

Filing Workers' Compensation Claims

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PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW

A worker injured on the job is entitled to no-fault accident and disability coverage which is known as industrial insurance or, more commonly, as workers' compensation. As a self-insured entity in Washington State, King County self-administers its workers' compensation program. The county's program is administered by the Human Resources Division Safety and Claims Management (Safety and Claims) Section.

Workers' compensation covers medical expenses and may also cover a portion of wages lost while a worker recovers from a workplace injury or occupational disease. Upon the death of an employee due to a work-related injury or occupational disease, death benefits are provided to surviving spouses, state-registered domestic partners, and dependent children.

PROCEDURES

When a county employee is injured on the job or has an occupational disease and files a workers' compensation claim, the following steps should be taken, preferably in the following order:

1. The employee notifies his or her supervisor
2. The supervisor informs the appropriate agency human resources representative or leave administrator
3. The employee and the supervisor complete required forms and reports
4. The employee visits his or her health care provider
5. The employee and/or the employee's supervisor report the employee's injury or occupational disease to Safety and Claims and provides Safety and Claims the required forms [Note: In an emergency, the supervisor may notify Safety and Claims]

Step 1 – The employee notifies his or her supervisor

Following a work-related injury or discovery of an occupational disease, the employee notifies his or her supervisor, typically by e-mail, telephone, or in person.

If the employee was in an accident involving a third party (someone outside county employment):
The employee and/ or the supervisor must notify Safety and Claims of the accident. Notification is required in order that King County may seek financial restitution if the third party responsible is for the injury. A "Third Party Election Form" and letter is sent to the third party by Safety and Claims in order to initiate the restitution process.

Step 2 – The supervisor informs the appropriate agency human resources representative or leave administrator

It is important that the agency’s human resources or leave administrator receive notification of a work-related injury or occupational disease because these individuals work with the supervisor to administer the process. Administration not only includes filing activities but other activities as well such as leave administration, payroll coding, protected leave, etc.

Step 3 – The employee and the supervisor complete required forms and reports

The employee’s supervisor meets with the employee to review the “Workplace Injury and Illness: A Guide for the King County Employees, Supervisors and Doctors” packet which includes all the following necessary forms to initiate a workers’ compensation claim:

- “Work Related Illness or Injury Supervisor Report Form” (completed by the employee and the supervisor) which may be accessed at http://146.129.33.132:8080/4dcgi/first_report/kc_first rpt.a4d
- “Self-Insurer Accident Report Sample (SIF-2)” (completed by the employee) at <http://www.kingcounty.gov/employees/HumanResources/SafetyClaims/WorkersComp/Forms.aspx>
- “Providers Initial Report Sample” (completed by the employee and his or her health care provider) at <http://www.kingcounty.gov/employees/HumanResources/SafetyClaims/WorkersComp/Forms.aspx>
- “Activity Prescription Form” (completed by the employee’s health care provider) at <http://www.kingcounty.gov/employees/HumanResources/SafetyClaims/WorkersComp/Forms.aspx>

These may also be obtained from agency supervisors or other department personnel; or from Safety and Claims at: 206-296-0510

The agency may also request the additional reporting procedures and the completion of additional forms. Contact the agency’s human resources office to obtain any addition process applicable to that agency. All forms should be completed and submitted as soon as possible after the injury occurs or the occupational disease is discovered. The time to file a claim is limited, and untimely claims are denied. Contact Safety and Claims for more information about deadlines that may apply to a particular situation.

a. *In situations where there is an emergency:*

If the employee requires emergency medical attention and cannot meet with the supervisor, the supervisor must immediately contact Safety and Claims and submit the online “Work Related Illness or Injury Report Form” in order to initiate a workers’ compensation claim.

b. *In situations where there is not an emergency:*

If non-emergency medical treatment is necessary, both the supervisor and employee complete the packet forms, the “Work Related Illness or Injury Report Form” and the “Self-Insurer Accident Report” (SIF-2), preferably within 24 hours of notification of the incident or diagnosis. The SIF-2 provides an assigned claim number. The claim number is a number issued by the State of Washington. The supervisor ensures that the employee completes the upper portion of the form including the employee’s signature. The completed form is forwarded to Safety and Claims for completion of the lower portion.

In all cases, the supervisor must complete the online “Work Related Illness or Injury Report Form” and forward it to Safety and Claims. The requirement applies regardless of whether medical treatment is sought.

Step 4 – The employee visits his or her health care provider

If the employee seeks medical treatment, the employee must inform the health care provider that King County is self-insured and the incident is a result of an on-the job injury or occupational disease. The employee provides the “Physicians Initial Report” to his or her health care provider.

The employee’s health care provider completes the “Physicians Initial Report”, which must be returned to Safety and Claims at the address listed on the top of the form. The form documents the medical treatment that was administered and provides information about any time that will be lost due to the injury or occupational disease.

Step 5 – The employee and/or supervisor report the employee’s injury or occupational disease via the required forms to Safety and Claims

a. *If the employee cannot return to work:*

When an employee visits a health care provider, the employee’s provider should indicate on the “Activity Prescription Form (APF)”, or on another appropriate form (some agencies have their own forms), whether or not the employee can return to work with full duties, restricted duties, or remain off of work. The employee submits the form to his or her supervisor who sends the form and reports the employee’s work status to Safety and Claims. Safety and Claims will monitor the employee’s return to work status. If the employee is medically unable to return the completed form that day, arrangements must be made to return the APF the following day (such as via FAX, email attachment, or hand delivery). If Safety and Claims receives the information directly from the health care provider, Safety and Claims will notify the employee’s agency.

b. *If the employee can return to work with restrictions:*

The employee must notify the supervisor, human resources representative, or agency leave administrator of any work limitations by providing written notification from the health care provider that identifies the restrictions. The employee and supervisor discuss whether the employee may perform his or her job with or without restrictions. Safety and Claims is informed of any restrictions.

There are occasions where Safety and Claims receives the restriction information directly from the health care provider or employee. In those circumstances, Safety and Claims will notify the employee’s agency. A coordinated effort will be made between Safety and Claims, the employee, the supervisor, and the employee’s health care provider regarding restricted duties.

c. *If the employee can return to work without restrictions:*

The employee’s health care provider may indicate on the APF or on a form appropriate to the employee’s division that the employee can return to work without restrictions. In that circumstance, it is the employee’s responsibility to provide the form to his or her supervisor. The supervisor is responsible for sending the form and reporting on the employee’s work status to Safety and Claims. As stated above, if Safety and Claims receives the information directly from the health care provider, Safety and Claims will notify the employee’s agency.

In the event that any provision of this Human Resources Bulletin conflicts with an existing law, policy, applicable provision of a collective bargaining agreement, or a binding past practice, the latter shall prevail.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Refer all questions or comments via e-mail to Safety and Claims.