

Section	Policy
40	43.00

Section Title: Benefits Administration – *Vocational Rehabilitation*  
Subject: Vocational Rehabilitation  
Effective Date: October 1, 1994

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## **A. POLICY PURPOSE**

This policy explains the goals and describes the terms and conditions of academic, vocational, and rehabilitative assistance available to a worker under subsection 27(20) of *The Workers Compensation Act* (the Act). For the purposes of this policy, this assistance is referred to as *vocational rehabilitation*. Vocational rehabilitation is intended to help a worker achieve maximum physical, psychological, economic and social recovery from the effects of a work-related injury or illness.

While discretionary, vocational rehabilitation should be consistently applied to all eligible workers. This policy describes:

1. The goal of vocational rehabilitation;
2. Who is eligible for vocational rehabilitation;
3. The relationship between vocational rehabilitation services and wage-loss benefits;
4. What services are available, what they are intended to accomplish, and when they will be provided; and
5. When vocational rehabilitation will be discontinued.

This is the central policy for the Workers Compensation Board's (WCB) vocational rehabilitation program. All policies in the 43.00 series should be applied in accordance with the general principles presented in this policy. These policies are listed in the *References* section of this policy.

## **B. POLICY**

### **I. Goals and Objectives**

1. The goal of vocational rehabilitation is to help the worker to achieve a return to sustainable employment in an occupation which reasonably takes into consideration the worker's post-injury physical capacity, skills, aptitudes and, where possible, interests.
2. The WCB will help the worker as much as possible to be as employable as she or he was before the injury or illness. Once this is done and when necessary, the WCB will provide reasonable assistance to the worker so that she or he actually returns to work. However, services may not always continue until the worker actually returns to work.
3. Vocational rehabilitation strives to return workers to the salary level they were earning before the injury or illness.
4. To meet these objectives, the following solutions (hierarchy of objectives) will be considered and pursued in the sequence below:
  - a. Return to the same work with the same employer.
  - b. Return to the same work (modified) with the same employer.
  - c. Return to different work with the same employer.
  - d. Return to similar work with a different employer.

- e. Return to different work with a different employer.
- f. Retraining and re-education.

While retraining and re-education is one of the last options it may be provided as part of one of the other options.

5. The worker and the pre-injury employer are key participants in the return-to-work process which involves the first three of the hierarchy of objectives in paragraph 4 a, b and c above. The WCB will make all reasonable efforts to involve the worker and employer in this process and will apply policy 43.20.25, *Return to Work with the Accident Employer*, as needed.
6. The return-to-work process applies to all claims. For all injuries or illnesses occurring on or after January 1, 2007, the return-to-work process will be considered jointly with the obligation to re-employ as provided for in section 49.3 of the Act and policy 43.20.25, *Return to Work with the Accident Employer*.
7. Return to work with the pre-injury employer involving the first three of the hierarchy of objectives is principally the responsibility of the Case Manager. When a Case Manager determines that return to work solutions with the pre-injury employer listed in paragraph 4 a, b and c above are not possible, then the worker may be assessed for vocational rehabilitation services by a Vocational Rehabilitation Consultant who will consider the solutions listed in paragraph 4 d, e, and f above.

## **II. Eligibility**

1. A worker will receive vocational rehabilitation services when:
  - a. The worker experiences a long-term loss of earning capacity;
  - b. It is reasonably determined that the worker will be unable to perform the pre-injury work without help; or
  - c. There are reasonable indicators that there is a risk of chronicity.

Under these circumstances, vocational rehabilitation is intended to speed up or improve the chances of the worker returning to the pre-injury or alternate work.

2. A worker who is eligible for vocational rehabilitation will be assessed when:
  - a. There are reasonable indicators that there is a risk of chronicity; or,
  - b. It is considered that a request for vocational rehabilitation services is timely, prudent, or necessary. This may include one or more of the following referral criteria:
    - i. A return to the regular employment may be a problem as a result of the compensable injury or condition.
    - ii. The injury/condition is of a serious nature, including:
      - Significant amputation
      - Brain or brain stem injury
      - Significant crush injury
      - Partial or complete spinal cord injury
      - Significant burns
    - iii. Extensive time loss from work is anticipated.
    - iv. Co-ordinated, inter or multi-disciplinary case management is required.

