

Health Care Advice

ASSISTIVE DEVICES AND EQUIPMENT

Adjustable Beds

This item is primarily used for workers who are severely impaired. Workers are considered severely impaired if their disabilities/impairments are:

- permanent and have been rated for either permanent disability (PD) benefits totaling at least 100%, or non-economic loss (NEL) benefits totaling at least 60%, or
- likely to be permanent in the opinion of a WSIB medical consultant, and are likely to meet one of the criteria above (Operational Policy 17-06-02).

General Description

An adjustable bed has features that allow an individual to move and alternate their position while in the bed. The head, foot and/or height of the bed can be adjusted independently. These beds are often referred to as “hospital beds.” In some cases, adjustable beds may require a specialized pressure redistribution surface to aid in the prevention and care of pressure sores. (Please see Health Care Advice, Support Surfaces.)

Guiding Principles

An adjustable bed may be appropriate if a worker is severely impaired due to the work-related injury/disease and:

- requires frequent changes in position while in bed, and has significant difficulty doing so without mechanical assistance, and/or
- is unable to transfer on or off a regular bed independently.

Prior to considering an adjustable bed, it should be determined that simpler, more cost-effective devices cannot meet the worker’s needs.

Note: Adjustable beds are considered when clinically necessary. Operational policy does not allow for the purchase of standard furniture, beds or basic orthopaedic mattresses.

Relevant Operational Policies

Entitlement to Health Care, 17-01-02
Independent Living Allowance, 17-06-02
Independent Living Devices, 17-06-03

NOTICE: This document is intended to assist WSIB decision-makers in reaching consistent decisions in similar fact situations and to supplement applicable WSIB policies and guidelines as set out in the Operational Policy Manual (OPM). This document is **not a policy** and in the event of a conflict between this document and an OPM policy or guideline, the decision-maker will rely on the latter.

Considerations

What is needed	WSIB considers
Information that the worker requires changes in position while in bed, and/or is unable to transfer on or off a regular bed independently due to the work-related injury/disease.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The difficulties must be due to the work-related injury/disease.• Work related injury/disease that could require the use of a hospital bed may include:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- severe burns,- mesothelioma,- spinal cord injury,- hemiplegia,- lung cancer,- lower extremity amputations,- recurrent bed sores and/or ulceration. <p>Note: This is not an exhaustive list of possible conditions.</p>
Written information from a health professional recommending an adjustable bed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A written recommendation and rationale is required from a health professional.
Information regarding expected length of time bed will be required.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Certain conditions may indicate a temporary need for an adjustable bed (e.g., fractures, recovery from surgery).• If condition is temporary and expected to improve, rental of an adjustable bed may be more appropriate.

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Functional Information and Review of Recommendations

If not already on file, functional information is required to determine if an adjustable bed is necessary, appropriate and sufficient for the worker’s work-related injury/disease.

If a health professional is already involved with the worker’s care, he/she may be able to provide the required information. Alternatively, a referral could be made to a health professional by the WSIB Service Delivery Team to obtain the required information.

The functional information is submitted to the Service Delivery Team for review. This information will:

- clarify the clinical rationale for the bed, and
- recommend specific features required for the worker’s needs.

Functional information required	WSIB considers
<p>What are the safety and/or clinical concerns with the worker’s present bed?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional rationale for why worker may require changes in position in bed may include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - management of swelling/edema, - respiratory complications, - concerns about skin breakdown, - current bed places the worker and/or caregiver at risk of further injury, - injury prevents the worker from moving frequently and this cannot be done without mechanical assistance.
<p>What simpler and more cost-effective alternative devices were considered and why do they not meet the worker’s needs?</p> <p>Alternate devices may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • trapeze bar, bed rails (for repositioning or transfers), • sturdy pole, ceiling lift, bed blocks (for transfers), • bed ladder (for repositioning), • pillows, bed wedge/roll (promotes proper positioning to decrease swelling or pain). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More cost-effective alternate devices should be evaluated for their potential use. • WSIB will consider payment of the most cost-effective device that is necessary, appropriate and sufficient for the work-related injury/disease.
<p>Was there a trial of the adjustable bed, if appropriate? What are the proposed controls and features?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worker should have tried the adjustable bed (or a similar one) to ensure that it meets the worker’s needs, if appropriate. • This typically occurs at the vendor’s showroom if possible.
<p>Is the worker able to safely and independently (if appropriate) use the adjustable bed?</p> <p>This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • details regarding the worker’s ability to reposition and transfer on and off the bed, • identification of any cognitive/perceptual concerns, • amount of assistance required by a caregiver, if applicable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The worker must be deemed safe to use the adjustable bed, or if assistance is required, ensure that a caregiver is available.

Functional information required	WSIB considers
<p>Is the recommended bed compatible with other assistive devices in the home?</p> <p>Other assistive devices may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • transfer lift, • trapeze bar, • over bed table, • wheelchair, • support surfaces. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The bed should be compatible with the existing assistive devices, or any required changes to existing equipment should be identified.

Functional information should include:

- a description of the worker's current condition, level of function and daily living situation,
- details about the worker's physical abilities and limitations related to sitting, standing, walking and transfers, and
- how the recommended bed will enhance performance of daily living activities.

Home Compatibility

Information required	WSIB considers
<p>Does the adjustable bed fit into current accommodations?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider entitlement to a model which corresponds to the size of bed the worker currently has (e.g., double bed to accommodate spouse). • Consider size of bed required for worker's needs (e.g., weight, height, mobility). <p>Example: Individuals with paraplegia may need a larger bed to be able to complete transfers, turning, and self-care activities such as dressing.</p>

If the available information is not sufficient, consult with the health professional who provided the information for clarification.

Maintenance/Repair

The WSIB pays for maintenance, normal inspection, repair and replacement of independent living devices (that cost over \$250) unless the damage is due to misuse or to not following the warranty or operating instructions. Workers must ensure proper maintenance is carried out.

Health Services

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