



Washington State Department of
Labor & Industries

Agency Snapshot

Our mission: Keep Washington safe and working.



Goal 1

Make workplaces safe.



Goal 2

Help injured workers heal and return to work.



Goal 3

Make it easy to do business with L&I.



Goal 4

Help honest workers, businesses and providers by cracking down on the dishonest ones.



Goal 5

Ensure L&I is an employer of choice.



L&I: An Overview

The Department of Labor & Industries (L&I) is a diverse state agency with a unifying mission: Keep Washington safe and working. We serve customers in 19 field offices throughout Washington and one central office in Tumwater. L&I's approximately 2,800 skilled employees include workplace and public safety inspectors, claims specialists, occupational nurses, researchers, accountants and auditors, labor standards experts, investigators and support staff.

L&I'S FIVE GOALS

1. **Make workplaces safe:** Reduce the injury rate at workplaces visited by L&I and foster a culture of safety at as many workplaces as possible.
2. **Help injured workers heal and return to work:** Create a culture of return to work, reduce unnecessary disability, reduce delays and improve customers' experience.
3. **Make it easy to do business with L&I:** Provide information and materials that our customers can easily understand, decrease time and costs for customers and improve specific processes based on customer needs and expectations.
4. **Help honest workers, businesses and providers by cracking down on the dishonest ones:** Improve identification of bad actions, improve public perception that we are targeting bad actions and decrease the number of bad actions.
5. **Ensure L&I is an employer of choice:** Encourage and provide safety and wellness, promote a culture of trust and increase opportunities for staff to learn and grow.

WHAT WE DO

To protect the safety, health and security of Washington's workers and citizens, L&I:

- Helps employers comply with, and enforces, safety and health standards.
- Administers the Workers' Compensation program.
- Enforces laws on wages, working conditions and child labor.
- Licenses, registers or certifies certain contractors.
- Inspects and/or regulates certain contractor work.
- Helps crime victims.
- Prevents and reduces fraud.

WHY IS OUR WORK IMPORTANT?

In 2014, 47 Washington workers died from on-the-job injuries. Washington's worker fatality rate is the fifth lowest in the nation and continues to decline (from 65 workers in 2013) — but even one worker fatality is too many.

The most common causes of worker fatalities are transportation incidents, being struck by or caught in objects or equipment, falls and assaults or other violent acts.

FACTS on the most common causes of worker injuries in Washington:

Falls from elevation

Assaults/struck by objects

Caught in/by equipment

Toxins/chemicals

Sprains/strains

Statistics at a Glance

Data from some of L&I's major areas of work are shown in the tables below. All numbers are for Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 (July 1, 2013–June 30, 2014) unless stated otherwise.

Workplace Safety	Federal Fiscal Year 2014 (10/1/13–9/30/14)
Workplaces inspected	5,010
Workplace safety consultations	2,190
Total hazards addressed	22,946
Timely correction of hazards	96.40%

Workers' Compensation	FY 2014
Employers insured	169,000
Workers covered	2.58 million
Number of new claims accepted	87,000
Benefits incurred	\$2.13 billion
Total premiums assessed (includes only accident and medical aid premiums)	\$1.86 billion

Worker Protections	FY 2014
Employment Standards	
Total unpaid wages collected for workers	\$2.1 million
Prevailing Wage	
Prevailing wage-related wages returned to workers	\$1.8 million
Apprenticeship	
Apprentices working	Over 11,000

Construction Trades	FY 2014
Electrical wiring jobs inspected	203,975
Building contractors registered	52,755
Boilers checked for safety	15,881
Elevators/escalators inspected for safety	9,887

FY 2014 financial savings

FY 2014 savings goal

\$35–\$70 million

Actual FY 2014 savings

\$91 million

- 445 fewer pensions than expected
- 426 fewer active time-loss claims than expected
- Lower medical costs than expected

Source: L&I Data

Innovations and Accomplishments

At L&I, innovation means being motivated to do new things in pursuit of our mission, even if it means changing the way we do things to reduce cost and improve efficiency. Here are some examples of how we strive to keep Washington safe and working in the most cost-effective way possible.

THE STAY AT WORK PROGRAM

This program encourages employers to bring injured workers quickly and safely back to work by providing light-duty or transitional work. By spring 2014, more than 2,500 employers were participating in the program. For every one dollar in reimbursements provided to employers through the Stay at Work program, the savings is \$2.40 in wage replacement payments. Once it is fully mature, we expect this program to save \$32 million annually.

LOGGER SAFETY INITIATIVE (LSI)

Manual logging is one of the most dangerous jobs in the state. This initiative is a partnership between L&I, private landowners, logging companies and others to reduce both injuries and costs in the logging industry. The Logger Safety Initiative is creating a culture of safety throughout the logging industry and is re-defining how employers value and prioritize workplace safety activities.



SAFETY AND HEALTH INVESTMENT PROJECT (SHIP)

The SHIP program awards grants for innovative ideas aimed at preventing accidents and helping injured workers return to work. During 2014, SHIP provided funding for 58 safety and health projects and six return to work projects - from a best practices health and safety manual for Washington's wine-making industry to instructional videos that demonstrate safe practices during logging operations. SHIP grants promote investment in workplace safety while helping avoid untold economic losses from preventable injuries. Preventing a single workplace injury can save an employer as much as \$750,000 in lost productivity and worker's compensation costs — and can save employees a lifetime of disability.

YOUNG SPEAKERS PROGRAM

Over 3,000 students and young workers hear presentations each year, learning about their rights as workers and hearing from young workers who experienced life-changing injuries on the job. This program has made a lasting impact on teens as they enter the working world.