- v. A return to the regular employment is expected to aggravate further or otherwise negatively affect the compensable injury or condition.
  - vi. There is an existing or anticipated loss in pre-injury earning capacity by reason of the compensable injury or condition.
  - vii. The worker requires supportive or social counselling services to optimize the likelihood of a timely return to employment.
  - viii. The worker, employer or healthcare practitioner requests assessment and/or intervention by a Vocational Rehabilitation Consultant.
  - ix. A return to the regular employment could result in exposure to a potentially hazardous work environment and it has been reasonably determined that there is a risk of another injury or illness (subject to Policy 43.10.60, *Preventive Vocational Rehabilitation*).
3. Eligibility in this policy relates to the loss of earning capacity due to the effects of the compensable condition. Eligibility on the basis of risk of further injury or illness is subject to Policy 43.10.60, *Preventive Vocational Rehabilitation*.
  4. A worker may be eligible for vocational rehabilitation benefits and services after an assessment by a Vocational Rehabilitation Consultant. The Vocational Rehabilitation Consultant will determine if the worker has transferable skills to recover a portion of his or her loss of earning capacity, sufficient skills to recover his or her loss of earning capacity or no transferable skills.
  5. If there is no longer a loss of earning capacity (i.e., the worker recovers from the effects of the injury or illness) the worker will no longer be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services. Under these circumstances, the worker will be given reasonable notice prior to the discontinuation of vocational rehabilitation services. Policy 44.30.60, *Notice of Change in Benefits or Services*, is applicable.

### **III. Relationship with Wage-Loss and Other Benefits**

1. Eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services is distinct from eligibility for wage-loss and other benefits such as medical-aid benefits. For example, a person may be eligible for wage-loss benefits, but does not require vocational rehabilitation services.
2. Eligibility for wage-loss benefits is defined by the Act. As well, the WCB has adopted policies which cover eligibility for wage-loss benefits. For injuries and illnesses on or after January 1, 1992, eligibility is based on "loss of earning capacity". For injuries and illnesses before January 1, 1992, eligibility is based on "disability".
3. Of particular importance are policies 44.80.10.10, *Average Earnings*, 44.80.30.10, *Establishing Post-Accident Earning Capacity*, 44.10.30.60, *Co-operation and Mitigation in Recovery*, 44.80.30.20, *Post Accident Earnings-Deemed Earning Capacity*, 44.80.30.30, *Prospective Earnings - Apprentices and Youthful Workers*, and 43.20.40, *Relocation*.
4. Eligibility for some services, particularly those designed to help the worker adjust to the effects of an injury or illness and enhance independent living, may continue beyond the completion of the vocational rehabilitation plan.

**IV. Services**

1. Specific services are based on the individual needs of a worker. Services should be reasonably required, cost-effective, and provide the potential for achieving vocational rehabilitation goals. These services are broadly defined as follows:
  - a. adjustment - services that assist the worker to address personal, social or emotional difficulties that result from the compensable injury and must be addressed for recovery or vocational rehabilitation to progress.
  - b. assessment - used to evaluate or measure vocational functioning or potential.
  - c. employment related services - provided to prepare the worker to compete for employment opportunities.
  - d. re-education, vocational, and academic training - all services and activities related to vocational plans where there is upgrading, vocational or academic training at a WCB accepted facility or institution.
  - e. independent living - services intended to promote, enhance and maintain the worker's non-occupational quality of life (see Policy 44.120.30, *Support for Daily Living*).
2. The WCB may provide services to help the worker address a problem unrelated to the compensable condition (e.g., substance addiction) in order to improve prospects for successful vocational rehabilitation. This is subject to the following:
  - a. A comparable service is not available from any other source, at a lesser cost or no cost to the WCB;
  - b. Adequate progress is achieved which benefits vocational rehabilitation efforts; and,
  - c. Vocational rehabilitation services continue to be cost-effective despite the presence of the problem unrelated to the compensable injury. If it is decided that vocational rehabilitation services should be discontinued because of the non-compensable problem, a separate decision must still be made regarding entitlement to wage loss or other benefits.

