

Operational
PolicySection
Independent Living and Quality of LifeSubject
Independent Living Devices

Policy

A worker with a serious injury or illness that permanently impacts their ability to communicate, be mobile or engage in self-care is entitled to an eligible independent living device to restore that ability, or to prevent further injury when carrying out the activity.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the independent living devices covered under this policy, the criteria for entitlement and payment, when maintenance and repair are covered and when entitlement may be reviewed.

Guidelines

This policy applies in conjunction with 17-06-01, Independent Living and Quality of Life Measures - Overview and Definitions.

Definitions

For definitions of **activities of daily living (ADLs)**, **instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs)**, **independent living** and **serious injury or illness**, refer to 17-06-01, Independent Living and Quality of Life Measures - Overview and Definitions. For a definition of **health care practitioner** and **health professional**, refer to 17-01-02, Entitlement to Health Care.

Entitlement criteria

A worker is entitled to an independent living device if all of the following criteria are met:

- the worker has a serious injury or illness as defined in 17-06-01, Independent Living and Quality of Life Measures - Overview and Definitions, that results in or is likely to result in a permanent impairment
- the worker is permanently impacted or likely to be permanently impacted by the injury or illness in their ability to: communicate, be mobile or engage in self-care
- the device will restore (partially or fully) that ability and/or prevent further injury or health complications to the worker in carrying out their activities of daily living or instrumental activities of daily living, and
- the other health care benefits and services available under the insurance plan do not adequately restore the ability or prevent further injury or health complications.

The claim file information must clearly identify how the independent living device accomplishes one of the objectives described in this policy. This includes identifying:

- how the worker's ability to communicate, be mobile or engage in self-care has been impacted and how the device helps restore (partially or fully) the ability and in doing so facilitates the worker's independent living, and/or
- the potential future injury or health complications and how the device will prevent these.

**Operational
Policy**

Section

Independent Living and Quality of Life

Subject

Independent Living Devices**Eligible devices**

Independent living devices enable a worker with a serious injury or illness to better meet, on their own, a permanent independent living need. Independent living devices considered under this policy are those that increase the worker's ability to:

- communicate, be mobile or engage in self-care, or
- prevent further injury or health complications due to the serious injury or illness.

Independent living devices may:

- require modification, customization, fitting, precise sizing or adjustment
- require a pharmacist or health professional to oversee the selection and purchase of the product, or
- be off-the-shelf.

The device must meet all the following criteria:

- is a necessary, appropriate and sufficient means of meeting the objectives of providing independent living devices outlined in this policy
- does not duplicate an objective served by another benefit, service, modification or device provided to the worker under the insurance plan
- is a safe and effective means of restoring function or preventing further injury or health complications
- is reasonable in terms of costs and anticipated benefits
- is cost-effective considering alternatives on the market and rental options
- meets performance standards generally accepted by medical or clinical rehabilitation specialists
- is certified by Canadian Standards Association International or meets other applicable safety standards, and
- is prescribed or recommended by a health care practitioner.

The WSIB does not consider devices and equipment for hobbies to be independent living devices. The WSIB considers devices or equipment for hobbies as a measure to improve quality of life under 17-06-09, Quality of Life Benefits and Allowance.

Other health care items

Separate from independent living devices, a worker may be entitled to any of the following:

- assistive devices and/or prostheses to address functional loss and/or anatomical loss resulting from the serious injury or illness, refer to 17-07-01, Prescription Eyewear, 17-07-04, Hearing Devices and 17-07-05, Orthopaedic, and
- off-the-shelf health care equipment and supplies required for treatment or functional aid during recovery or to improve or maintain independent living, refer to 17-07-06, Health Care Equipment and Supplies and 17-01-07, Preferred Supplier of Health Care Products and Services.

**Operational
Policy**

Section

Independent Living and Quality of Life

Subject

Independent Living Devices

Items such as hot tubs, pools, all-terrain vehicles, tractors, snowplows and riding lawnmowers are not approved as the WSIB does not consider such items to be appropriate measures to meet the objectives of providing independent living devices. In cases where:

- a worker's ability to communicate, be mobile or engage in self-care is affected by the serious injury or illness and this results in the inability to safely carry out an ADL or IADL, and
- other available benefits, services or items/devices do not adequately address the worker's inability to safely carry out the ADL or IADL,

the WSIB will consider allowing one of the generally excluded items on an exceptional basis.

