

The Facts About Workers' Compensation

What is workers' compensation? Its purpose is to insure that an employee who is found to sustain an industrial injury or illness will be provided with benefits to medically cure or relieve them from the effects of the injury/illness, provide temporary compensation when they are medically unable to perform any occupational function, compensation for any residual handicap and/or impairment of bodily function, benefits for dependents if an employee dies as a result of an injury/illness, protection from discrimination by his/her employer because of the injury/illness.

Am I Covered? Nearly every person employed in California is protected by workers' compensation, however there are a few exceptions. People that are self-employed or volunteer workers may not be covered. Similar laws cover federal and maritime workers. Athens Administrators Risk Services Group (Athens Administrators) is your employer's claims administrator. Your employer or Athens Administrators can answer any questions you might have about coverage.

What Does Workers' Compensation Cover? If you have an injury/illness due to your job, it is covered. The cause can be a single event, like a fall or it can be due to repeated exposures, such as hearing loss due to constant loud noise. Injuries ranging from first-aid to serious accidents are covered. Even injuries related to a workplace crime, such as psychological or physical injuries, are covered under workers' compensation. Some injuries that result from voluntary activity, such as off duty social or athletic activities may not be covered. Check with your employer or Athens Administrators if you have questions. Coverage begins the moment you start your job. There is no probationary period or wage rate.

Duty Of The Employee. Immediately notify your employer or Athens Administrators so you can get the medical help that you need without delay. If your injury is greater than a first-aid injury, your supervisor will give you a Claim Form (Form DWC-1) for you to describe where, when and how it happened. To submit a claim, fill out the "Employee" section of the DWC-1. Keep one copy of this form and give the remaining pages to your supervisor. Your employer will fill out the "Employer" section and return a signed and dated copy of the form to you. Your employer will keep a copy of this form and forward another to Athens Administrators. Athens Administrators is in charge of handling your claim and informing you about your eligibility for benefits.

Your claim benefits do not start until your employer knows about your injury, so report and file the DWC-1 as quickly as possible. California law requires your employer to authorize medical treatment within one working day of receipt of your Claim Form. Employers are liable for up to \$10,000 in treatment pending a decision by Athens Administrators for a claim to be accepted or rejected. Waiting to report may delay workers' compensation benefits. You may not receive benefits if you fail to file a claim within one year of the date of injury, the date you know the injury was work related, or the date benefits were last provided.

Duty of the Employer: Provide this form to every employee at the time of hire or by the end of their first pay period.

Within one working day, upon knowledge or notice from any source of a work injury/illness greater than first-aid, provide the employee with a Claim Form (DWC-1) and authorize medical treatment and report the claim to Athens Administrators Risk Services Group.

What are the benefits? You may be entitled to various kinds of benefits under California workers' compensation law including:

Medical Care: Medical treatment that is reasonably required to cure or relieve the injured worker from the effects of the injury/illness. There is no deductible or co-payment. These medical benefits may include lab tests, physical therapy, hospital services, medication and treatment by a doctor. State law limits certain medical services as of January 1, 2004. You should never receive a medical bill. If additional treatment is necessary, Athens Administrators will coordinate medical care that meets applicable treatment guidelines for the injury. The doctor may be a specialist for your specific type of injury, and he or she will be familiar with workers' compensation requirements and will report promptly to Athens Administrators so your benefits can be paid.

The physician with overall responsibility for treating your injury/illness is your primary treating physician (PTP). The PTP decides what kind of medical care you need and if you have work restrictions. If necessary, the PTP will review your job description with you and your employer to define any limitation or restrictions that you may have. This doctor also is responsible for coordinating care between other medical providers and will write reports about any permanent impairment of bodily function(s) or the need for future medical care. Generally, your employer selects the PTP you will see for the first 30 days, but if you want to change doctors for any reason, ask your employer or Athens Administrators. They're as interested as you are in your prompt recovery and return to work and will select a different doctor for you. If your employer has a Medical Provider Network (MPN) you will be directed to treat with a physician within the MPN and different rules apply regarding changing your physician.

You can be treated by your personal physician or medical group immediately if you have health care insurance for injuries or illness that are not work related, and your physician agrees in advance to treat you for any work injuries/illnesses and has previously directed your treatment and retains your medical records and agrees, prior to your injury/illness, to treat you for workplace injuries/illnesses and you gave your employer your physician's name and address in writing before the injury. You may use the form inside of this pamphlet or your employer may have a form for you to use.

