

THE WCB

and My **HEARING**
LOSS CLAIM



If you're
hurt at work,
we're
here to help.

This booklet is intended to provide you with valuable information regarding hearing loss, choosing and selecting a hearing aid and your WCB claim.

If you require a hearing aid, an audiologist at a hearing loss clinic will discuss different kinds of hearing aids to help you choose the appropriate style. They will take into account your communication needs, lifestyle, type of hearing loss, ear shape and cosmetic preferences.

Hearing aids do not restore normal hearing and cannot fix the damage to your inner ear's hair cells; therefore, your ear will always have some difficulty processing sounds. Adjusting to a hearing aid takes time – as they do not eliminate background noise and you need to get accustomed to hearing different sounds.

Hearing loss clinics

- Help you choose hearing aids
- Help you understand what hearing aids are capable of doing, as well as their limitations
- Demonstrate how to put on your hearing aids and how to use the controls
- Adjust the hearing aids as necessary
- Educate you on how to care for and maintain your hearing aids
- Provide you with tips on how to improve your communication

Please contact your hearing loss clinic if you are having trouble with your hearing aids.

Adjusting to your hearing aid

A hearing aid will bring back sounds you have not heard in a long time; therefore, your brain needs time to adapt.

Regardless of the type of hearing aid you try, remember that your hearing loss clinic should offer you a trial period to allow you to adapt. This trial period is important because if you are not satisfied with the hearing aid, you may return it within the trial period. This will not affect any future entitlement to hearing aids under your WCB claim.

As you try out your new hearing aid, remember:

- you might be temporarily disturbed by background sounds
- you will get better at not noticing competing sounds as your brain adapts
- you should expect your tolerance for loud sounds to increase slowly
- you should slowly increase the time you wear the hearing aids
- you should gradually increase the number of situations in which you use your hearing aids
- active daily use of your hearing aids is necessary for adaptation to sound.

Tips to adjusting

- Visit your hearing loss clinic during the trial/adjustment period to ensure you get maximum benefit from your new hearing aids.
- Follow appropriate care and maintenance instructions for the hearing aids.
- Contact the hearing loss clinic as soon as possible if a problem arises with your hearing aids.
- Have realistic expectations about what hearing aids can and cannot do.
- Remember, you may still have problems hearing in background noise even with excellent hearing aids.

Choosing a hearing aid

What are the advantages and limitations of a hearing aid?

Hearing aids do not replace normal hearing, but should give you substantially improved speech understanding in quiet backgrounds (one-to-one, watching TV), and somewhat improved speech understanding in background noise (restaurants, group conversation). They should make listening less tiring, but may make background sounds (paper rustling, refrigerator running) sharper and more distracting. Your own voice may sound different to you. This is true for all styles of hearing aids.

What's the best type of hearing aid?

There is no one superior hearing aid or hearing aid manufacturer. The best choice for you depends on many factors, such as the type of your hearing loss, the shape of your ear, your communication needs, and your lifestyle.

Should I get one or two hearing aids?

This depends on your hearing. If you have hearing loss in both ears, you would likely benefit from a hearing aid in each ear. Your hearing loss clinic will provide a recommendation to the WCB and the WCB will provide you with written confirmation concerning your entitlement to hearing aids.

Is a smaller hearing aid better?

Not necessarily. There are advantages and disadvantages to all styles of hearing aids. Your hearing loss clinic can discuss these with you.

Is a more expensive hearing aid better?

Not necessarily. Some hearing aid components may result in a more expensive hearing aid. The benefit of any one of these components depends on many factors and may vary from person to person.

Can my hearing aid be adjusted if my hearing changes?

Usually. Hearing aids have many internal adjustments. Often your hearing aids can be reset by the hearing loss clinic or manufacturer to match a change in your hearing.

Can I wear my hearing aid at work?

If you do not work in hazardous noise you can wear your hearing aids. If you do work in hazardous noise, hearing protection should be worn instead of a hearing aid. Hearing aids are not designed to act as hearing protection and do not provide enough sound reduction to protect hearing, even when they are turned off.

How often should my hearing aid be replaced?

After five years, replacement of hearing aids may be considered if there has been further deterioration in your hearing due to ongoing employment related non exposure, your current hearing aids are not providing adequate amplification or repair of your hearing aids is no longer appropriate as determined by the WCB. If you receive replacement hearing aids, you may discard or keep your old hearing aids. However the WCB will maintain, pay for batteries, and repair only the most recently purchased hearing aids.

What happens if my hearing aid is lost, damaged or stolen?

WCB is not responsible for replacing lost or stolen hearing aids, or those damaged by causes beyond normal wear and tear.



Hearing aid maintenance

Your hearing loss clinic will explain how to use and care for your hearing aids so they will function well and remain in good repair. Here are a few things to remember:

- Turn off your hearing aids when you are not using them.
- Keep your hearing aids in their protective container when not in use.
- Use the wax guard, if provided.
- Keep hearing aids away from heat and moisture.
- Do not apply hair care products while wearing hearing aids.
- Clean hearing aids regularly as instructed.
- See your hearing loss clinic if you are experiencing problems.

Different hearing aids will consume batteries at different rates. Battery life depends on the size of batteries, the volume setting, and how long you wear the hearing aid each day.

Battery size	Life span
10	5 to 7 days
312	6 to 13 days
13	10 to 16 days
675	16 to 30 days

Batteries have a shelf life. Your hearing loss clinic should not be sending you batteries unless you have ordered them. It is suggested that a six month supply of batteries be ordered at a time.

The WCB will pay for a maximum of 100 batteries per hearing aid, per year, if a size 10 battery is used. If your hearing aid uses size 13, 312 or 675 batteries, the WCB will pay for a maximum of 60 batteries per year.

There is also a maximum price that the WCB will reimburse for each hearing aid battery. Please check with your Adjudicator if you are unsure how much the WCB will pay per battery.

Some manufacturers now offer rechargeable hearing aids. Consult with your hearing loss clinic to see which aid is right for your needs.

Questions and answers about WCB benefits

The WCB will provide you with a written decision outlining your entitlement after you submit a hearing loss claim. Some frequently asked questions are outlined below. If you have any questions concerning your claim, contact your Adjudicator.

Does the WCB provide hearing aids to everyone who has an accepted hearing loss claim?

No. The degree of hearing loss determines whether or not the WCB will approve hearing aids.

What benefits am I entitled to receive from the WCB?

If your claim is accepted and you are approved for hearing aids, you are also eligible for the cost of batteries and hearing aid repairs. The WCB pays for the repair and maintenance of only one set of hearing aids at a time.

Depending on the severity of your work related hearing loss you may also be entitled to a permanent impairment award. Your adjudicator will provide you with written confirmation of your benefit entitlement once a decision on your claim is made.

Are all hearing aids covered?

No. A wide variety of hearing aids are fully covered. Your hearing loss clinic has a list of WCB approved hearing aids.

If I decide not to get a hearing aid now, can I change my mind later?

Yes. If you are eligible for hearing aids now but decide not to get them for any personal reason, you are still eligible to receive them in the future.

What items are not covered by the WCB?

TV, radio, and telephone amplification devices, Bluetooth devices, closed-caption decoders, battery testers, and remote controls if they are provided at additional cost.

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How to Reach Us

The Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba
333 Broadway, Winnipeg, MB R3C 4W3

Email us at
wcb@wcb.mb.ca

For more information, visit
www.wcb.mb.ca

or call us at
204-954-4321

or toll free
1-855-954-4321

Report fraud and non-compliance

Call 204-888-8081 or toll free 1-844-888-8081
Email **Compliance@wcb.mb.ca**

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