HEARING SERVICES FAQ

for WorkSafeNB Hearing Services Providers

1. **Does the Standing Offer Price and Exception List for Hearing Aids still apply?**
   The Standing Offer Price and Exception List for Hearing Aids, negotiated with manufacturers for WorkSafeNB along with their provincial counterparts in PEI is still in effect. It can be found here.

2. **Will the Standing Offer Price and Exception List for Hearing Aids ever change?**
   Yes, the lists will continue to evolve. The version on the WorkSafeNB website is updated regularly.

3. **What happens when a hearing service was authorized by WorkSafeNB before November 2, 2020, but the hearing service will not be delivered or completed before this date?**
   WorkSafeNB will process authorization requests based on the device and pricing standards in place at the time WorkSafeNB granted the authorization approval.

4. **What happens when a quote for hearing services was submitted for WorkSafeNB before November 2, 2020, but the quote was not authorized before this date?**
   All quotes and/or authorization requests received by WorkSafeNB on or before November 2, 2020, but not authorized, accepted or processed by WorkSafeNB, will be processed based on the standards in place as of November 2, 2020.

5. **Is there a list of approved hearing service providers for provision of hearing services for WorkSafeNB and is it subject to updates?**
   A list of approved hearing service providers, by geographic area within New Brunswick, is available on WorkSafeNB's website. The list of approved hearing service providers will evolve as new locations are added and others are retired.

6. **What is the process for a WorkSafeNB- approved hearing services provider to be paid for services?**
   Hearing service providers must submit to WorkSafeNB their invoices for payment. The invoices will be verified against the approved fee schedule that follows and against the *WorkSafeNB Form HA-01 Hearing Aid Fitting and Service Report* and *WorkSafeNB Form HA-02 – Exception Report*, as applicable.

7. What is the approved fee schedule for hearing services?

APPROVED FEE SCHEDULE

Respondents should note that all fees below are inclusive of any applicable taxes

1. Full Diagnostic Audiometric Report (if pre-authorized by WorkSafeNB)	$100
2. Fitting and Maintenance Fee (per hearing aid device) • first 24 months for initial and new aid	$450
3. Support and Maintenance Fee (per hearing aid device) • annually, following first 24 months	$90
4. Batteries (maximum annual supply of 60 batteries per hearing aid device, excepting hearing aid devices requiring size 10 batteries, which are allowed an annual supply of 100)	$1 per battery
5. Manufacturer Repairs Fee, per service, outside of warranty period Warranty = two years for new hearing aids Warranty = one year for manufacturer repair	Manufacturer's invoice plus $70, plus shipping
6. Hearing re-evaluation • only after first year anniversary of new hearing aid(s)	$60
7. Copy of injured worker's file requested by WorkSafeNB and provided by the respondent within five business days of WorkSafeNB's request.	$50

8. How will an injured worker access hearing services?

Once their hearing loss claim is approved, WorkSafeNB will notify the injured worker of the list of WorkSafeNB-approved hearing service providers in the injured worker's geographical location, entitlement, and the terms and conditions of the contract between WorkSafeNB and the approved service provider.

WorkSafeNB issues a claim number to cover the cost of the hearing aid device to a hearing service provider, based on the Standing Offer Price and Exception List for hearing aids, as determined appropriate by WorkSafeNB. Approved hearing service providers will be issued an individual service provider payee number upon contract agreement.

9. How is the selection and ordering of hearing aids determined?

The selection of the hearing aid device from the Standing Offer List and Exceptions List for Hearing Aids should, as guideline, have stable reserve gain of approximately 10 dB at the time of first fitting. The Standing Offer Price and Exceptions List for Hearing Aids is available online.

If an injured worker's medical need requires a hearing aid device not on the Standing Offer Price List for Hearing Aids, WorkSafeNB will review the request on a case-by-case basis. Hearing service providers must complete and remit to *WorkSafeNB Form HA-02 – Exception Report* for review and approval in these circumstances. If the injured worker chooses a more expensive alternative hearing aid device than what WorkSafeNB's audiologist consultant has determined is sufficient to meet the medical need, the hearing service provider must invoice the injured worker directly for the difference.

