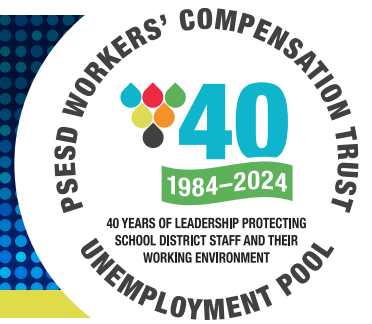


# SoundAdvice



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER | FALL 2023 | PSWCTUP.ORG



**Clairmonte Cappelle**, Executive Director,  
Workers' Compensation Trust,  
Unemployment Pool & Technology Services

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## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### Our Commitment Remains Firm After 40 Years

Colleagues,

I trust that you experienced a safe and enjoyable summer break as the season winds down and we collectively prepare to welcome new and returning students for the upcoming school year. Supporting your work to prepare students for success in a safe working and learning environment is the cornerstone of our **mission and vision** and is reflected in the collaborative **work** we engaged in with you every day. We value that partnership work with you and the mutual purpose it serves for our respective organizations.

The upcoming 2023-24 school year also marks a special milestone for Puget Sound Workers' Compensation Trust and Unemployment Pool. We will be commemorating our 40th anniversary of protecting school districts, their staff, and their working environment, and delivering claims and risk management solutions to the K-12 community. Over those four decades, we have remained steadfast in our commitment to you, programmatically and financially. We have been keenly cognizant of the limited financial resources and other financial stressors faced by school districts and have offered our services at an economical rate without burdening school districts' finances. Even though we are an alternative risk financing program/

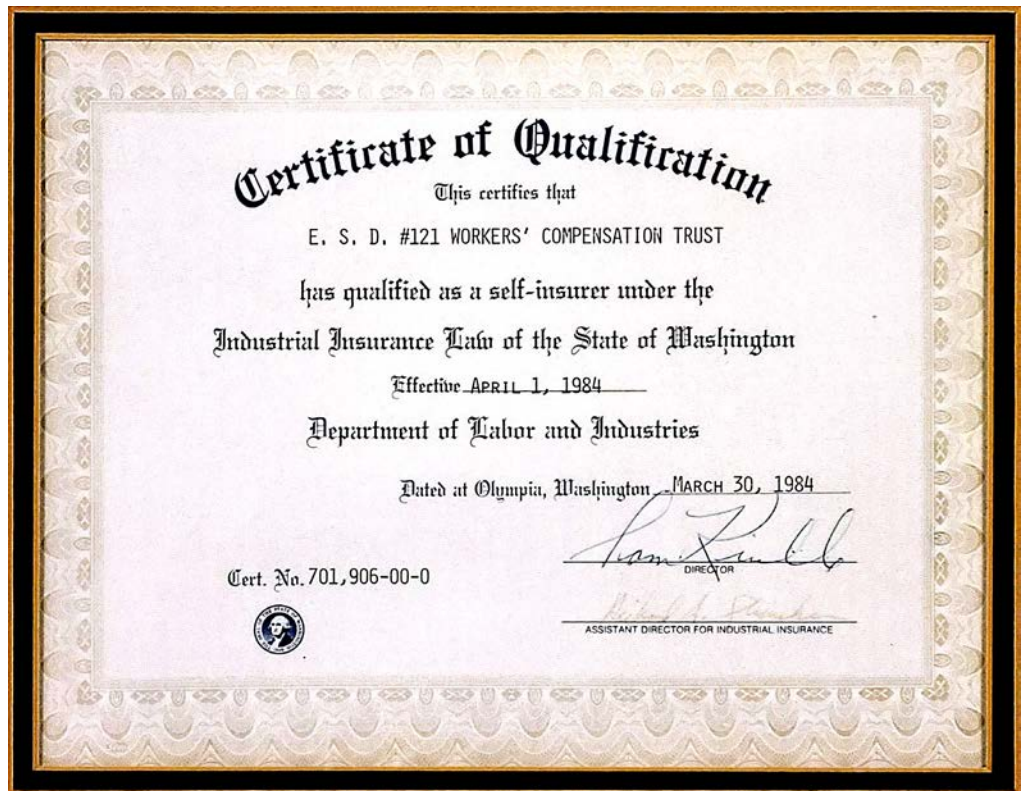
cooperative for workers' compensation and unemployment compensation, and not an insurance company, similar principles do apply. A key principle is the promise to be in business indefinitely to pay and manage eligible claims characterized by their long-tailed exposure that can span years with the likelihood for reopening after closure.