In these exceptional cases, the WSIB considers both of the following:

- whether any of the generally excluded items are necessary, appropriate and sufficient to enable the worker to carry out the ADL or IADL, and
- whether the requested item will enable the worker to safely perform the ADL or IADL.

Hospital beds

The WSIB may authorize a hospital bed or specialty mattress as an independent living device where, due to the serious injury or illness, the worker:

- requires assistance moving or alternating positions while in bed
- requires assistance transferring in and out of bed
- is unable to access their usual sleep location
- requires caregiving while in bed that is facilitated by the features of a hospital bed or specialty mattress, or
- experiences severe pain, as may be experienced by workers in a palliative state, that is partially eased by a hospital bed or specialty mattress.

Medical conditions that require the use of a hospital bed or specialty mattress may include, but are not limited to, severe burns, lung cancer, mesothelioma, lower extremity amputations (not digits), spinal cord injuries, cardiopulmonary disorders and pressure sores that do not respond to other treatment.

The WSIB generally considers authorizing hospital beds where the head, foot or height of the bed are independently adjustable. The WSIB generally considers authorizing specialty mattresses that are designed for the purpose of reducing or relieving pressure. Additional features such as heating or vibration may be approved if the WSIB determines they are medically necessary forms of treatment for the worker.

The WSIB does not consider authorizing beds or specialty mattresses for general comfort, sleep preferences or pain other than as described in this policy (e.g., standard mattresses, basic orthopaedic mattresses).

**Operational
Policy**

Section

Independent Living and Quality of Life

Subject

Independent Living Devices

Entitlement to a hospital bed or specialty mattress includes the purchase of specialty sheets, if required. This does not include standard sheets (e.g., double, queen, king).

Where a hospital bed is not available in the same size as the worker's current bed, the WSIB may consider providing a hospital bed and a companion bed.

Pre-authorization

The WSIB must pre-approve the independent living device. The WSIB is not responsible for reimbursing the cost of an independent living device where WSIB approval is not obtained in advance and the WSIB does not subsequently approve the device. In some cases, the WSIB may require workers to purchase a device from an approved vendor.

The WSIB processes reimbursement upon submission of receipts from workers or invoices from vendors.

Maintenance, repair and replacement

The costs associated with the normal maintenance, inspection, repair and/or replacement of independent living devices are the responsibility of the WSIB unless damage is due to misuse or failure to follow the warranty requirements or recommended operating instructions. The worker will be responsible for ensuring appropriate maintenance is carried out as required. The WSIB may reimburse the worker for maintenance costs if the appropriate receipts are provided.

Material change and review

A worker must advise the WSIB of any material change that may affect their entitlement to benefits and services under the insurance plan, such as ongoing entitlement to an independent living device.

Where there is a material change or a request to review entitlement, the WSIB determines if a review is required to assess ongoing entitlement to an independent living device. Entitlement to the maintenance, inspection, repair and/or replacement of a device applies only where there is ongoing entitlement to the device.

As part of a material change review, all independent living benefits and services the worker is receiving may be reviewed together to ensure that the worker is receiving the necessary, appropriate and sufficient complement of benefits and services to facilitate their independent living.

For more information about material changes, refer to 22-01-02, Material Change in Circumstances - Worker.

**Operational
Policy**

Section
Independent Living and Quality of Life

Subject
Independent Living Devices

Transitional provisions

In claims with an accident prior to September 21, 2026, where the initial entitlement decision is made on or after September 21, 2026, this policy also applies to purchases prior to September 21, 2026.

Application date

This policy applies to all decisions made on or after September 21, 2026, for purchases on or after September 21, 2026, for all accidents. This policy also applies to purchases prior to September 21, 2026, in the claims identified in the "Transitional provisions" section.

Document history

This document replaces 17-06-03 dated October 14, 2009.

This document was previously published as:

17-06-03 dated October 12, 2004

17-06-03 dated June 15, 1999.

References**Legislative authority**

Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997

Sections 32, 33

Workers' Compensation Act, Revised Statutes of Ontario 1990

Section 50

Approval

Approved by the President and CEO on June 23, 2026.