If you give the name of your personal chiropractor or acupuncturist, different rules apply, and you may need to see an employer-selected physician first.

Temporary Disability Benefits: If you are not medically able to work for more than three days due to your work-related injury, counting weekends, you have a right to temporary disability (TD) payments to assist substituting your lost wages. After two weeks from reporting the injury, you will receive a check. If your employer has a salary continuation plan, your benefit may be included in your regular paycheck. TD is payable every 14 days until the doctor states you can return to work (Payments won't be made for the first three days, though, unless you're hospitalized as an inpatient or unable to work more than 14 days). The amount of the payments will be two-thirds of your average wage, subject to minimums and maximums set by the state legislature. Although the TD payment will not be the full amount of your regular paycheck, there are no deductions and the payments are tax-free. For injuries occurring on or after January 1, 2008, TD payments are limited to 104 compensable weeks within five years of date of injury. For a few long-term injuries such as chronic lung disease or severe burns, TD payments can last up to 240 weeks within five years from the date of injury. If you reach the maximum TD payment period before you can return to work or before your condition becomes permanent and stationary. See the "Other Benefits" section of this pamphlet for additional information. A timely filing with Employment Development Department may result in additional State Disability benefits when TD benefits are delayed, denied, or terminated.

Permanent Disability: If your doctor says your injury will always leave you with some permanent impairment of bodily function(s), you may receive permanent disability (PD) payments. The amount depends on the doctor's report, how much of the PD was directly caused by your work, and factors such as your age, occupation, type of injury, and date of injury. State law determines minimum and maximum amounts, and they vary by injury date.

If you are entitled to PD, Athens Administrators will send you a letter explaining how the benefit was calculated. If the injury causes PD, the first payment of PD benefits is made within 14 days after the last payment of TD, unless your employer has offered you a position that pays at least 85% of your date of injury wages or if you are returned to a position that pays you 100% of the wages and, compensation paid to you on the date of injury, the PD would be paid after an Award issues.

Supplemental Job Displacement Benefit (SJDB): If you have a permanent whole person impairment, the eligibility for SJDB begins when your employer does not offer regular work, permanent, modified, or alternative work within 60 days of the receipt of a doctor's Medical Maximum Improvement (MMI) report. This is a nontransferable voucher for education-related retraining and/or skill development at state-approved schools, tools, licensing, certification fees and other resources as possible benefits. If you qualify for the supplemental job displacement benefit, Athens Administrators will provide a voucher up to a maximum of \$6,000.

Death Benefits: If the injury/illness causes death, payments may be made to your dependents. State law sets these benefits and the total benefit depends on the number of dependents. The payments are made at the same rate as TD payments. In addition, workers' compensation provides a burial allowance.

Discrimination: It is a violation of Labor Code Section 132(a) and illegal for your employer to punish or fire you for having a workplace injury/illness, for filing a claim or for testifying in another person's workers' compensation case. If your employer is found guilty of discrimination, you would be entitled to increased benefits, reinstatement and reimbursement for lost wages and benefits.

Other Benefits: Sometimes people confuse workers' compensation with State Disability Insurance (SDI). Workers' compensation covers on-the-job injuries/illnesses and is paid for by your employer or their insurance. On the other hand, SDI covers off-the-job injuries or sicknesses, and is paid for by deductions from your paycheck. If you are not getting workers' compensation benefits, you may be able to get State Disability benefits. Contact the local office of the State Employment Development Department listed in the government pages of your phone book for more information.

You may be eligible to access the return-to-work fund, for the purposes of making supplemental payments to injured worker's whose PD benefits are disproportionately low in comparison to their earnings loss. If you have questions or think you qualify, contact the Information & Assistance office listed in this pamphlet or visit the DIR website at: www.dir.ca.gov.

If You Still Have Questions... ask your supervisor or employer representative. Or contact Athens Administrators at the number indicated on workers' compensation posters at work and on this brochure. You can also contact the State Division of Workers' Compensation (DWC) and speak with an Information and Assistance Officer. These officers are available to review problems, answer questions and provide additional written information about workers' compensation at no charge. The local office is listed below and posted at your workplace. You can also call 800-736-7401 or visit the DWC website at: <http://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc>.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION FRAUD IS A FELONY. Anyone who makes or causes to be made any knowingly false or fraudulent material statement for the purpose of obtaining or denying workers' compensation benefits or payments is guilty of a felony. Fines can be up to \$150,000 and imprisonment up to five years.



