

THE FAIR PRACTICES OFFICE

Offering independent, expert, free of charge services to injured workers, their dependents and employers

<i>Harold Robinson, LLB</i> <i>Fair Practices Commissioner</i>

Overview

The Fair Practices Office (FPO) was established following a review of the workers' compensation system in 2017. Following the review, one improvement made to the system was to create a separate agency-the FPO-to provide an independent platform for the work of appeal advisors, system navigators, and for fairness and system reviews.

Who we are

The FPO opened its doors in Edmonton and Calgary in December 2018.

The FPO is *independent* from the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB), the Appeals Commission for Alberta Workers' Compensation (Appeals Commission), and the Medical Panels Office (MPO).

The FPO's services are *free of charge* and essential to ensure fair compensation, meaningful rehabilitation for injured workers, a sustainable and affordable compensation system and to restore and strengthen trust in the workers' compensation system.

How we do our work

The FPO appeal advisors are *experts* with an average of 16 years of experience and training. FPO services are delivered with 54 full-time positions across four branches: The Navigate the System Branch, the Worker Appeals Advisor Branch, the Employer Appeals Advisor Branch, and the Fairness Review Branch.

Navigate the System Branch (NSB): NSB is responsible for supporting injured workers to navigate the workers' compensation system, including the WCB, the Appeals Commission and the MPO. It explains eligibility requirements, options, operations and practices and connects injured workers with supports and services outside the workers' compensation system.

Worker Appeals Advisor Branch (WAAB): WAAB is the largest branch within the FPO. It offers injured workers and their dependents timely, fair and independent advocacy and dispute resolution services at no additional cost to them. WAAB helps workers and their dependents through the WCB appeals processes by providing early resolution whenever feasible, education and information, advice, and representation throughout all levels of appeal, including the Dispute Resolution and Decision Review Board (DRDRB) and the Appeals Commission.

Employer Appeals Advisor Branch (EAAB): Employer appeal advisory services is new for employers. This branch provides independent and free advisory and advocacy services to employers covered by the WCB who require assistance with a claim or account matter. Like WAAB, EAAB also focuses on early resolution whenever feasible, education and information, advice, and representation throughout all levels of appeal. EAAB and its staff work separate and apart from WAAB staff.

Fairness Review Branch (FRB): The FRB serves an ombudsman-like function with a special focus on how decisions are made (but not on the decisions themselves). FRB's complaint review process is impartial and evidence based. It works with the respective system partner(s) on implementing an appropriate remedy to address any identified issue of behavioral or procedural fairness, including dealing with breaches of WCB's Code of Conduct.