

## Home modifications assessment

The Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) may request assistance from occupational therapists to complete a home assessment to assess mobility issues within the home environment for severely injured workers. Severely injured workers can include those who have experienced spinal cord injury, major amputations, severe burns or other injuries that result in significant mobility challenges.

Home modifications are designed to improve accessibility and can vary in nature. Examples include installation of ramps, handrails, non-slip nosing on stairs, wider doorways, raised entrances, etc.

### Home modification assessment principles

Recommendations for modifications, assistive devices and/or equipment must reflect the following principles:

- Accommodate medical restrictions for the worker without endangering their recovery and safety or the safety of others.
- Directly relate to the compensable work injury accepted on the claim.
- Address the worker's mobility needs with practical and cost-effective solutions that are necessary for their independence.
- Consider both the worker's current and future mobility and functionality.
- Illustrate evidence-based, objective findings and clinical rationale.

### Objective recommendations and clinical rationale

The information you share helps set the stage for the worker to gain independence and improved accessibility in their home.

When completing an assessment:

- Avoid rendering an opinion directly to the worker regarding the extent of injury, compensation and other benefits. Please ask them to direct any questions to their claim owner.
- Use clinical reasoning based on objective findings with

a common-sense approach for recommended solutions submitted in your reporting.

- Provide tailored suggestions and recommendations for each worker that align with WCB's overarching goal to support and maintain a worker's independence in their home by focusing on improved access, mobility, function, safety, health and well-being.

### Tips for successful home modification reporting

Your reporting information is the primary method of communicating a worker's status, barriers and goals to WCB.

- Please ensure you provide consistent, complete and timely information, with clear documentation that identifies the clinical rationale supporting your recommendations.
- Claim owners will use the information as the basis for collaborating with the worker and consultant/contractor if needed to complete the necessary residential modifications.

### Collaboration with WCB is critical

Case conferences between you and the worker's claim owner are required prior to submitting your finalized report.

The claim owner will review and consider your recommendations for modifications and/or adaptive equipment before determining how best to proceed and support the worker.

*Note: WCB is unable to provide major home modifications to a rental property or a home owned by a family member; the worker must be the homeowner. For rental locations, minor modifications like grab bars, ramps, etc., may be supplied and installed with the landlord's written permission.*

### Questions? We are here to help.

If you would like more information on our home modification assessment, please contact us at 780-498-3219 or email our Health Care Strategy (HCS) Occupational Therapy team at [hcs.ot@wcb.ab.ca](mailto:hcs.ot@wcb.ab.ca).

