

Impact of WISHA Activities on Compensable Claims Rates in Washington State, 2001-2002

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Executive Summary:

Safety & Health Assessment & Research for Prevention (SHARP) program has conducted two examinations using L&I data to examine the association between WISHA activities and compensable claims rates. The first analysis was completed in 2001, and showed that WISHA enforcement activity was associated with a decline in claims rates relative to those businesses that had not been inspected (Baggs 2003). No statistically significant change was found amongst businesses receiving only a consultation visit during this period. The objective of the analysis reported here is to determine if similar impacts occurred amongst the set of businesses receiving WISHA visits two years after that first cohort.

The methods used in this analysis mirror those used in the first study. The following inclusion criteria were used to select the group of accounts for study:

1. Only companies reporting hours each quarter from SFY 1999–2002.
2. State Fund companies.
3. Companies with a single business location (one busloc only). Much WISHA activity is in multiple busloc accounts, which we were unable to include due to lack of site-specific claims and hours data.
4. Companies with at least 10 FTEs-YR.
5. Companies with no prior WISHA activity during the pre-study period.

Major Findings:

- The results of the analysis on the new cohort of WISHA-visited businesses reinforces and strengthens the main findings of the 2001 report.

- WISHA activity was associated with a 30% greater decline in compensable claims rates from SFY2001 to SFY2002 among fixed site SIC codes.
- Among non-fixed site SIC codes, WISHA activity was associated with an 18% greater decline in claims rates, although this was not statistically significant.
- WISHA enforcement activity was associated with a 36% greater decline among fixed site SIC codes and an 18% greater decline at non-fixed site SIC codes, although the latter was not statistically significant.
- WISHA consultation activity was not associated with a greater decline in compensable claims rates. There were insufficient numbers of consultations among our set of study accounts to determine effect.
- WISHA activity was not associated with a decrease in the survival of accounts. In fact, a greater proportion of accounts with WISHA activity survived through the study period, SFY1999–2002.