compensated for 90% of their earnings. This means injured workers would receive benefits more in line with their expected earnings.

- In the tragic event of a worker's death, a fatality benefit equal to the maximum Non-Economic Loss Payment would be provided to the spouse or dependant. If there's no spouse or dependant, it would be paid to the estate.
- The surviving spouse of a worker killed on the job would no longer be treated differently depending on the family's income, whether there are children involved, or whether the spouse can be gainfully employed.
    - If there are children, the surviving spouse would receive benefits until the youngest child reaches 18, or up to 25 if they attend post-secondary education.
    - Spouses without children will receive full benefits for 5 years with the ability to receive longer, and can apply to continue receiving benefits until 65 if not considered capable of employment.
- Cost-of-living adjustments to an injured worker's benefits would no longer be reduced by 0.5% on Alberta's Consumer Price Index (CPI). Adjustments would be calculated based on the actual CPI, without any reductions.
- Provide the ability to adjust the benefits of young workers to mitigate the hardship they might otherwise experience when they sustain a long-term injury on the job. These changes recognize that significant injuries can affect the future career opportunities of a young worker.
- The long-term compensation rate for severely injured young workers, who were either under 25 at the time of accident or over 25 and enrolled in a vocational or academic program, would be the higher of:
    - 90% of net earnings at time of the accident or
    - 90% of net earnings based on the Alberta average weekly earnings for the previous year
- Retirement provisions would be updated to better recognize the impact of a workplace injury on an injured worker's retirement savings.

## Obligation to return to work and duty to accommodate

Employers now have an obligation to return their employees who suffered injuries and illnesses in their workplaces to work, unless it imposes an undue hardship. This obligation does not remove a worker's rights under the *Alberta Human Rights Act* around accommodation.

Following other jurisdictions in Canada, the proposed changes to the Act would enshrine the obligation of an employer to return employees to work.

- When a worker is medically able to perform the essential duties of the worker's pre-accident employment, the employer must:
    - offer to re-employ the worker in the position that was held before the accident or
    - provide alternate employment of a similar nature and at the earnings comparable to the worker's employment at the time of the accident
- WCB would be responsible for addressing concerns about return to work.