**V. Individualized Written Rehabilitation Plan (IWRP)**

1. The WCB will help a worker establish sufficient vocational potential to eliminate or minimize his or her loss of earning capacity. Further, the WCB will provide an opportunity for the worker to achieve this potential and the associated earning capacity. The Individualized Written Rehabilitation Plan (IWRP) is an important tool used for these purposes.
2. Where rehabilitation services are provided, the goals and responsibilities of the worker, the WCB and the employer (when involved) will be identified through an IWRP.
3. When developing the IWRP, the worker, the worker's representative, advisor or union representative, the WCB and the employer (when involved) may pursue the established hierarchy of objectives. The WCB will document the outcome(s) of this joint process. Ideally, the worker's healthcare practitioner will also be involved in this process. The IWRP will:
  - a. Define the overall vocational rehabilitation goal or goals.
  - b. Describe the occupation or occupational group in which the worker can competitively pursue employment upon achievement of the vocational rehabilitation goal. This will be based on recognized methods of job classification. Where applicable, the description will include any community-specific features of the occupation as determined through job analysis.
  - c. Detail the specific steps which must be taken for the vocational rehabilitation goal (or goals) to be attained.

- d. Detail the methods, techniques, and supports which will be utilized to assist the worker in attaining a specific objective or the vocational rehabilitation goal (or goals). The provider(s) of the service(s) will be identified as the IWRP progresses.
  - e. Outline the benefits and/or allowances which will accompany the IWRP.
  - f. Indicate the time frames associated with the overall IWRP and its component steps.
  - g. Indicate the expectations for the worker's earning capacity upon the completion of the IWRP. This expectation will be a factor in decisions regarding deemed earning capacity (i.e. subject to Policy 44.80.30.20, *Post-Accident Earnings - Deemed Earning Capacity*).
4. The WCB will develop the plan after adequate assessment. This assessment is meant to identify the skills possessed by the worker and skills to be acquired by the worker. Further, the plan will establish the worker's post-plan earning capacity through analysis of the worker's skills in comparison to the labour market.
  5. The WCB will reasonably ensure that the plan is based on a realistic goal. A realistic goal is one which is within the worker's physical, intellectual, vocational, and emotional capacities. In helping a worker establish a goal, the WCB will apply knowledge of the worker's *vocational profile*, medical aspects of the worker's condition, the worker's interaction with the environment and the effort and persistence the worker demonstrates in the face of obstacles.
  6. Vocational rehabilitation goals will generally be based on the "loss of earning capacity" principle stipulated in the Act. Within this limit, the WCB will make every effort to meet the worker's needs, aspirations, values, preferences, sensitivities, and goals.
  7. When developing the worker's vocational profile the WCB will include the worker's personal characteristics education, work history, occupationally significant characteristics, and transferable work skills.
  8. Every IWRP will include a Financial Implications Report. This accounting of costs will be attached to and forms a part of the plan. The Financial Implications Report will indicate all the costs associated with the plan and when it is expected that these costs will be experienced. The report will also project the amount of post-plan wage loss benefits.
  9. The WCB will demonstrate that the IWRP is cost-effective. The test of cost-effectiveness takes into consideration the costs which are expected without the plan versus with the plan. As well, it is necessary to compare costs against available options.
  10. For an IWRP to be implemented there must be a commitment by all parties participating in the plan.
  11. Once an IWRP has been developed the WCB will inform all parties of it in writing and will ensure that all parties understand it. The pre-injury employer will be informed of the IWRP, the associated costs and given another opportunity to accommodate the worker with modified and alternate work.
  12. Once the plan is implemented, the following apply:
    - a. The worker is responsible for notifying the WCB of any difficulties or circumstances which might affect the completion of the plan.
    - b. The WCB is responsible for notifying the worker and, in certain circumstances, other parties to the plan of any difficulties which might affect the completion of the plan.
  13. If the plan requires revision due to unforeseen developments in the vocational rehabilitation process, amendment of the plan will be acknowledged by all involved parties. All the requirements for developing the initial plan apply to the amendment.
  14. The WCB will be flexible in its management of the plan and reasonably respond to change. The WCB will monitor the plan to determine if the plan is progressing as anticipated. Where this is not the case, adjustments will be made in consultation with the worker and the service providers involved in the worker's rehabilitation. The WCB will evaluate the plan at the attainment of

identified outcomes in the plan.

