

# NOISE INDUCED HEARING LOSS (NIHL POC) PROGRAM OF CARE

## Questions and Answers for Hearing Health Care Providers

### NIHL POC Delivery

#### 1. *What is the updated NIHL POC?*

The NIHL POC outlines evidence-based services to reduce the impact of hearing loss by providing hearing aids to improve workers' quality of life.

The updated NIHL POC is for workers with an approved claim for occupational NIHL claim who require hearing services for their new hearing aid(s) on or after August 15, 2016.

For workers who have started the NIHL POC prior to August 15, 2016 please follow and complete the previous NIHL POC guidelines. For further information, please refer to [www.wsib.on.ca](http://www.wsib.on.ca)

#### 2. *Do all workers require a new audiogram?*

Most workers will have undergone an audiometric assessment which includes an audiogram when they submit their NIHL claim. Therefore, a repeat audiometric assessment is required **only** if it has not been conducted in the last 6 months.

If a new or repeat audiometric assessment is required, follow the guidelines in the Reference Guide and please submit a copy of the audiogram to WSIB.

#### 3. *Do all workers need a prescription for a hearing aid from an audiologist or a physician?*

Yes, a prescription for a hearing aid from an audiologist or a physician is required and must be kept in the worker's record. WSIB may request a copy of the prescription at a later date.

#### 4. *Do I need to get authorization from the WSIB before starting the NIHL POC?*

If there is an approved NIHL claim where a new hearing aid is required, the hearing health care provider can start the NIHL POC without specific approval from the WSIB.

#### 5. *What documentation do I need to submit to the WSIB after Dispensing and Fitting of the hearing aid?*

Please submit the manufacturer's invoice to WSIB within 5 business days. Please ensure that the worker's full name and WSIB claim number are on the invoice.

#### 6. *What should I do if a worker does not return for the Progress Follow-up visit?*

In the event that the worker does not return for the Progress Follow-up visit, submit the NIHL POC Hearing Aid Outcome Report and indicate that the worker has not returned. Use the date of the report as the service date.

#### 7. *What documentation do I need to submit to the WSIB after the Progress Follow-up visit?*

After the Progress Follow-up visit, please submit the following to the WSIB within 5 business days:

- NIHL POC Hearing Aid Outcome report and Hearing Aid Outcome Questionnaire
- Manufacturer's invoice - If a worker requires a different hearing aid since the initial submission of the invoice after Dispensing and Fitting

#### 8. *When should verification of the hearing aid be completed?*

Verification using real ear measurements will be completed at the fitting and will be kept by the hearing health care provider in the worker's health record and may be requested by the WSIB periodically. Real ear to coupler difference (RECD) values are included in the real ear measures.

#### 9. *How do I provide hearing aid use data (data logging) to the WSIB?*

Please record hearing aid use data from the programming screen and provide it on the NIHL POC Hearing Aid Outcome Report.

#### 10. *How do I submit the required documentation to the WSIB?*

Please submit completed reports and documents:  
by fax 416.344.4684 or toll free 1.888.313.7373  
by mail 200 Front Street West., Toronto, ON, M5V 3J1

## NIHL POC Billing

### 1. *What does the NIHL POC fee include?*

The NIHL POC covers all hearing services for the worker related to their hearing aid(s) during the first year of use. The primary components of the NIHL POC includes the following:

#### **Service Block 1**

- Assessment (including new or repeat audiogram)
- Dispensing and Fitting
- Provision of batteries for the first year of hearing aid use
- Initial Follow-Up (2-4 weeks post-fitting)

#### **Service Block 2**

- Progress Follow-Up (90 days post-fitting)
- Additional follow-up visits for up to 365 days post-assessment if needed

#### **Reporting**

- NIHL POC Hearing Aid Outcome Report.

### 2. *Are there new billing instruction for the updated NIHL POC?*

Yes, the billing instructions are different from the previous NIHL POC. The service date for Block 1 should be the date of the assessment. The date of assessment is defined as the worker's initial visit where activities such as evaluation of communication needs, pre-fitting counselling and selection of hearing aid(s) are conducted. Block 1 is billed after the dispensing and fitting of hearing aid(s).

The service date for Block 2 should be the date of the progress follow-up visit (90 days post fitting).

#### **Example**

- Worker completes initial assessment on Sept 1st
- The dispensing and fitting of the hearing aids takes place on Sept 15th
- Bill Block 1 after the dispensing and fitting, using the initial assessment date - Sept 1st
- An initial follow-up occurs on Sept 30th
- The worker returns for a progress follow-up on Dec 1st
- Bill Block 2 using the date of the progress follow-up as service date - Dec 1st

### 3. *Do I need to bill separately for programming?*

Programming is completed during Dispensing and Fitting, Initial Follow-up, Progress Follow-up and additional follow-up visits. Programming fees are included in the NIHL POC Service Block 1 and Block 2 fees.

### 4. *How do I bill for batteries?*

It is expected that the worker will be provided with sufficient batteries for the first year of hearing aid use. Battery fees are included in NIHL POC fees.

#### **(a) When should I dispense batteries?**

Batteries may be dispensed at any time during the first year of hearing aid use. The provider should consider the specific product and worker requirements.

For example, at the dispensing and fitting the worker may be provided with sufficient batteries to last until their next scheduled appointment. Alternately, the worker may be dispensed with sufficient quantity to last multiple visits.

### 5. *Do I need to bill separately for any additional follow-up visits if required in the first year?*

The NIHL POC Service Block 2 fee includes additional clinic visits up to 365 days post-assessment as needed.

### 6. *In my clinic, both the Audiologist and Hearing Instrument Practitioner are involved and deliver care to the same worker. How should I bill?*

Only one hearing health care provider can bill for the NIHL POC. Distribution of the NIHL POC fee will result through agreements between the two hearing health care providers.

## Other questions

### 1. *A worker requires hearing aid services. I was not the original hearing health care provider. What is the process that should be followed?*

The WSIB understands that workers may change hearing health care providers for a variety of reasons. For hearing health care providers who did not provide the worker's assessment, please contact the WSIB prior to providing services.

### 2. *If the right and left hearing aids are not dispensed at the same time and the worker needs a hearing aid for the other side, what is the process?*

Please discuss the situation with the Health Care Payment Representative.

**3. A worker loses his/her hearing aids. How can I assist the worker?**

Lost and damaged hearing aids are usually covered by the manufacturer's warranty as procured through the WSIB.

If the manufacturer's warranty has lapsed, please contact the Health Care Payment Representative. All requests for early replacement must follow the hearing aid replacement process.

**4. If hearing aids are damaged and require services, what is the process?**

In most cases, repairs are covered under the manufacturer's warranty. The cost of in-house repairs is included as part of the NIHL POC in the first year of use.

The WSIB may authorize a replacement before five years when a hearing aid is beyond repair unless there is evidence that the device was deliberately damaged, misused or the operating instructions were not properly followed.

The WSIB may also consider a hearing aid beyond repair in situations such as those where high repair costs make replacement a more appropriate alternative, or the nature/extent of the damage prevents repair.

**5. Who can I call if I have further questions?**

For further enquiries about the NIHL POC, please call the Health Care Professional Access Line at 416.344.4526 or toll free 1.800.569.7919, Monday to Friday.

For general enquiries, status of claim, billing and payment, or to speak to a Health Care Payment Representative call 1.800.387.0750.