

1. What is a Medical Panel?

A Medical Panel is a panel of three specialist physicians who are appointed to address differences in medical opinion or other medical questions related to a worker's claim. A Medical Panel occurs when requested by the Workers Compensation Board (WCB), the Appeals Commission, or the worker through the Appeals Commission, when there are areas of medical differences and/or complexity on a claim file that require resolution by an independent body.

2. Why am I having a Medical Panel?

Your claim file has been sent for a Medical Panel because there is an area of medical difference of opinion or because of its complexity. Most often Medical Panels will answer questions relating to diagnosis, causation, work restrictions, return to work, and additional testing/treatment.

3. How long will it take to book my Medical Panel? Why does it take so long?

While difficult to predict, we anticipate it will take between six months and a year to book your Medical Panel. We must first request participation from physicians. Participation can be unpredictable depending on the service request, the number of available physicians in that specialty, and their willingness to be involved. Once we have the physicians who will be on the Medical Panel, we must then book a date that is mutually agreeable for the physicians. Most physicians have clinic days, hospital rotations, on call, operating room time and specialty service days that we must book around, which can be a challenge and prolong the process.

4. Who will be on my Medical Panel?

Three specialty physicians experienced in the medical field that are in question will make up your Panel. Sometimes they will all be from the same specialty, while other Panels will have multiple specialties. The Medical Panels Program creates a Case Eligibility List from which the worker, the employer, and the WCB will each select a physician to sit on the Panel. If one of the parties does not make a choice, the Medical Panels Commissioner will make the selection and will then choose a Chair from the three physicians.

5. Will my employer be at the Medical Panel?

No. The employer is not invited to attend the Medical Panel, but they are invited to participate in the Medical Panel selection process through the Case Eligibility List. They will receive the report, once complete.

6. Can I bring someone with me to my Medical Panel?

You are permitted to bring up to three representatives to the Medical Panel: for example, a health professional, a family member, and a consultant. A treating physician may attend as a Medical Professional Advisor. The Medical Panel Program will compensate for expenses associated with the Medical Professional Advisor if they are your treating physician.

7. Can my representatives or family members speak at my Medical Panel?

Yes, The Medical Panel is less formal than other proceedings. The physicians may call upon the family members or representative provide a statement. As long as all participants are respectful, the discussion is usually open and informal.

8. Why do I have to come to Edmonton for my Medical Panel? Do I have to come at all?

Medical Panels are held in Edmonton as we have the support staff available to assist throughout the Examination as necessary. We also have a basic examination room for physical exams, if applicable. Attendance at the Medical Panel is not mandatory for workers, but it could be in your best interest to attend. It gives you an opportunity to be heard, to be assessed and examined. Claim and compensation decisions will be made based on the Medical Panel report.

If you and/or your immediate family member who is travelling with you is required to travel, your travel costs will be paid for by the WCB prior to travel.

9. How long does the Medical Panel take?

A Medical Panel usually takes two to three hours. Panel Members will interview, and likely examine, the worker during the Medical Panel.

10. Can I bring additional information to the Medical Panel for the physicians to review?

The Medical Panels Program will send all parties a copy of the Medical information Package (MIP). If you find that documents are missing from your MIP, please forward them to us as soon as possible to be added to the file. Any documents that are sent in after the MIP will be shared with all parties and the panel. If you have a last-minute item, you may bring it to the Medical Panel and ask that the Medical Panel Members consider the item in their decision.

11. What may be discussed during the Medical Panel?

During a Medical Panel there may be discussions about:

- Questions or issues forwarded to the Medical Panel
- Medical history of the worker
- Medical test results
- The accident resulting in injury
- Fitness to Work or modified work
- Any new medical information
- Medical treatments
- Injured Worker questions

12. How long does it take for the report to be completed?

You can expect to receive your Medical Panel report within approximately 60 days of your Medical Panel date. If the panel is waiting for additional documents or test results this could delay the report. In this case, the Medical Panels Program will contact you to inform you of the delay.