15. The WCB and the worker may not be able to agree completely on the content of the plan. For example, the type of plan desired by the worker may be inconsistent with the loss of earning capacity for which the WCB is responsible. Under such circumstances, the WCB will expect the worker to participate in a different plan. At the same time, the worker can use the appeal process to pursue the plan which she or he wanted.
16. If a plan intended to result in employment outside of the pre-injury employer is implemented, **and subsequently** during the plan the pre-injury employer indicates that it has a suitable position for the worker, the plan may be continued if:
  - a. Following assessment, the WCB determines that the employer has not offered a suitable position to the worker; or
  - b. The worker wants to continue with the rehabilitation plan; and
  - c. The plan is more than one third completed; and,
  - d. It is evident that the worker is going to successfully complete the plan.

It may be that the worker chooses to continue the plan and the position offered by the employer provides earnings higher than those expected upon completion of the plan. In this case, the worker's earning capacity will be based on the earnings for the position with the employer. This deemed earning capacity will be implemented upon completion of the plan (subject to Policy 44.80.30.20, *Post-Accident Earnings - Deemed Earning Capacity*).

17. The IWRP contains details on personal information and personal health information and is therefore subject to the confidentiality provisions under the *Act, The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and *The Personal Health Information Act*. Disclosure of information to any third party is subject to the provisions in the legislation as well as policies 21.50.10, *Disclosure of File Information*, and 21.50.40, *Disclosure of File Information - Employer Access*.

## **VI. Allowances**

1. In some circumstances, injured workers will be eligible for reasonable allowances to cover additional costs required because of a vocational rehabilitation program or the compensable rehabilitative needs of the injured worker. When paid, the WCB will monitor the allowance. Available allowances include:
  - a. Tools and Equipment - The cost of special equipment, tools, or clothing where this is required to support a return to work will be paid by the WCB. These tools and equipment remain assets of the WCB for the life of their usefulness. Maintenance of the tools and equipment is the responsibility of the WCB until the plan ends. The WCB may decline responsibility for maintenance, if it is needed, due to the fault of the worker.
  - b. Tuition, Books, Supplies, etc. - When a particular vocational rehabilitation plan involves academic or vocational training, the cost of tuition and required books or supplies will be paid by the WCB.
  - c. Travel Expenses - When participation in an activity related to vocational rehabilitation involves travel expenses in excess of those which existed prior to the compensable injury, these additional expenses will be paid or reimbursed by the WCB under the following conditions:
    - i. A requirement for the worker's personal payment of travel costs is shown to the satisfaction of the WCB to constitute sufficient financial burden so as to prevent reasonable participation in the rehabilitation service;

- ii. The travel costs for a particular vocational rehabilitation activity exceed the costs associated with the worker's pre-injury employment; or,
- iii. The travel costs are a temporary alternative to relocation of the worker, prior to actual job placement.
- iv. The WCB will pay for travel costs on the basis of the method of transportation which represents the lowest cost and is reasonable for the worker to accept.
- v. Travel costs may include:
  - Bus fare.
  - Parking fees (based on receipts).
  - Mileage allowance, at equivalent rates as paid to WCB employees.
  - Airfare.
- vi. The WCB will not normally reimburse workers for costs arising out of a personal travel choice made by the worker when the WCB did not initiate that choice.
- vii. The payment of travel expenses associated with relocation of the worker is subject to Policy 43.20.40, *Relocation*.

In some cases, the issue of travel expenses may be covered by Policy 44.120.10, *Medical Aid*, or Policy 43.20.40, *Relocation*.

2. A worker may be eligible for additional benefits under Policy 43.20.40 *Relocation*, or Policy 44.120.30, *Support for Daily Living*.

## **VII. Discontinuation of Vocational Rehabilitation Services**

1. The conclusion of vocational rehabilitation services is a natural part of the vocational rehabilitation process. Vocational rehabilitation services will be reduced or discontinued under the following circumstances:
  - a. The worker completes a vocational rehabilitation plan and has achieved her or his maximum earning capacity.
  - b. The worker does not have a loss of earning capacity **and** does not require, because of the compensable condition, assistance with activities of daily living, counselling services, or an allowance.
  - c. The worker chooses not to, or reports the inability to reasonably participate in a suitable program of vocational rehabilitation.
  - d. The worker chooses not to, or reports the inability to accept suitable employment for reasons not related to the compensable injury or condition.
  - e. The worker discontinues suitable employment for reasons not related to the compensable injury.

