

Frequently Asked Questions: Ontario Commercial Automobile Accident Benefits Reform

1. What is changing on July 1, 2026?

Ontario is making Accident Benefits customizable. Medical, Rehabilitation, and Attendant Care benefits will remain mandatory, while all other Accident Benefits become optional. This gives commercial automobile policyholders more flexibility to choose coverage that aligns with their business culture, operations and driving needs.

In addition, automobile insurers must pay first for medical and rehabilitation expenses (excluding medications), except where WSIB applies, before any private or workplace benefit plans respond.

The new optional coverage for Caregiver, Housekeeping and Home Maintenance includes coverage for an impairment, a broader definition. Prior to July 1, the standard option included coverage for Catastrophic injuries only.

2. Which Accident Benefits become optional?

Optional Accident Benefits now include Income Replacement, Non-Earner, Caregiver, Dependent Care, Lost Educational Expenses, Visitor Expenses, Housekeeping & Home Maintenance, Damage to Personal Items, Death, Funeral, and Indexation benefits.

3. Who is covered under optional Accident Benefits?

Optional benefits apply only to the Named Insured, their spouse, their dependents, and any listed drivers on the commercial automobile policy. **These benefits do not automatically extend to all employees or temporary drivers.**

If the named insured is a **corporation**, there is no spouse/dependants concept in practice—so optional benefits hinge on **who is “specified as drivers”** on the commercial policy.

These benefits **do not automatically extend** to all employees, casual drivers, or temporary drivers unless they are specifically listed on the policy. This also means that some individuals who may have been covered in the past may no longer be eligible for certain optional accident benefits; such as pedestrians, cyclists and passengers.

4. Do private or workplace benefit plans still respond?

Some individuals may have coverage through workplace or private benefit plans; however, many plans have exclusions, limitations, or lower limits for injuries arising from automobile accidents.

Because private benefit coverage varies significantly from person to person, optional Accident Benefits can help provide more consistent and predictable protection for the Named Insured and listed drivers, regardless of what other benefits may (or may not) respond.

The descriptions of the statutory accident benefits in this document is a summary of the statutory accident benefits in Ontario Regulation 34/10 (the “SABS”). Do not rely on this summary alone. For full details, refer to the SABS or speak with your insurer, agent, or broker.

5. Do these changes affect my existing commercial automobile policy?

Yes. At renewal on or after July 1, 2026, your existing optional benefits will continue unless you request changes. These renewal terms will also reflect the updated Accident Benefits framework. Optional benefits may also be added or removed mid-term.

6. Why might a business choose to add optional Accident Benefits?

Optional Accident Benefits can:

- Provide added financial support for the Named Insured and listed drivers
- Help reduce business interruption following an injury
- Fill coverage gaps where workplace or private benefit plans may not respond
- Offer more certainty for self-employed individuals or owner-operators

7. What happens if I remove an optional benefit and later need it?

Only the Accident Benefits that are **in force at the time of an accident** will apply. Removing optional benefits may reduce financial protection for listed drivers if an injury occurs.

8. Can I change my optional Accident Benefits at any time?

Yes. Optional Accident Benefits can be added or removed at any time during the policy term. Any changes apply **only to future accidents**, not to claims arising from past events.

9. How do I know which optional Accident Benefits are right for my policy?

When reviewing your options, consider:

- Who is listed as a driver and how often they drive
- The type of business use and exposure
- Financial responsibilities if a driver is injured
- Whether workplace or private benefit plans would respond to auto accident injuries

This review can help identify potential coverage gaps.

10. Who can I speak with for help reviewing my options?

Your licensed broker can help assess your business and driving needs, explain available optional Accident Benefits, and support you in making informed decisions for your commercial automobile policy.

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