



Permanent Impairment Assessments: Why Choosing the Right Accredited Doctor Matters

If you've suffered a workplace injury that has resulted in a permanent impairment, one of the most important steps in the workers compensation process is your permanent impairment assessment.

Many injured workers are surprised to learn that they generally only have **one opportunity** to undergo a permanent impairment assessment for each work injury. Because of this, choosing the right accredited doctor can be extremely important.

What is a permanent impairment assessment?

A permanent impairment assessment is an examination carried out by an accredited doctor to determine whether a workplace injury has resulted in a permanent loss of function.

The assessment is conducted using strict guidelines and rules and results in a percentage assessment known as **whole person impairment**. This assessment may affect whether you are entitled to lump

sum compensation and, if so, how much compensation you receive.

Who can conduct the assessment?

Not just any doctor can perform a permanent impairment assessment.

The assessment must be conducted by a doctor who has been accredited and trained to assess permanent impairment under the relevant guidelines.

You cannot have seen the accredited doctor before.

When an injured worker indicates they wish to undergo a permanent impairment assessment, the workers compensation insurer should provide a list of accredited doctors from which the worker can choose.

Can my employer or insurer choose the doctor?

Not unless you expressly direct them to.

The choice of accredited doctor belongs to the injured worker. While an employer, claims agent or insurer may provide the list of approved assessors, the decision about which doctor to select is ultimately yours.

This is an important right and one that should be exercised carefully.

Why does the choice of doctor matter?

Every workplace injury is different.

Accredited doctors have particular expertise in assessing certain types of injuries, such as spinal injuries, shoulder injuries, neurological conditions, digestive injuries or other physical impairments.

If your injury involves multiple body parts or conditions, it may even be necessary for assessments to be conducted by more than one specialist to ensure each aspect of the injury is properly considered.

Choosing an assessor whose expertise aligns with your injury can help ensure the assessment is conducted appropriately and all relevant issues are properly examined.

Should I seek legal advice before choosing a doctor?

Many injured workers benefit from obtaining legal advice before selecting an accredited doctor and arranging a permanent impairment assessment.

Think of selecting the accredited doctor like choosing a mechanic for your car. You want someone qualified and who will a good job.

An experienced workers compensation lawyer can help you:

- Understand whether the timing is right.
- Identify all relevant injuries and conditions.
- Consider which accredited doctor may be most appropriate for your circumstances.
- Protect your rights throughout the assessment process.

How Can Andersons Help?

If your workplace injury has left you with a permanent impairment, obtaining the right advice before your assessment can make a significant difference.

At Andersons, our Workers Compensation team can advise you about your entitlement to a permanent impairment assessment, help you understand the process, and ensure you are in the strongest possible position before your assessment takes place. Contact us today to arrange your **first free consultation**.