CRACKING DOWN ON DISHONEST BUSINESSES

Businesses that don't register with L&I, accurately report worker hours or pay workers' compensation premiums are part of the "underground economy." L&I has formed a Construction Underground Economy Advisory Committee to work with the construction industry to curb fraud. We are also strengthening our partnership with the Department of Revenue and the Employment Security Department by sharing information, meeting on a regular basis and engaging with stakeholders to identify problems and create new tools for dealing with fraud.

In addition to finding and investigating fraud, L&I takes steps to prevent it from happening in the first place. For example, the successful Protect My Home website helps educate homeowners about how to avoid becoming fraud victims.



TRUCKING INJURY REDUCTION EMPHASIS (TIRES) BLOG

Working with the trucking industry, L&I uses social media to provide a forum for truckers to share important information about staying safe. The TIRES blog enables truckers to communicate best safety practices with each other.

A STATEWIDE MEDICAL PROVIDER NETWORK

L&I provides increased access to high quality health care for injured workers through a statewide medical provider network. Workers injured on the job now choose a health care provider from a network of providers that meet L&I requirements. As of December 2013, more than 19,000 providers were enrolled in this network, including a broad range of specialists. Almost 99% of injured workers in Washington live within 15 miles of at least five primary-care network providers.

CENTERS FOR OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND EDUCATION (COHES)

These centers help provide injured workers access to medical care that helps them heal and get back to work more quickly. A 2011 study found that injured workers treated by COHE-affiliated health care providers are off work 20% fewer days than other injured workers. These organizations were offering services in 26 of 39 counties by the end of 2013, and continue to actively recruit health care providers.

STRUCTURED SETTLEMENTS

L&I is in its third year of using Claim Resolution Structured Settlement Agreements. These agreements can help resolve workers' compensation claims for eligible workers age 53 and older who have a claim at least six months old. L&I expects this program to save about \$70 million for claims filed through September 30, 2014, and about \$10 million per year after that.



STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

L&I's joint efforts with WorkSource, a state program run by the Employment Security Department, helps address difficulties faced by injured workers who are able to work, but not with their employer of injury. We are also engaging the vocational rehabilitation community to involve them earlier in claims and to standardize work processes. This increased support for injured workers in the first critical months of a claim significantly increases their likelihood of returning to work.

TECHNOLOGICAL IMPROVEMENTS

To continue making it easy to do business with L&I, we've made improvements to our complaint tracking, collections data and wage-complaint filing technologies. These improvements allow more workers to file wage complaints faster and more easily. For the first time, employees can file a wage complaint with L&I electronically.

FINANCIAL SAVINGS

In 2013, L&I set a goal to save \$35 to \$70 million in FY 2014 by helping injured workers heal and return to work. Actual results were savings of over \$91 million in reduced disability costs, and fewer workers becoming long-term disabled — achievements and trends L&I will strive to continue in 2015 and beyond.

Listening to Customers

At L&I, we know what our customers think we're doing well and what we can improve because we regularly ask them. L&I conducts scientifically valid surveys with customers on our most complex, and sometimes difficult, services.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION CLAIMS

We survey only workers and employers who have “time-loss” claims, in which the worker is off work while they heal from workplace injuries. About 70% of workers and employers say their claims manager does a good job. L&I is giving claims managers advanced training to build skills for successfully helping injured workers with these more difficult cases.

EMPLOYER AUDITS

No employer enjoys an audit of their workers' compensation premiums, but more than 75% walk away saying that the auditor did a good job of working with them, and 70% say the audit made them more confident about their workers' compensation reporting.

WORKPLACE SAFETY INSPECTIONS

L&I surveys workers and employers who participate in workplace safety inspections, and their assessment of our inspectors is strongly positive. Among employers, 87% say the inspector did a good job while 91% of the workers say the same. All surveys are anonymous and conducted by a third party.

PLAIN TALK MAKES SENSE

At any one time, L&I is working on about a dozen projects to “Plain Talk” forms, letters and customer instructions. We test improved items with actual customers, which helps us produce documents people can read and understand.

The payoff is significant. For example, before we “Plain Talked” a form that's needed to start benefits for newly pensioned workers, only 46% of customers correctly filled out the form and returned it within 14 days. Now 65% respond on time, giving L&I staff more time to focus on customers who need extra help.



Lean

L&I has adopted the Lean system to deliver the most value from the customer's perspective while using the fewest resources. Lean can lead to fundamental changes in business processes that reduce delays, improve quality and consistency of service, and lower costs. Here are some examples of how L&I has used Lean to improve our business processes.

RECOVERING WORKERS' COMPENSATION OVERPAYMENTS

L&I's overpayment recovery program works to return money from overpayments made to customers to the state. Using Lean tools, staff created uniform work standards and focused on recovering the largest overpayments. **The new process increased overpayment recoveries by 28% (\$1.36 million) the first year.**

REDUCING LABOR COSTS

Each month, L&I distributed paper phone bills to supervisors to check employees' long-distance phone services. Using Lean tools, staff developed an electronic filing system to maintain the records. **The new process reduced record review and retention costs by more than \$300,000 a year, and freed up more than 7,000 hours of staff time each year.**



L&I: Our Mission

L&I continues to work to keep Washington safe and working through our five goals:

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2. Help injured workers heal and return to work.
3. Make it easy to do business with L&I.
4. Help honest workers and businesses by cracking down on the dishonest ones.
5. Ensure L&I is an employer of choice.

For more information about our work, visit our website or call us:

- General information: www.Lni.wa.gov or 360-902-5800
- Detailed fact sheets about L&I's programs and activities: www.Lni.wa.gov/Main/AboutLni/Legislature/FactSheets.asp

Upon request, foreign language support and formats for persons with disabilities are available. Call 1-800-547-8367. TDD users, call 360-902-5797. L&I is an equal opportunity employer.

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