



This factsheet has been prepared for general information purposes. It is not a legal document. Please refer to the *Workers Compensation Act* and the *Rehabilitation Services and Claims Manual, Volumes I and II* for purposes of interpretation and application of the law.

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ARTHRITIS

Please read the factsheet *Occupational Diseases: An Introduction* for basic information about workers' compensation for occupational diseases.

Can I get workers' compensation for arthritis?

WorkSafeBC does not generally accept osteoarthritic degeneration (arthritis) either as the immediate result of an **injury** or as an **occupational disease**. It is considered part of the aging process. However, you may be able to get compensation if a personal injury has "activated" or "aggravated" your arthritis which would not have been a problem for months or years.

For example, if several years ago you had a WorkSafeBC claim for a knee injury and your doctor now says that you have arthritis in the knee because of the injury, you can claim the arthritis as part of the claim. You will need a supportive letter from your doctor or specialist linking your arthritis to the work injury or incident.

Another example could be if you had a knee injury years ago that did not occur at work. Your knee has never bothered you since that injury, but then you re-injure the same knee at work. The medical evidence shows you have arthritis. You do not fully recover, and your doctor(s) say that the work injury made the arthritis act up when otherwise it may not have bothered you for years.

In such a case, you can claim for an **aggravation** of the arthritis, but not for the arthritis itself. You will need a supportive opinion from your doctor or specialist showing that your work injury made the arthritis worse or painful before its time. In other words, if you could have gone for months or years without a problem if not for the work injury or activity, you can make a WorkSafeBC claim.

Rarely, WorkSafeBC may accept a claim for arthritis as a direct result of prolonged job duties. For example, WorkSafeBC accepted a claim from a physiotherapist who suffered from osteoarthritis in both thumbs **due to the nature of the work** without a specific injury. If your case is similar, it may be accepted.

For more information:

Website: gov.bc.ca/workersadvisers



Lower Mainland/Fraser Valley/Kootenays: 1-800-663-4261
Northern & Central Interior: 1-800-663-6695
Vancouver Island: 1-800-661-4066

What if I disagree with a decision?

If you do not agree with a WorkSafeBC decision, you have the right to request a review. You must file your request for review within **90 days**. If you disagree with the Review Division decision, you have **30 days** to file an appeal to the Workers' Compensation Appeal Tribunal.