*NOTE:* Employment will be considered suitable when it is consistent with the worker's physical, intellectual, vocational, and emotional capacities and represents a reasonable opportunity for maximum vocational rehabilitation.
  - f. The worker retires from the workforce or is deemed to have reached her or his retirement date.
  - g. The worker has completed a plan which has resulted in a certain level of earning capacity and (or) it is not cost-effective to provide additional or any services.

2. Reasonable notice for termination of services will be provided. The specific time period for notification will be in accordance with Policy 44.30.60, *Notice of Change in Benefits or Services*.
3. Suspending, reducing, or discontinuing wage-loss benefits is a separate decision. Generally, these decisions hinge on whether there is a loss of earning capacity resulting from a personal injury arising out of and in the course of employment. As well, these decisions may require that specific policies be applied (e.g., Policy 44.10.30.60, *Co-operation and Mitigation in Recovery*, Policy 44.80.30.20, *Post-Accident Earnings - Deemed Earning Capacity*).

### **C. REFERENCES**

*The Workers Compensation Act*, Section 27(15) and 27(20) [**prior to January 1, 1992**]

*The Workers Compensation Act*, Sections 22(1) and 22(2), 27(20) and 33 [**on or after January 1, 1992**]

*The Workers Compensation Act*, Sections 22(1) and 22(2), 27(20), 33 and 49.3 [**on or after January 1, 2007**]

*The Workers Compensation Act*, Subsection 101(1)

*The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*

*The Personal Health Information Act*

#### Related WCB Policies:

21.50.10, *Disclosure of File Information*

21.50.40, *Disclosure of File Information – Employer Access*

43.10.30, *Functional Impairment Awards*

43.10.50, *Rehabilitation for Spouses or Common-Law Partners of Deceased Workers*

43.10.60, *Preventive Vocational Rehabilitation*

43.20.25, *Return to Work with the Accident Employer*

43.20.40, *Relocation*

44.10.30.60, *Co-operation and Mitigation in Recovery*

44.30.60, *Notice of Change in Benefits or Services*

44.60.30, *Special Additional Compensation*

44.80.10.10, *Average Earnings*

44.80.30.10, *Establishing Post-Accident Earning Capacity*

44.80.30.20, *Post-Accident Earnings - Deemed Earning Capacity*

44.80.30.30, *Prospective Earnings – Apprentices and Youthful Workers*

44.120.10, *Medical Aid*

44.120.30, *Support for Daily Living*

Board Order 155/84, *Procedure for Claimants Leaving the Province*

#### **History:**

1. Board Directive of September 14, 1983, suspends use of "statement of intent" for job search.
2. Policy on Rehabilitation Travel Allowance originated by Board Order No. 75/84 effective May 23, 1984.
3. Procedural manual for Rehabilitation Department adopted by Board Order No. 123/84 on September 12, 1984.
4. Board Directive of May 15, 1985, confirms practice for payment of bus passes/travel allowances.
5. Training manual for Vocational Rehabilitation adopted by Board Order 47/87 on March 4, 1987.
6. Policy 43.00, *Vocational Rehabilitation*, approved by Board Order 47/94, effective for all decisions on or after October 1, 1994, regardless of the date of the accident. Board Orders 75/84, 123/84, 47/87 and Board Directives dated September 14, 1983 and May 15, 1985 rescinded.
7. References Section updated in October 1996 to reflect Policy 44.30.60.
8. Policy updated for new policy names and position titles.