Pre-designation Of Personal Physician

In the event you sustain an injury or illness related to your employment, you may be treated for such injury/illness by your personal medical doctor (M.D) or doctor of osteopathic medicine (D.O.) or medical group if: You have health care insurance for injuries/illness that are not work related, the doctor is your regular physician, who shall be either a physician who has limited his or her practice of medicine to general practice or who is a board-certified or board-eligible internist, pediatrician, obstetrician-gynecologist, or family practitioner, and has previously directed your medical treatment, and retains your medical records; your "personal physician" may be a medical group if it is a single corporation or partnership composed of licensed doctors of medicine or osteopathy, which operates an integrated multi-specialty medical group providing comprehensive medical services predominantly for non-occupational illnesses and injuries; prior to the injury your doctor agrees to treat you for work injuries or illnesses; prior to the injury you provided your employer the following in writing: (1) notice that you want your personal doctor to treat you for a work-related injury/illness, and (2) your personal doctor's name and business address.

You may use this form, a form provided by your employer or provide all the information in writing to notify your employer if you wish to have your personal medical doctor or a doctor osteopathic medicine treat you for a work-related injury/illness and the above requirements are met.

**Notice Of Pre-designation Of Personal Physician
Employee: Complete this section**

Employer: _____

If I have a work-related injury or illness, I choose to be treated by: _____
(Name of doctor) (MD, DO, or medical group)

(street address, city, state, zip) (telephone number)

Employee Name (Please Print): _____ Employee's Address: _____

Name of Insurance Company, Plan, or Fund providing health coverage for nonoccupational injuries or illnesses: _____

Employee Signature: _____ Date: _____

Note to Employee: Unless you agree in writing, neither your employer or Athens Administrators may contact your personal physician to confirm a pre-designation. If your physician does not sign this form, other documentation that they agreed to be pre-designated prior to the injury will be required. If you agree, your employer or Athens Administrators may contact your personal physician to confirm this pre-designation. Sign and date below:

Employee Signature: _____ Employee #: _____ Date: _____

Physician: I agree to this Pre-designation:

Signature: _____ Date: _____
(Physician or Designated Employee of the Physician)

The physician is not required to sign this form, however, if the physician or designated employee of the physician or medical group does not sign, other documentation of the physician's agreement to be pre-designated will be required pursuant to Title 8, California Code of Regulations, section 97801(a)(3). (Optional DWC Form 9783 July 1, 2014)

Notice of Personal Chiropractic of Personal Acupuncturist

If your employer, or your employer's insurer does not have a Medical Provider Network (MPN), you may be able to change your treating physician to your personal chiropractor (D.C.) or acupuncturist (L.A.C.) following a work-related injury/illness. In order to be eligible to make this change, you must give your employer the name and business address of a personal D.C. or L.A.C. in writing prior to the injury/illness. Athens Administrators generally has the right to select your treating physician within the first 30 days after your employer knows of your injury/illness. After your employer or Athens Administrators has initiated your treatment with another physician during this period, you may then, upon request, have your treatment transferred to your personal D.C. or L.A.C. or your employer may have their own form. The D.C. or L.A.C. must be your regular D.C. or L.A.C. who has directed your treatment and retains your chiropractic records and history. If your employer has an MPN, you may only switch to a D.C. or L.A.C. within the MPN. A chiropractor cannot be your treating physician after 24 visits. If you still require medical treatment thereafter, you will have to select a physician who is not a chiropractor. This prohibition shall not apply to visits for postsurgical physical medicine visits prescribed by the surgeon, or physician designated by the surgeon, under the postsurgical component of the Division of Workers' Compensation Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule.

Name of chiropractor or acupuncturist (DC or LAC) _____
(telephone number)

(street address, city, state, zip)

Employee Name (Please Print): _____ Employee's Address: _____

Employee Signature: _____ Date: _____

Title 8, California Code of Regulations, section 97831
(Optional DWC Form 97831 Effective date July 1, 2014)

CJPIA MPN by Harbor Health Information:

MPN Website: <https://search.harborsys.com/cjpia>

MPN effective date: 01/01/2023

MPN ID: 3148

For help locating a MPN physician, call your Medical Access Assistant at:
(855) 521-7084

For MPN questions, call: (866) 482-3535
Or email lfarlander@athensmci.com

When a work injury occurs:

- Quickly seek first aid.
- Call 9-1-1 for help immediately if emergency medical care is needed.
- Immediately report injuries to your supervisor.

**Information and Assistance Officer at the
Division of Workers' Compensation**

1.800.736.7401