10. What does the $450 fitting fee include?

The fitting maintenance fee is a bundled fee that is expected to cover two years of service and maintenance, per hearing device, from the hearing service provider selected by the injured worker. Therefore, WorkSafeNB does not compensate hearing services providers for each client visit.

Hearing service providers must provide all the services outlined below when fitting (a) hearing aid device(s) and will be paid for the fitting fee as outlined in the fee schedule shown in #7.

The Fitting-Maintenance Fee and Support and Maintenance Fee will cover the following maintenance services:

a. Minimum of two cleanings every year for five-year period.
b. Assessment of problems. This may also include assessment related to manufacturer repairs.
c. Minor in-house repairs, which include, but are not limited to adjustments, reprogramming, removal of wax, cleaning, repair/replacement of battery doors, ear hooks, tubing, and wax guards. Minor repairs are expected to be minimized by appropriate training and education of the injured worker during the fitting process. Hearing aid devices with repeated repairs will be monitored and audited against the manufacturer's serial number. The hearing services provider must identify on any invoice and the *WorkSafeNB Form HA-01 – Hearing Aid Fitting and Service Report* what service was provided and the serial number of the applicable hearing aid device.
d. Counselling.

Fitting-Maintenance Fee includes real ear measurements, ear molds, ear impressions, ear mold blowers, Dri-Aid Kits and other consumables.

11. What is the ear mold/hearing device remake fee?

If an injured worker requires a new ear mold because it no longer fits after the two-year hearing device warranty expires, WorkSafeNB will remit only once over a subsequent one-year time period an inclusive flat fee payment of $90 per device to the hearing service provider. The hearing service provider must complete and submit *WorkSafeNB Form HA-01 – Hearing Aid Fitting and Service Report*.

12. What is the manufacturer repair fee?

Manufacturer repairs are applicable after the hearing aid device warranty period of two years has expired and an injured worker's hearing aid device must be sent to the manufacturer because it has died, has internal feedback, is noisy or hissing, requires a circuit or shell change, or does not meet the manufacturer's electroacoustic specifications.

13. Are hearing aid batteries supplied to injured workers by hearing services providers annually?

Hearing services providers will provide an annual supply of batteries. The quantity of batteries supplied, 100 annually per device for size 10 batteries and 60 annually per device for all other battery sizes, must be clearly indicated on the invoice, and the maximum price WorkSafeNB will pay is $1 per battery. Suppliers will be responsible for managing inventory of batteries and tracking batteries dispensed to WorkSafeNB clients.

Suppliers may invoice WorkSafeNB annually for the maximum amount of batteries per client served. WorkSafeNB does not pay for battery supplies that exceed the annual maximum quantity.

The hearing services provider must complete and submit *WorkSafeNB Form HA-01-Hearing Aid Fitting and Service Report* when supplying batteries.

14. What is an initial hearing test?

A hearing test is part of the worker's application for workers' compensation benefits. It is required to determine entitlement to compensable occupational noise-induced hearing loss resulting from hazardous noise levels in and out of the workplace, or within a certain specified time from the end of exposure to hazardous noise levels in and out of the workplace. The initial hearing test must be performed by a qualified supplier.

15. What is a full diagnostic hearing assessment and in what circumstances will WorkSafeNB pay for one?

A full diagnostic hearing assessment is not part of the bundled fitting maintenance fee. It may, therefore, be separately invoiced at $100 per worker. WorkSafeNB pays for the initial full diagnostic hearing assessments to determine the injured worker's hearing loss only when requested by WorkSafeNB. Additional assessments are only considered when pure-tone evaluations indicate a significant change in the injured worker's hearing loss. A significant change in hearing is defined as a minimum of 20 dB HL in three or more of the octave frequencies between 500 Hz and 4000 Hz.

