

Protecting Ohio Workers

BWC Safety and Health Initiatives

Ohio's workforce powers our state's economy. Safe, healthy workers are able to maintain high productivity and support their employer's bottom line. In turn, we have an obligation to ensure each worker returns safely to their families and communities after every shift.

The Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) helps protect Ohio workers and their employers with a rich offering of safety and health programs and services to prevent on-the-job injuries and illnesses. BWC, through its Division of Safety & Hygiene, has expanded its efforts to improve workplace safety through consultations, classroom, online and on-site training, grants, and an impressive library of safety and health resources. Since 2010, the number of employers using BWC safety services has increased by 70 percent.

These offerings have made BWC the benchmark for the workers' compensation industry and produced remarkable results:

- Injuries are at record lows, with 88,170 approved claims filed in fiscal year 2016, compared to 104,000 in 2010;
- Injury rates per 100 employees dropped at almost twice the rate observed in the rest of the nation;
- Average base rates for employers are their lowest in decades, due mainly to the reductions in frequency and severity of workplace injuries.

As a leader in the industry, BWC is leading the way once again with an innovative plan that will invest \$44 million over the next two years to create a healthier workforce and a culture of safety in every Ohio workplace.

Health and Wellness Program (HWP)

BWC will invest \$6 million annually in a robust health and wellness program for Ohioans working for small employers (50 or fewer employees) in specific high-risk industries, as well as injured workers with certain types of injuries. BWC will contract with a third-party vendor to provide services such as smoking cessation programs, health coaching and chronic disease management.

Expanded safety grant funding to protect firefighters and social and healthcare workers

BWC will extend the current annual funding level of \$15 million for the next two years for Safety Intervention Grants, setting aside \$4 million a year for two high-risk occupations, including:

1. \$2 million for fire departments to purchase equipment, including personal protective equipment, to minimize exposure to dangerous environmental elements;
2. \$2 million for employers that serve disabled children and adults; funds will support training and equipment aimed at preventing injuries among social and health care workers providing these services.

Safety awareness campaigns

BWC will invest \$2 million to create a statewide safety awareness and educational campaign for slips, trips and falls, overexertion and motor vehicle accidents, which are responsible for more than 60 percent of workplace injuries. The effort will include online and mobile training resources that address safety at home and at work.