Yet, because of our intentional risk financing planning, and our recognition of and response to the changing landscape with its increasingly challenging elements, over the past 10 years, we have more than doubled our fund balance to fulfill our long-tailed exposure obligation – from \$19M to \$43M – while our average base rate has remained relatively the same, increasing by less than 2% annually over the same time period. This favorable outcome has occurred even with the implementation of various **member programs**, including an annual allocation of \$1.8M since 2018 to support school district members with developing transitional work for returning injured workers. As of July 2023, we have reimbursed school districts \$882K since program inception, avoiding \$1.9M in time loss payments, resulting in a return on investment of \$1.1M. While other risk pools may return dividends when actual claims costs are lower than actuarially projected, we choose to use these funds to incentivize return-to-work

and **other best practices**. Similarly, we will be launching a complimentary pre-loss workplace safety incentive program during the upcoming school year to reward best practice safety initiatives. Hence, we will have incentive programs on both sides of the claim to promote adoption of a best practice risk management culture. Our **training and education programs** have also been an effective conduit for promoting a best practice risk management culture among our school district members as well as supporting the professional development of their staff on noteworthy and pertinent claims and risk management topics.

At the core of our commitment to deliver high quality, culturally responsive claims and risk management solutions is the dedication and expertise of our **staff** who work diligently each day to fulfill our promise of the best possible experience with our services. Our performance standards guide and support this commitment, along with our business intelligence and analytics function, developed and utilized to support meeting or exceeding our performance standards.

Lastly, we do not do this work alone. We rely on and coordinate the niche expertise of our business partners who have been incredibly supportive and see themselves as an extension of us.



As such, they have been graceful and accommodating to our request, including expectations of cultural responsiveness when delivering services on our behalf. As important is the support and wisdom of our executive advisory boards for both **workers' compensation** and **unemployment compensation**. We thank our Board Members over the decades for their contributions, guidance, and perspective toward program enhancement, and ensuring that such programs align with school districts' needs and are navigable.

Over the next several months during the new school year, we will be celebrating our momentous milestone with events and communications, culminating in a celebratory occasion at our annual meeting in April 2024. More to come on that. On behalf of our leadership and staff, thank you for your unwavering support and commitment over the decades. We appreciate you immensely and look forward to furthering our firm commitment to you and your staff for the best possible claims and risk experience in the region for the next 40 years and beyond.



