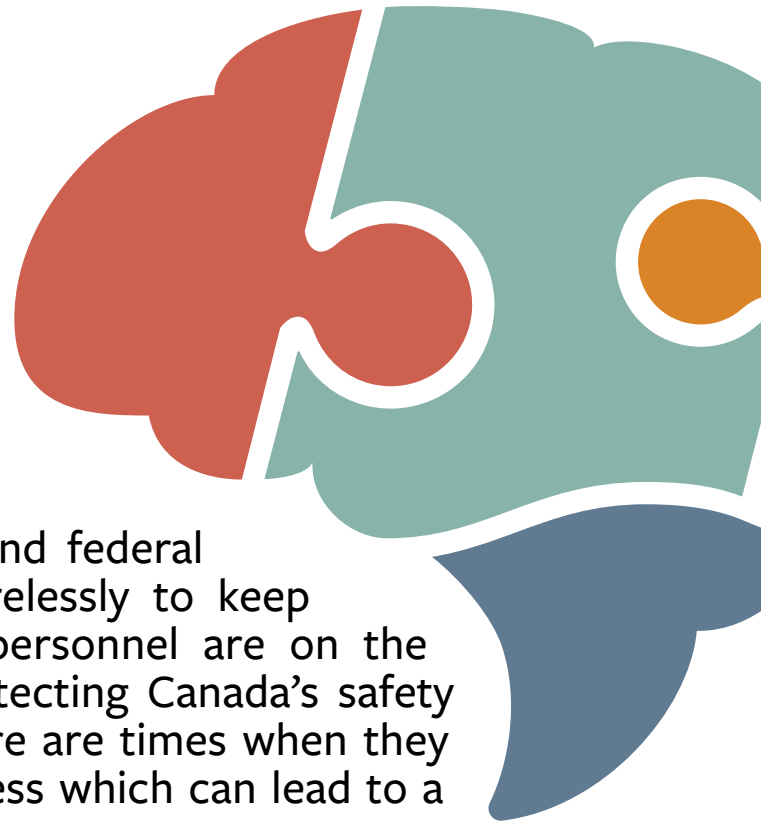


Presumptive Injury and the frontline



USJE represents nearly twenty thousand federal Public Safety Personnel who work tirelessly to keep Canadians safe. These public safety personnel are on the front lines and behind the scenes protecting Canada's safety and security. Given their mandate, there are times when they experience significant occupational stress which can lead to a mental health injury.

Unfortunately, however, these personnel are often denied Worker's Compensation by provincial/territorial boards for their injuries. This is because the Government Employees Compensation Act (GECA) is a piece of legislation that has not changed since its establishment 50 years ago. As it is currently written, it defers to the provinces and territories to determine the criteria for coverage of federal public service employees. This results in notably inequitable and inconsistent access to Workers' Compensation across the country for federal Public Safety Personnel who are more likely to incur an occupational stress injury while on the job.

Consequently, this legislation has the effect of leaving behind thousands of federal Public Safety Personnel who are vulnerable to psychological injuries owing to their efforts to keep Canadians safe from coast to coast to coast. These personnel, while not first responders who are recognized in provincial legislation as having a presumptive entitlement, are nonetheless regularly exposed to traumatic incidents, materials, victims as well as criminalized persons.

A Private Member's Bill (Bill C-357, An Act to amend the Government Employees Compensation Act) in support of USJE's proposed changes to GECA was introduced in September 2023, which highlights key amendments the federal government could make to resolve this gap.

The Government Employees Compensation Act (GECA) is a piece of legislation that has not fundamentally changed since its establishment 50 years ago.

If you are in a certain occupation and incur a mental health related injury, it is presumed that the injury was due to the conditions of work.

Ultimately, if these changes to GECA were adopted, they would ensure that federal Public Safety Personnel have improved access to Workers' Compensation, no matter where they live in Canada, so that they receive the support and mental health interventions they require. This would increase their chances of returning to the workplace healthy and equipped to manage complex caseloads, files and a generally high stress workplace.

With the new Parliamentary session now underway, USJE is urgently advocating for the adoption of these proposed legislative amendments to GECA as quickly as possible. USJE is requesting your support in highlighting why the amendments matter and should be adopted quickly.

In the absence of better access to Worker's Compensation, the Government of Canada unfortunately risks increasing its reliance on its Long-Term Disability Insurance program as one of the only mechanisms available to federal public service employees who are not recognized or treated for their mental health injuries.

Long term disability is both very expensive for the Government of Canada and means that employees have no choice but to leave the workplace permanently. In doing so, they often forfeit decades of expertise and corporate knowledge that federal public safety employees have developed.

You can find more information about USJE's proposals at **PTSIatWork.ca** including USJE's federal budget submission.

There are many Public Safety Personnel that are exposed to workplace trauma who are not included in presumptive injury definitions.



www.PTSIatWork.ca **www.usje-sesj.com**

SYNDICAT DES EMPLOYÉ·E·S DE LA SÉCURITÉ ET DE LA JUSTICE

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