

Protecting the workers' compensation system

We are committed to deterring, detecting and prosecuting those who abuse the funds held in trust to help workers and employers.

Abuse occurs when an individual is intentionally dishonest in order to obtain money, goods or services to which they are not entitled. The workers' compensation system is based on self-reporting, which means we rely on people to be honest – and they are! However, there is a small percentage who are not, which can add up to big costs to the system.

Cost to the public

Abuse of the workers' compensation system costs us all. The ripple effect includes lost jobs and profits, lower wages and benefits, and higher costs for goods and services – in part because employers are forced to pay higher premium rates to cover increased claim costs.

Possible signs of system abuse

We should all be alert for signs of system abuse. Signs may include:

Worker indicators

- Misrepresenting or exaggerating an injury
- Making false or misleading statements
- Falsely claiming an injury or illness is work-related
- Working while receiving disability benefits

Employer indicators

- Failing to report a workplace injury or illness
- Unlawfully deducting premiums from a worker's wages
- Intimidating a worker into not reporting a claim
- Deliberately understating or falsifying payroll information
- Employers in compulsory industries failing to register for an employer account, or registering only when a claim is filed
- Possessing or using a forged or false WCB clearance certificate

Service provider indicators

- Intentionally falsifying an invoice
- Billing for services that are not provided or are medically unnecessary

Investigations unit

Our internal Investigations unit was established in 1994. Granted Peace Officer status under the Province of Alberta's *Peace Officer Act*, the unit's special investigators examine allegations of system abuse and WCB-Alberta will lay charges when appropriate.

Of the charges laid by the Investigations unit, more than 90% result in conviction. Those charged may be prosecuted under the Criminal Code of Canada or under Provincial Offences legislation. Those convicted face jail sentences, court fines and may be ordered to repay any monies obtained fraudulently.

Report suspected system abuse

If you suspect someone is abusing the system, you can report it to us. You don't have to provide your personal information if you wish to remain anonymous. By providing your contact information, an investigator can follow up with you if they have questions or require more details.

Investigation referrals come from WCB staff and tips from the public. This includes employers, workers, family members, neighbours and others who appreciate that abuse of the system is costly and wrong.

If you suspect someone is abusing the workers' compensation system, please report it by calling:

- 780-498-3999 (Edmonton)
- 403-517-6200 (Calgary)
- 1-866-922-9221 (toll-free in Alberta)
- 1-800-661-9608 (toll-free outside Alberta)