9. Policy deletes the requirement for sign-off by all parties on an IWRP with effect of Board Order 08/07 on February 27, 2007. Revisions include changes to reflect current practice and other non-substantive changes in language and formats.
10. Administrative guidelines were approved by the Executive Management Team on November 30, 2007.
11. Minor formatting, grammar, and wording changes were made to the policy, June 27, 2012.
12. References to Policy 44.10.30.60 and 44.80.30.30 updated to reflect revised policy names on October 10, 2018.
13. Board Order 13/19 updated this policy to delete the reference to Policy 44.101, *Financial Assistance for Self-Employment*, as that policy was repealed by Board Order 12/19 on April 16, 2019.
14. Reference to Policy 43.20.30.10, *Rehabilitation Services for Part-time Workers*, was removed as that was repealed by Board Order No. 46/19 on December 18, 2019.
15. In October 2020, references to Policies 43.10.50 and 44.80.30.10 were updated to reflect policy names. References to Policy 44.40.10, *Evidence of Disability*, were removed as that was repealed by Board Order No. 41/19 on November 28, 2019. Reference to Policy 43.20.20, *Modified and Alternate Return to Work with the Accident Employer*, was removed as that was repealed by Board Order No. 46/19 on December 18, 2019.
16. Minor formatting changes were made to the policy February 2021.

## **D. ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES**

### **Types of Services**

#### Adjustment Services:

1. Adjustment Services may include:

- a. Social Counselling - These services can be provided or facilitated by the WCB when, to treat a condition related to the compensable injury, personal, emotional or social difficulties need to be addressed so that a worker may participate successfully in the vocational services offered or available. For example, social counselling services might be provided to assist in resolving marriage or family difficulties.

Where feasible, these services will be provided by other agencies whose responsibilities include providing services of this nature. The WCB, in conjunction with the claimant will actively seek sponsorship of a program with other agencies.

If the worker is eligible for an adequate program, the WCB will not duplicate the service. Where such programs are in the WCB's opinion, either inadequate or

untimely, the WCB may provide the service utilizing internal resources or where necessary, through contracts with external agencies.

- b. Supportive Counselling - These services may be provided when the worker requires assistance in coping with the difficulties typically associated with disability. Supportive counselling helps the worker deal with feelings of fear, anger, frustration, guilt, denial, and depression. As well, supportive counselling addresses self-esteem/image, attitudinal and motivational factors. The aim of supportive counselling is to promote acceptance and development of adjustment strategies.
- c. Financial Counselling - External service resources can be accessed where the worker experiences financial planning or budgeting problems that affect his/her ability to meet financial commitments.
- d. Vocational Counselling - Through interview or clinical methods, this service is provided and/or facilitated by the vocational rehabilitation consultant to help the worker explore and identify prospective vocational and employment options. Vocational counselling should clarify various factors (i.e. life experience, values, expectations, needs, personality, interests, education, etc.) which need to be considered when establishing a vocational plan.

Vocational counselling is part of the adjustment and/or early stages of vocational assessment.

#### Vocational Assessment Services:

1. Vocational assessment may depend upon and flow from the results obtained through adjustment services, including vocational counselling.
2. Assessment, as part of the vocational rehabilitation process, is intended to help a worker evaluate her/himself from many aspects **in specific reference** to the hierarchy of objectives.
3. Adequate assessment is crucial to the development of a reasonable vocational rehabilitation goal. A goal can only be realistic if it reasonably takes into consideration the worker's functional capacity, education, work history, personal and occupational preferences or characteristics, vocational skills, transferable skills, etc.
4. Assessment includes transferable skills analysis, computerized career counselling or "job-matching" systems, aptitude/interest/achievement tests or inventories, functional capacity

evaluation, medical assessments, job analysis, situational assessment, work site assessments, and other observational techniques.

Transferable Skills Analysis - Commercial packages are used which speed up the analysis of transferable skills. These are designed to support a systematic and orderly method by which the WCB can evaluate a client's vocational potential for work. It is based on a synthesis of information derived from the worker's background history (including medical, psychological, educational, social and vocational information) and consultation with allied professionals.

5. As part of helping the worker through the assessment process, the WCB may use specific tools, techniques, and methods, including the following:

- a. Psychometric Tests/Inventories – These are formal or standardized instruments used to measure elements such as academic achievement, dexterity and co-ordination, specific or general vocational aptitudes, interests, learning styles, temperaments, etc.

It is appropriate to differentiate between psychometric and psychological tests because psychological (i.e., personality inventories) should always be administered/interpreted through a qualified psychologist. Psychological tests or inventories involve a set of standardized or control stimuli designed to elicit a representative sample of behaviour.

