

minutes

IWAC MEETING		
Dec 5, 2025	9 a.m. – 2:30pm	Delta Fredericton
Meeting called by	Jarrod Yeo	
Type of meeting	IWAC meeting	
Note taker	Norma Doucette	
Attendees	Jarrod, Paula Garant, Leica Gahan. Pam Baker, Kirk Westfield, Lee Russell, and André Jobin	
Agenda Topic 1		
Welcome André	Jarrod	
Discussion	Jarrod introduced our newest member, André Jobin and his service dog, Roscoe. André is a former paramedic from Grand Falls, with over 25 years of frontline experience and lived experience with psychological injury and advocacy.	
Action	N/A	
Agenda Topic 2		
Safety Share	Jarrod	
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Winter tires.• Check your washer fluid• Remove ice on windows• Clear your vehicle of snow, including headlights / license plate.• Ensure wipers make full contact with windshield before leaving.	
Action	Jarrod requested that a member volunteer to do Safety Share at next meeting.	
Agenda Topic 3		
Review of the Sept minutes.	Jarrod	
Discussion	September meeting minutes were distributed, no objections.	
Action	N/A	
Agenda Topic 4		
What's new since we last met?	Jarrod	

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Discussion	<p>H&S Conference</p> <p>IWAC's presence made a real impact. Members felt welcome. Appreciated reserved table up front near doors.</p> <p>IWAC video was shared (and now posted on WorkSafeNB website and on YouTube)</p> <p>Kirk was asked for an interview with Safety Services NB podcast. Published on Dec. 1, 2025: Podcast</p>
Action	<p>IWAC would like a better description of the sessions.</p> <p>Begin thinking about what it could look like in 2026.</p> <p>The committee would like to be paid per diem for attending the conference.</p>
Agenda Topic 5	
Improving first touchpoint with new employers	Jarrold
Discussion	<p>Clear early communications were originally highlighted by the IWAC.</p> <p>Jarrold met with Prevention to step back and look at the full experience, not just the email itself.</p> <p>There were gaps in clarity and sequencing. The email was informative but reactive, not supportive.</p> <p>There's a lot of room for modernization.</p> <p>This work positions us to build a more helpful, consistent onboarding experience over time.</p>
Action	<p>Identify opportunities beyond wording: timing, automation, and proactive support.</p> <p>Prevention is working with other provinces to see what's working.</p> <p>A refreshed welcome email will be created.</p>
Agenda Topic 6	
Summary of recent policy position papers:	Jarrold
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accident Reporting & Application for Benefits • Traumatic Mental Stress 	

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Discussion	Shared summary of the position papers to help André understand our approach to sharing worker perspectives with the Board.
Action	N/A
Agenda Topic 7	
Upcoming Policy Consultation	Jarrod
Discussion	<p>The next major policy consultation is the review of Policy 21-111- Occupational Diseases.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Occupational diseases are among the most complex claims. Goal is to modernize policy to be clear, evidence-based, and easier to understand. <p>What's changing?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy is being restricted to explain the decision-making process more clearly. A major improvement is the creation of Appendix A, a standalone list of recognized occupational diseases. Replaces reference to Reg. 84-66 and makes it easier to update as scientific evidence evolves. Updated policy clearly distinguishes population-level causation (is the disease recognized as work-related in general?) from individual-level causation (did the worker's exposure cause it?) <p>Opportunities for IWAC input.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Barriers to access: diagnosis and expertise Date of accident confusion Transparency and fairness
Action	<p>The consultation opens in January, with feedback due in February.</p> <p>The full consultation package will be shared with the IWAC once the board approved it releases.</p>
Agenda Topic 8	
Strengthening Mental Health Supports	Jarrod
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First Canadian WCB to partner with Wounded Warriors Canada Brings trauma-informed care to first responders, healthcare professionals, correctional officers, and their families.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures psychological injuries receive the same priority as physical injuries. • Training and support underway for WorkSafeNB leaders and staff. • New psychological H&S resource centre coming Q1. • Modeled after WCB Saskatchewan, with NB-specific tools and resources.
Action	<p>IWAC will receive a preview before launch.</p> <p>Leica and Kirk are developing list of organizations who can support our programs and services.</p>
Agenda Topic 9	
Annual report 2025 (draft)	Jarrold
Discussion	IWAC provided draft copies to review.
Action	IWAC will give feedback or suggestions.
Agenda Topic 10	
Client letters	Jarrold
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current letters still use legacy formatting (Times New Roman, dense structure) • Not written with modern plain-language standards • Heavy legislative citations create confusion, not confidence • Long URLs and minimal use of QR codes • Tone is formal, detached, and intimidating. • Jarrold shared update on AI decision letter writing project
Action	IWAC can play a meaningful role in making communications clearer, kinder and easier to navigate.
Agenda Topic 11	
Client Acceptance Letter	Jarrold
Discussion	<p>The letter is broad, generic, and non-committal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Am I getting travel covered? • Do I qualify home care? • Will I get help with prescriptions or equipment? • Should I expect vocational rehab? • What is “psychology services” and can I ask for it? <p>Workers tell us all the time they discover benefits only because someone else mentions them.</p>

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	<p>A worker shouldn't have to be a squeaky wheel or an expert in the system to receive all entitlements.</p> <p>Acceptance letter describes benefits but doesn't <i>offer</i> them. It doesn't explain what injured workers will receive or what will happen next.</p>
Action	Opportunity for improvement. IWAC can provide powerful insight.
Agenda Topic 12	Preparation for Meeting with Board of Directors
Expanding PTSD coverage for first responders and trauma exposed professionals	Jarrold
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IWAC can send a clear message that there are groups- corrections healthcare, education – often see repeated trauma without presumptive coverage. • NB trails other provinces in this area. • Pam and Lee shared personal experiences and idea of expanding coverage for families and any worker who witnesses traumatic events on the job
Action	Prepare to share insights with Board of Directors.
Agenda topic 13	
Medical Aid	Jarrold
Discussion	<p>Cannabis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WorkSafeNB introduced its medical cannabis policy in 2018. • At the time, it was considered progressive. We were the first WCB in Canada with a specialized medical cannabis framework. • The intent then was caution and clarity. Cannabis was new in clinical practice, and the policy deliberately focused on narrow, well-established situations. <p>Cannabis, when medically supervised, may reduce reliance on opioids or sedatives. If our systems are too narrow, we risk missing opportunities to support recovery.</p> <p>Weight Loss Drugs (Generics)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generic versions of Ozempic expected to significantly lower the cost of weight-loss medication. • Lower cost may change how it's viewed as treatment and rehab.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential relevance for workers whose injuries reduce mobility and contribute to weight gain and related mental-health impacts. <p>Injured workers gain weight due to reduced mobility, impacting physical and mental health.</p> <p>Exercise and recovery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise plays a proven role in physical recovery, mobility, and long-term function • Strong evidence that activity improves mental health, sleep, and pain management • Gym access often reduces reliance on medication and supports sustained return to Work • Currently paid out-of-pocket by many injured workers, despite clear health benefits. • Opportunity to explore fitness supports as a preventive, cost-saving measure.
Action	Prepare to share with Board of Directors on Dec. 11.
Agenda topic 14	
Next meeting	Jarrold
Discussion	<p>Q1 2026</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New photo for André/Roscoe <p>Future Agenda Items</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision & Mission statements: Why do we exist and what do we do? More importantly, why does it matter? • Goals/Objectives • Revisit IWAC's terms of reference: Terms lengths, honorariums, etc.?
Action	<p>Review Terms of Reference before next meeting</p> <p>Think about approaches for engaging during <i>WC Act</i> review.</p>