

## Farming coverage

As of Jan. 1, 2016, waged, non-family workers on farms and ranches are protected under the [Workers' Compensation Act](#). This means farmers and ranchers who employ these workers need a WCB-Alberta account.

### What is workers' compensation?

Workers' compensation is disability insurance that protects employers and workers against the impact of workplace injuries and illnesses. Workers' compensation is no fault, meaning protection is provided regardless of how the workplace injury happened.

### Who is covered?

Any waged workers who are not business owners or family members of business owners are covered by workers' compensation insurance.

This includes full-time and part-time employees and any subcontractors who do not have their own workers' compensation coverage.

Two categories of workers are not required to be covered:

1. Non-waged workers, such as friends or neighbours who come to help out.
2. Farm owners and family members of farm owners, even if they receive a wage. This means a shareholder of a corporation or a partner in a partnership where all shareholders/partners are family members; a sole proprietor and their waged family members; and waged shareholders of a corporation in which all shareholders are family members. Family members include, whether by blood, marriage, adoption or by virtue of an adult interdependent relationship:
  - Immediate family (i.e., spouses or adult interdependent partners, children, parents, siblings)
  - Extended family (i.e., grandparents, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, first cousins)
  - Any other person prescribed to be a family member

We understand that farms and ranches have a variety of work arrangements. Simply put: If you employ waged workers,

non-waged workers and family members, you are required to open an account only for the waged workers who are not family members.

Farmers and ranchers can purchase optional workers' compensation coverage for themselves, their families and non-waged workers.

### When are workers covered?

Workers' compensation insurance protects your workers in the event of a work-related injury or illness. To be considered work related, the injury must arise out of and occur in the course of employment.

If someone on your farm is injured and you aren't sure if the injury is work related, it's always best to submit a claim. We will review the information and be able to confirm if the injury is covered.

### Key benefits of workers' compensation insurance

- **For workers:** Compensation benefits for work-related injuries include immediate replacement of lost wages and comprehensive medical and rehabilitation services.
- **For employers:** Liability coverage means farm and ranch owners and their waged workers are protected from legal action should a worker be injured on the job.
- **Personal coverage:** Optional personal coverage is designed to grant an employer or director (if you have an incorporated company) the same protection against personal wage loss and legal action as a worker.

### The cost of coverage

WCB sets premiums for different kinds of businesses every year based on risk and actual claims experience. We have developed specific classifications for farming and ranching operations to make sure we're grouping businesses together that have similar operations and risks.

Industry rates range from \$1.70 to \$2.97 per \$100 of assessable earnings based on the nature of your business. Your specific premium rate will be determined once we've reviewed your account application.

If your assessable earnings (these are the earnings based on your workers' gross earnings before deductions) are \$50,000 per year, here are some examples of the premiums you could expect to pay, depending on your rate:

- At a rate of \$1.70, you would pay \$850 per year ( $\$50,000 \times \$1.70/\$100$ )—this rate applies to greenhouses/market gardens, mushroom producers/bait farms, and agri-tourism farms.
- At a rate of \$1.75, you would pay \$875 per year ( $\$50,000 \times \$1.75/\$100$ )—this rate applies to hog producers, poultry/egg producers, goat/sheep producers, fishing/fish or fur farms, and apiaries.
- At a rate of \$2.25, you would pay \$1,125 per year ( $\$50,000 \times \$2.25/\$100$ )—this rate applies to hay/grain/crop farming, harvesting/baling-custom, forage, and peat moss processing.
- At a rate of \$2.97, you would pay \$1,485 per year ( $\$50,000 \times \$2.97/\$100$ )—this rate applies to beef producers, feed lots, livestock auctions/stockyards, dairy farms, elk/bison producers, llama/alpaca producers, and riding academies/horse stables.

As a farm or ranch owner or director, you have the option of purchasing workers' compensation for yourself or any other director in your business. You determine the amount of earnings to cover (subject to minimum and maximum levels).

The personal coverage amount you choose should reflect your annual employment earnings, as this amount will be used to determine your compensation in the event of a work-related injury.

The cost for personal coverage is charged at the same rate as your workers. For example, if you are a poultry producer (rate of \$1.75) and purchased minimum personal coverage (\$31,300 in 2019), the cost would be \$547.75 for a full year ( $\$31,300 \times \$1.75/\$100$ ).

## What if you have alternate coverage for your workers?

Workers' compensation coverage for waged workers is required. This means you need to open a WCB account to cover your waged, non-family workers, even if you previously purchased coverage for your workers through a private insurer.

You have the option to purchase personal coverage with WCB or private insurance to cover yourself. You can also purchase WCB coverage or private insurance to cover any non-waged workers or family members on your farm.

If you already have private insurance for your waged, non-family workers, please contact your insurance broker to help you adjust your private coverage appropriately.

## Getting started

If you employ waged, non-family workers on your farm or ranch, you have to sign up for WCB coverage.

If you don't have waged, non-family workers yet, but expect to in the future, you have 15 days from their first day of work to set up your account. [Visit our website](#) to sign up and receive more information about your coverage and premiums.

Our website also has [additional information](#) on WCB coverage and what it means to you and your workers, information on our various incentive programs that can help you reduce your premiums, and directions on how to report an injury.

## Need help?

You can contact WCB's Employer Account Services directly at 780-498-3999 (Edmonton), 403-517-6000 (Calgary), or toll-free at 1-866-922-9221.

