

PANEL OF ADMINISTRATORS  
Maureen Nicholls, Chair

Alan Barnard  
Bruce Rollick

November 2002 (No. 2)

Update 2002-6

**TO HOLDERS OF THE *REHABILITATION SERVICES & CLAIMS MANUAL* -  
VOLUME II**

This update of the *Rehabilitation Services & Claims Manual* contains changes to the *Manual* approved by the Panel of Administrators since November 2, 2002.

Changes have been made to policy item #39.44, "Assessment of Awards for Hand-Arm Vibration Syndrome". A summary of the amendments is attached.

If you have any questions regarding this update, or the *Rehabilitation Services & Claims Manual*, please call the Publications and Videos Section of the Workers' Compensation Board at (604) 276-3068, or toll free within BC at 1-800-661-2112, Local 3068.

MAUREEN NICHOLLS  
Chair, Panel Of Administrators

Attachment

## **SUMMARY OF AMENDMENTS - Update 2002-6**

#39.44 This policy was amended by deleting the following paragraphs:

3. If evidence from the Board officer in Vocational Rehabilitation Services shows that the worker has not returned to the worker's normal or equal paying occupation, then an award in accordance with the conversion table is granted.
4. If evidence from the Board officer in Vocational Rehabilitation Services shows that the worker has returned to the worker's normal or equal paying occupation, then no award is payable.

**#39.44      *Assessment of Awards for Hand-Arm Vibration Syndrome***

To measure the extent of any permanent disability resulting from Hand-Arm Vibration Syndrome, the evaluation is carried out in the following manner:

1.      The Disability Awards Medical Advisor assesses the vascular, sensorineural and musculoskeletal impairments of the worker in reference to the following table.

Elements	Process (Assess each hand separately)	Points Applied
<i>Vascular Element:</i>	Assess vascular elements: blanching of fingers in cold temperature, pain, swelling, ulcers, gangrene & amputations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distal phalange on index, middle and ring finger = 1 point each</li> <li>• Middle phalange on index, middle and ring finger = 1 point each</li> <li>• Proximal phalange on index, middle and ring finger = 2 points each</li> <li>• All phalanges on little finger = 1 point</li> <li>• All phalanges on thumb finger = 1 point</li> <li>• Distal half of palm (top) = 1 to 2 points</li> <li>• Proximal half of palm (bottom) = 1 point</li> </ul>	17 points max per hand
	ADD: Double value of sum of above if there is evidence of trophic changes (i.e., ulcers)	17 points max per hand
	MAXIMUM points for Vascular element	34 points per hand

Elements	Process (Assess each hand separately)	Points Applied
<i>Sensorineural Element:</i>	Assess sensorineural impairment (evidence of numbness, tingling and reduced sensory perception)	2 points max per hand
	Assess manual dexterity (i.e., difficulty with buttons and writing) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional 1 to 2 points per hand if reduction occurs</li> </ul>	2 points max per hand
	MAXIMUM points for sensorineural element	4 points per hand
<i>Musculoskeletal Element:</i>	Assess musculoskeletal impairment (loss of grip strength)	2 points max per hand
	MAXIMUM points from vascular, sensorineural and musculoskeletal elements for each hand	40 points per hand
	Add total points for both hands.	

2. The Board officer in Disability Awards assesses the worker's disability using the Disability Awards Medical Advisor's assessment of impairment and the following table.

Conversion of Points to Percentages of Disability

Points System	% Disability	Points System	% Disability	Points System	% Disability
1 – 4	1	21 – 30	6	Beyond 40	Maximum of 20
5 - 15	2	31 – 35	8		
16 - 20	4	36 – 40	10		

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** November 19, 2002  
**APPLICATION:** To all section 23(1) decisions adjudicated after the effective date.