

Help for Injured Workers of Self-Insured Employers



Office of the Ombuds

<http://ombuds.selfinsured.wa.gov>

What does the Office of the Ombuds do?

We advocate for the rights of injured workers from self-insured companies who need help maneuvering through the workers' compensation process. We also strive to make improvements to the self-insured workers' compensation system by identifying issues and recommending policy improvements.

Although physically located at the Washington State Department of Labor & Industries (L&I), the Ombuds is appointed by the Governor and serves as an independent agent and advocate for self-insured workers.

An information resource

Our team helps answer questions and explains the rights and responsibilities of injured workers and employers navigating Washington's industrial insurance regulations for the self-insured community. We provide information about workers' compensation, including education, training, and web resources.



Investigation of complaints

We also assist injured workers to ensure they receive the workers' compensation benefits they are entitled to under the law. When an injured worker contacts us about a claim issue, our team reviews and investigates the complaint. During an investigation, we may need to contact your health-care provider, employer, or third-party administrator (TPA) to resolve the issue. You will be involved in the process.

Confidentiality

The records of the Ombuds office are confidential. Information about an inquiry or complaint will not be disclosed without your authorization.

Advocates, not lawyers

The Ombuds staff have years of experience dealing with workers' compensation issues. We can assist you to ensure you receive the appropriate benefits under the law. If our team is unable to help resolve an issue, you may want to consult with an attorney who specializes in workers' compensation. Locate an attorney for a consultation through the yellow pages, online, or through the Washington State Bar Association at www.wsba.org or 1-800-945-9722.

FAQs about Washington's Workers' Compensation benefits

- 1. What are my rights and responsibilities as an employee of a self-insured business?** You have the same rights and responsibilities as other workers in Washington State. You cannot waive your rights under Washington industrial insurance laws or be discriminated against for filing a claim (RCW 51.04.060).
- 2. How do I file a claim for benefits?** Contact your employer to file a claim and request a Self-Insured Accident Report (SIF-2). Your provider also must file a Provider's Initial Report (PIR) on your behalf.
- 3. Will I be paid for absences from work?** If your provider determines you're unable to work as a result of your injury or occupational disease, you will be paid a portion of your lost wages. You will not be paid to attend medical provider appointments unless your provider certifies that you are unable to work.
- 4. Am I allowed to choose my healthcare provider?** The first time you see a healthcare provider, you may choose any healthcare provider who is qualified to treat your injury.

For ongoing care, you must be treated by a provider in the L&I Medical Provider Network. If your regular provider is not in the network and does not want to enroll, you must transfer to a network provider. Go to **www.Lni.wa.gov/FindADoc** for a list of network providers. Attend your medical appointments and follow your prescribed treatment plan.

- 5. How do I protest a decision on my claim?** File a written protest with L&I's Self-Insurance Section within 60 days of receiving the Order and Notice with which you disagree. Explain in detail why you think the decision is unfair and supply any additional information you think may be helpful. Mail your protest to: Department of Labor & Industries, Self-Insurance Section, PO Box 44892, Olympia, WA 98504-4892.
- 6. I received a bill from my health-care provider for injury-related treatment. What do I do?** Contact your employer or third-party administrator immediately. All injury-related medical bills should be sent directly to them for payment.

See the Ombuds website for additional information.

To file a complaint:

You may file a complaint in writing or by contacting the Ombuds office at 1-888-317-0493. If you file a complaint by mail or fax, please include your name, claim number, contact information, and a brief description of your issues.

Contact information:

Office of the Ombuds for
Self-Insured Injured Workers
Department of Labor & Industries
950 Broadway Suite 200
Tacoma WA 98402

Toll free hotline: 1-888-317-0493
Interpreter services available

Confidential email: SIombuds@Lni.wa.gov

Fax: 253-596-3885



For more information, download a copy of the *Guide to Workers' Compensation Benefits — For Employees of Self-Insured Businesses* at www.Lni.wa.gov/go/F207-085-000.

Upon request, foreign language support and formats for persons with disabilities are available. Call 1-800-547-8367. TDD users, call 711. L&I is an equal opportunity employer.