A full diagnostic hearing assessment must include:

- A clinical history of hearing problems.
- Otoscopic evaluation and report.
- Pure-tone air conduction testing to include the following frequencies where appropriate: 250,500, 1,000, 2,000, 3,000, 4,000, 6,000, and 8,000Hz. Inter-octave frequencies where the difference between adjacent octave frequencies is 20 dB or greater.
- Unmasked bone conduction thresholds when abnormal air conduction thresholds exist at any frequency from 250 Hz to 4,000 Hz.
- Appropriate masking must be used for both air and bone conduction testing, when necessary.
- Speech audiometry, including speech reception threshold testing, determination of uncomfortable levels, most comfortable levels and speech discrimination testing level.
- Assessment of the function of the middle ear system or impedance audiometry, including acoustic reflexes.
- Any other tests required for assessing hearing aid candidacy.
- Detailed written assessment report.
- Legible completion of full diagnostic hearing assessment report to be signed and dated by individual performing the test.

The hearing services provider must complete and send to *WorkSafeNB Form HA-01 – Hearing Aid Fitting and Service Report*.

16. What is a hearing re-evaluation, and when are they paid for by WorkSafeNB?

A hearing re-evaluation may be performed if the injured worker complains of hearing difficulty and the hearing device has been evaluated to determine that it is programmed appropriately and functioning properly. WorkSafeNB will pay a flat fee of $60 for a hearing re-evaluation.

WorkSafeNB defines the hearing re-evaluation test to include, at minimum:

- Otoscopic evaluation
- Pure-tone air conduction testing and masking, when indicated, to include the following frequencies: 250, 500, 1,000, 2,000, 3,000, 4,000, 6,000, and 8,000 Hz
- Speech audiometry, including speech reception threshold testing and speech discrimination testing level
- Functional assessment of the middle ear system or impedance audiometry
- A detailed written report is included in the audiological assessment fee
- Legible completion and submission of hearing re-evaluation report to be signed and dated by individual performing the test.

The hearing services provider must complete and send to *WorkSafeNB Form HA-01 – Hearing Aid Fitting and Service Report*.

17. When will WorkSafeNB pay approved hearing service providers for a copy of an injured worker's file?

WorkSafeNB expects hearing services providers to maintain detailed, legible assessment and service records related to hearing and hearing aid devices of injured workers. Upon request, the hearing services provider is expected to supply WorkSafeNB with a full copy of the injured worker's file within five working days to be eligible to invoice WorkSafeNB $50 for this service.

A support clerk with WorkSafeNB's Intake and Adjudication Department must make the request for a copy of the injured worker's file. The support clerk will provide a claim number to the hearing services provider at the time of the request.

The hearing services provider must complete and send to *WorkSafeNB Form HA-01 – Hearing Aid Fitting and Service Report* before their invoice will be paid.

18. Can injured workers switch between hearing services providers?

New Brunswick-approved hearing service providers who are approached by injured workers wanting to transfer service, must contact WorkSafeNB's Intake and Adjudication Department for approval.

19. Are there additional considerations for replacement of hearing aid devices?

WorkSafeNB will replace an injured worker's hearing aid device only when medically necessary. The minimum replacement time frame is currently every five years.

For new hearing aid devices to be approved, the injured worker's current hearing aid devices must be proven to be inappropriate.

The hearing service providers must not solicit injured workers for replacement of current hearing aid devices; replacement must be initiated by the injured worker.

Hearing aid devices will not be replaced while under manufacturer or repair warranty without authorization by WorkSafeNB. In these circumstances, hearing services providers must submit *WorkSafeNB Form HA-02- Exception Report* for approval.

20. Who can I call if I have further questions?

For further inquiries about WorkSafeNB's Hearing Services program including general enquiries, status of claim, billing and payment, or to speak to a adjudication services claim manager, please call 1 800 999-9775.