- i. Vocational interest inventories provide an outline of what an individual wants to do, would be satisfied doing, and/or wishes to do. These types of inventories can stimulate career exploration by surveying aspirations, activities, occupations, and self-estimates of abilities.
- ii. Vocational aptitude testing is intended to define an individual's ability to learn in terms of specific categories (i.e. verbal reasoning, numerical reasoning, space relations, language usage, etc.). Vocational aptitude tests or inventories can assist in identifying an individual's capacity to acquire proficiency within a formal or informal training setting.
- iii. Achievement tests involve measurement of an individual's current level of functioning under various categories (i.e., mathematics, reading, language, etc.).
- iv. Personality inventories are designed to measure personality traits relevant to the functioning of the individual in a wide variety of situations (i.e., employment, education, organizational, inter-personal, etc.).

Depending upon the specific inventory, there may be identification of sources of personal strengths or self-defeating styles. Further, personality inventories may measure cognitive style, general levels of personal adequacy/adjustment, values, intellectual activity, etc., for the purposes of identification and prediction.

- v. Intelligence tests are a measurement of an individual's capacity for intelligent behaviour and can be used as part of a cognitive, general psychological or neuropsychological assessment.

These tests/inventories are used solely for the purpose of ensuring appropriate vocational planning and intervention.

- b. Functional Capacity Evaluation - This is an evaluation of a worker's physical capabilities based on performance in a real or simulated work environment. This evaluation should detail maximum weight capacities for lifting, pushing, pulling, limitations if any, in standing, sitting, kneeling, walking, reaching, and bending, overall musculoskeletal status and general conditioning level.

This assessment provides guidelines regarding a return to work and vocational planning. It can be adapted for the purposes of evaluating general capabilities or capabilities specific to an identified vocational option.

- c. Medical Assessment - This service is utilized to identify work or functional capacities through evaluation by a qualified healthcare practitioner or facility.
- d. Job Analysis - This service involves the objective analysis of the content of jobs and description of the jobs in a standardized and clear manner. Job analysis provides relevant information (i.e., physical demands) to the worker, employer, and vocational rehabilitation professional.

In general, job analysis is the gathering, evaluating, and recording of accurate, objective and complete job data. Job analysis identifies and describes:

- i. What the worker does in terms of activities or functions.
  - ii. How the work is done in terms of the machines, equipment, tools, and work aids.
  - iii. The results or outcome of the work performance.
  - iv. The skills, abilities, and adaptabilities required to perform the job tasks.
  - v. The context of the work in terms of organizational factors. For example, what is the nature and extent of the worker's discretion, responsibility or accountability?  
Job analysis is appropriate when examining the prospects of a return to a specific occupation/job or establishing a vocational plan.
- e. Earning Capacity Assessment (ECA) – At various stages in the vocational rehabilitation process a worker's earning capacity is required. An earning capacity is defined as the determination of a worker's employability level established through an analysis of a worker's physical capabilities, education, training and transferable skills in comparison to the labour market. As such it is specific to a worker, the conditions of the labour market and may change over time.
  - f. Situational Assessment - This is used to assess behaviour in a real or simulated work environment and determine the workers' level of vocational functioning. This can assist in developing remedial strategies where performance-related difficulties have surfaced. Situational assessment contrasts sharply from standardized testing alternatives in that it attempts to link the performance of the worker with the environments in which performance is required.
  - g. Work Samples - This involves having the worker perform actual portion or simulations of jobs utilizing the same materials, tools and equipment used in the actual job. This service can be provided as a method of exploring vocational options before planning for or attempting to meet the full responsibilities of the position in a work environment.
6. As part of the assessment, external resources should be utilized for evaluation where specialized skills are required and not accessible internally (e.g., rehabilitation psychology, occupational therapy).

#### Employment Services:

1. Employment Services are intended to help the worker find a job. To that end, the WCB offers specialized employment services to the worker when his/her vocational plan reaches the point where re-employment is the focus.
2. Various employment services may be initiated or requested by the Case Manager / Adjudicator or Vocational Rehabilitation Consultant. The specific services include:

- a. Individualized Job Seeking Skills/Techniques - This service provides the worker with skills to locate job openings, make formal applications, and participate in an employment interview. On a one-on-one basis, this service involves training in resume preparation, job interview methods, and counselling related to employment directions.
- b. Group Workshops – This service provides a series of workshops intended to maximize the worker’s prospects of securing employment. Typical workshops include:
  - i. Resume Preparation.
  - ii. Job Search Skills – explores a common sense approach to job search, including completing job applications and preparing cover letters.
  - iii. Interview Skills – provides practice interviews, developing impression management skills and answering difficult interview questions.

