard, a regulation under The Accessibility for Manitobans Act.

During its recent review of the Standard, the Accessibility Advisory Council identified opportunities to better align legislation and policy frameworks that affect workers with disabilities. Notably, the Council recommended that government "clarify return to work requirements to include removing systemic barriers, not solely addressing individual limitations, to help employees return to work effectively" (pp. 31–32). The Council further encouraged applying a disability lens to return-to-work processes, and work is currently underway to advance these recommendations.

Given the WCA's significant impact on workers who experience injury-related disabilities, reviewing the legislation through an accessibility and human rights lens can help ensure it remains inclusive, clear, and responsive to evolving understandings of disability, while supporting fairness and consistency in practice.

The Manitoba Accessibility Office would be pleased to offer accessibility-related input or expertise, should that be helpful.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further or to connect our teams.

Thank you,
Heidi

Heidi Wurmman
Assistant Deputy Minister
Department of Families
(T) 204-945-0811

Manitoba is located on Treaty land, and the ancestral home of the Anishnaabeg, Anishininewuk, Dakota Oyate, Densuline and Nehethowuk nations, on the homeland of the Red River Métis, and the ancestral lands of Inuit.