

From: Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation
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Welcome to the first edition of RepConnect - the BWC claims policy e-newsletter

Some of you may have attended the quarterly meetings BWC hosted in the past to share information. However, to reach a more extensive audience on a timelier basis, we're modernizing to a digital format. This will allow you to read this information at your leisure and easily share it with others in your organization. In addition, we've included contact information you need to send us any questions/comments/concerns you may have. Our goal is to respond to questions within five business days from receipt of the inquiry.

Some benefits of an e-newsletter format include:

- Information shared timely (quarterly sharing of information, with special updates as needed);
- Information that is accessible on www.bwc.ohio.gov 24/7, expanding the audience exponentially;
- Direct access to the resource who can address questions (e.g., an email box, a phone number). This eliminates the inefficiency of our team having to collect the questions, get the responses from subject matter experts, and then get back to the requestor;
- Information is easily distributable to everyone in a company, office, etc. No waiting for

period
• **BWC Kaizen event looks to improve percent permanent partial (%PP) process**

meeting minutes;
• Those who are not comfortable using the current equipment or speaking in front of people can more easily ask questions.

We hope you enjoy this new format and find it useful. We look forward to hearing your comments and feedback. Thank you for your continued collaboration.

Kim Hartman, J.D.
Director of Operational Policy (claims, medical and vocational rehabilitation)

IN OTHER NEWS

2016 Compensation Rate Chart

The 2016 Compensation Rate Chart is available [here](#).

Authorization to Receive Workers' Compensation Payment (C-230)

To ensure timely and appropriate processing of your request for authorization to receive a workers' compensation payment, we encourage you to

Travel reimbursement

We revised the travel policy and reimbursement rates effective Dec. 1, 2015. These changes were primarily due to revisions to **Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) 4123-6-40** and to mirror more closely the Ohio Office of Budget and Management travel policy for employees.

The following changes and/or clarifications specifically impact injured workers.

- When an injured worker needs special transportation, such as a taxi, BWC must pre-approve it. The reason for the special transportation must also be related to the injured worker's allowed conditions.
- Meals, instead of being reimbursed based on miles traveled, are now reimbursed if the travel requires an overnight stay, or if the travel day is 12 hours or more.
- We added language to the policy clarifying that if there is an overpayment of travel reimbursement, the injured worker may pay back the overpayment, or we can deduct it from future travel reimbursements.

We also revised the **Injured Worker Reimbursement Rates for Travel Expenses (C-60A)** to reflect the following changes to reimbursement rates.

- When travel is more than 12 hours but less than 24 hours, meal

file the [C-230](#) with the application or request.

Questions?

Email [BWC RepConnect](#).

reimbursement is 75 percent of the per diem rate, \$38.25.

- When the period of travel includes an overnight stay, meal reimbursement is as follows:
 1. The day of departure is 75 percent of the per diem rate, \$38.25;
 2. Full days of travel are 100 percent of the per diem rate, \$51.00;
 3. The last day of travel is 75 percent of the per diem rate, \$38.25.
- Previously, meal reimbursement ranged from \$12 to \$46.
- Lodging: Actual cost up to \$89 per night (an increase from \$83).
- Mileage: There was no change to the reimbursement rate of 52 cents per mile.

Death claims

We revised the death claims policy to clarify the requirements and necessary documentation. Specifically:

- We added language to require that a dependent file a written application for death benefits. The person making the request must use the newly revised [Additional Information for Death Benefits and/or Funeral Expenses \(C-5\)](#), or equivalent. The form provides us with the information we need to begin processing the application and should allow for a quicker claim decision.
- We added a section to the policy providing information about ongoing documentation and contact requirements for dependents receiving death benefits. Previously, while there were contact and documentation requirements, the policy did not spell them out. Of particular note, a dependent attending an educational institution must submit proof of continued enrollment each term and proof of attendance from the previous term (e.g., class registration, copy of final grades from the past term). We're also expanding our use of text messaging and email to make compliance with contact and documentation requirements easier.
- The policy clarifies that failure of a dependent to comply with contact and documentation requirements will result in the withholding and/or termination of

benefits.

Accrued compensation

We revised the accrued compensation policy to reflect the adoption of a new **Application for Accrued Compensation (C-6)**. This form is available at www.bwc.ohio.gov. Individuals should request accrued compensation using this form, or an equivalent. Using the C-6 ensures we have the necessary information and documentation to begin processing the application and should expedite a claim decision.

Lump sum advancement

We updated the lump sum advancement (LSA) policy due to changes in **OAC 4123-3-37**. We also made updates to the LSA Options Form and the **Application for Payment of Lump Sum Advancement (C-32)**. Specific updates are as follows.

- We no longer require the applicant to provide copies of bills or statements (e.g., credit card statements, house/rent payment statements or copies of medical bills) as supporting evidence of financial need or the furtherance of the injured worker's rehabilitation. Rather, the applicant will provide the name of the creditor(s)/vendor(s) and the amount owed/anticipated on the application.
- We may grant an LSA of a percentage permanent partial (%PP) award.
- We may pay an LSA of scheduled loss (SL) or %PP as a balance of the award or a portion of the award.
- The 1/3 reduction limitation that applies to the rate of the compensation being advanced does not apply to LSAs of SL or %PP.
- We will not accept an early payoff of an LSA.
- We have adopted a seven-day required response time for the LSA Options Form. If we don't receive the response in seven days, we'll designate the life expectancy option for the weekly reduction.

Percentage of Permanent Partial Disability (C-92) waiting period

The policy clarifies that the applicable 26 week or 40 week waiting period (depending on the date of injury) begins the day after the date of injury or the last day compensation was paid under **Ohio Revised Code 4123.56**, and does not include the date of injury or the last date of compensation paid.

For example, if an injured worker has a medical-only claim with a date of injury of Jan. 28, 2016, the waiting period to file an **Application for Determination of Percentage of Permanent Partial Disability or Increase of Permanent Partial Disability (C-92)** begins on Jan. 29, 2016.

BWC Kaizen event looks to improve percent permanent partial (%PP) process

We will sponsor a Kaizen event to address the percent permanent partial (%PP) process. For those of you not familiar with Kaizen, it's a Japanese term meaning to break apart or change (kai) for the better (zen). Team members will meet for five straight days beginning Feb. 1, 2016.

Specific goals to improve the process include reducing:

- Lag time for application resolution;
- Exam no-shows and/or reschedules;
- Suspended applications.

With Kaizen, implementation of the improvements begins as soon as possible after the team completes its week of work. Look for an update in a future edition of RepConnect.

The team will be co-facilitated by BWC Six Sigma Black Belts **Jill Stevenson** and **Scottie Powell**. Please email either of them directly with specific questions.

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