Ideally, a worker should attend the group workshops at the completion of an academic or skill enhancement program specified in the IWRP. A worker’s job search entitlement usually does not begin until he/she attends the workshop or is offered a workshop and declines.

- c. Individual Marketing Plan (IMP) - An IMP is defined as “a situation in which a worker has been ‘deemed’ unemployable (incapable of competing for employment within an identified occupational group); however, continues to show genuine interest in participating in the work force.”
- d. Worksite Modification - This service provides for modification of a work site/station, based on analysis of the environment, so that the worker can perform the job. Modification can address difficulties related to work posture, sitting, materials handling, use of tools, displays, controls, heat, lighting, noise, etc.
- e. Work Experience - This placement service provides the opportunity to develop skills to ensure that the worker is qualified to compete within the established occupational group. Furthermore, it enables the worker to regain basic employment readiness skills (i.e, meeting regular responsibilities, functioning within a structured day, increasing general work tolerances, etc.) Work Experience will vary in length depending upon the required skill set  

A work experience may be used as part of the assessment and plan development process.
- f. Work Assessment - Is a tool to assist the Vocational Rehabilitation Consultant in determining whether the identified goal is appropriate and whether the worker is job-ready. Upon receiving the Request for Service, the Employment Specialist will review the worker’s skills and abilities, compensable restrictions, interests and aptitudes in an attempt to assess whether the pre-plan goal is appropriate. The worker is placed with an employer for a short duration to assess the worker’s suitability to the occupation under consideration.
- g. Job Search - Is defined as the period of time during which the worker is actively seeking employment and is capable of accepting employment as detailed in the worker’s IWRP. Each worker’s IWRP denotes a minimum length of job search entitlement (12 weeks). The minimum job search period is reviewed periodically and is published in Schedule A of WCB Policy 44.80.30.20, *Post-Accident Earnings – Deemed Earning Capacity*. The employment services provided during the job search period are geared towards the worker’s re-employment.

The Job Search period usually begins at the conclusion of the skill enhancement portion of the IWRP when the WCB is satisfied that the worker is both employment ready and job search ready. A worker is considered ready to compete for employment when he/she possess the skills to locate job openings, make formal applications and participate in an

employment interview.

- h. Training-On-The-Job (TOJ) - This placement service is designed to provide an individualized training program based on an agreement between the worker, an employer and the Employment Specialist. TOJ placements provide the worker with the opportunity to acquire specific skills. Ideally, the worker is hired by the employer upon completion of a TOJ. The nature and extent of training-on-the-job placements are dependent upon the complexity of the tasks which must be learned by the individual within the context of the worker's IWRP. The individual circumstance may lead to a cost sharing agreement between the WCB and the Employer.
- i. Job Placement Incentives - During a claimant's job search period, the Employment Specialist may offer employers a financial incentive to hire claimants. The Employment Specialist may facilitate two types of incentive placements with employers on behalf of their claimants. The incentive placements are:
  - Two Week Job Placement Incentive (TWJPI); and
  - Job Specific Training Placement Incentive

These placements can only be facilitated during the claimant's job search period.

3. When a worker is offered employment services, it is essential that he/she fully participate in all endeavours intended to promote employment or employability. The vocational rehabilitation consultant or employment specialist provide supports which enhance job seeking activities and ensure that services aimed at providing for employment are individualized on the basis of the particular client profile.

Therefore, any requirement for activity on the part of the worker should be based on an assessment of the worker's unique capabilities and the specific vocational goal.

#### Re-education, Vocational and Academic Training:

1. The vocational rehabilitation consultant helps the worker to obtain information regarding programs available through universities, community colleges, adult education centres, and other accredited training facilities.
2. The vocational rehabilitation consultant also maintains regular contact and provides required supports during the re-education, vocational or academic program. For example, the vocational rehabilitation consultant can facilitate tutorial services or enlist the assistance of available resources internal or external to the training facility.