40 YEARS OF LEADERSHIP PROTECTING SCHOOL DISTRICT STAFF AND THEIR WORKING ENVIRONMENT

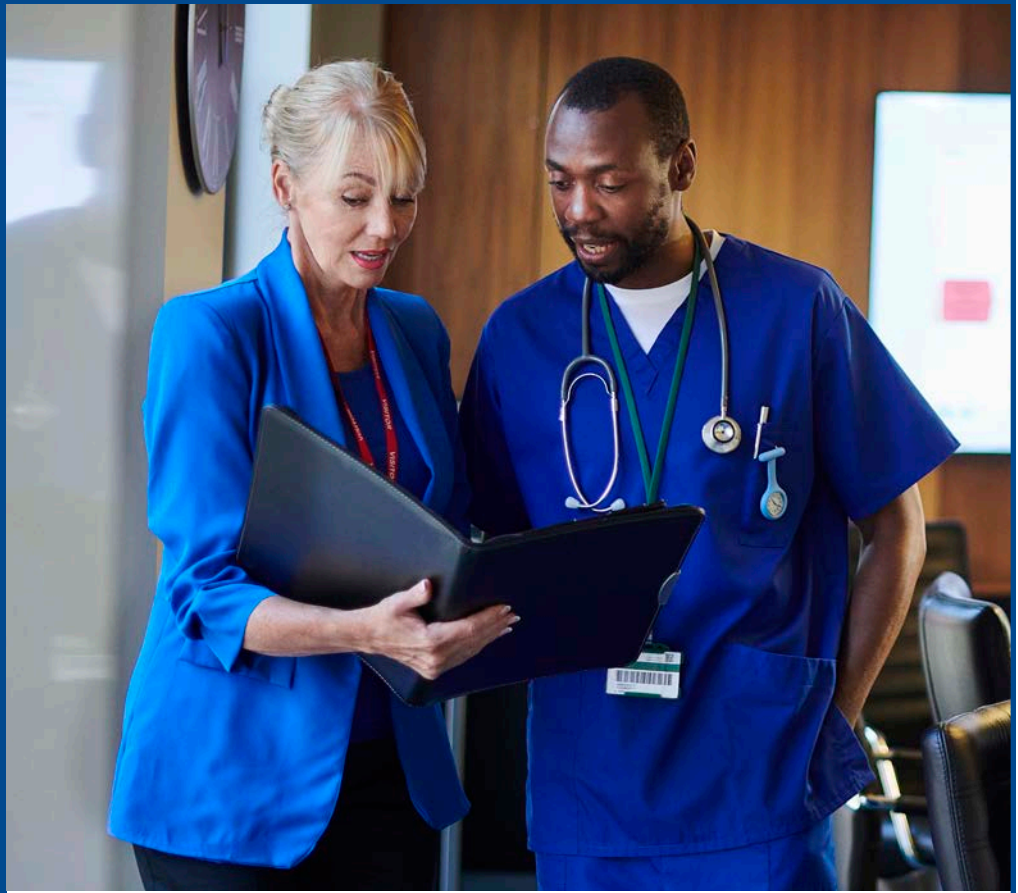


SAVE THE DATE!  
40<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
APRIL 2024  
PSWCT/UP ANNUAL MEETING

# STRENGTHENING OUR MEDICAL MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

A successful workers' compensation program can be characterized by the extent to which the appropriate expertise and skill sets are applied timely to manage interwoven legal and medical elements that arise during the lifecycle of worker' compensation claims. Depending on program size, scope, and staff experience, successful management of these two elements is the role of the claim handler, in our case, the Claims Consultant. However, where there exists a critical mass or activity of both elements, a program structure consisting of niche expertise in these two areas is an effective and efficient approach to support the claim handler in the management of workers' compensation claims.

Five years ago, PSWCT implemented a niche expertise model to address growing and more complex legal and medical activity occurring on claims. We developed and recruited for Claims Attorney and Nurse Case Manager positions. Brad Jones is our Claims Attorney and in-house subject matter expert for both our workers' compensation and unemployment compensation business lines. Because we do not do this work alone, Attorney Jones oversees our external legal panel partners and manages their work product and performance. Similarly, we have cultivated a mutually rewarding relationship with Tina Baker, owner of Heartland Nurse Case Management Services, to provide medical and nurse case management services.



Effective September 2023, we will further build on our medical management capabilities with the addition of Paul S. Darby, MD, PhD, MPH as our inaugural Medical Director. Dr. Darby is a board-certified occupational and environmental medical physician, a Fellow of the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, and has practiced medicine in the state of Washington as a licensed physician for more than 20 years. Dr. Darby will lend his expertise to strengthen our coordination with treating providers to ensure that our injured workers receive care that is related to the claim and medically necessary, reasonable, and appropriate.

As we approach our 40th anniversary, the workers' compensation landscape

is becoming more complex and challenging. From the rising incidence of **mega claims** (we recently received a \$2.1M medical bill expense on a claim) to increased frequency of **psychological conditions** allowed on claims to continued prevalence of **co-morbid conditions** on claims - these factors are collectively driving the medical component of workers' compensation claims to unprecedented levels. We will continue to be at the forefront with access to best practices, proven solutions, tools, resources, and expertise to address new and emerging severity and frequency factors so that we can continue to provide the most economical workers' compensation claims and risk services to the region's K-12 community.

# Making the Case for Submission of Wage Records on All Claims

From its **inception**, workers' compensation has evolved as an industry and has been modernized over time to current practice. However, the legal structure remains substantially the same. If an employee is unable to work due to a work-related accident or illness, they are paid a percentage of their regular salary. This is known as time-loss compensation payments. The supporting rationale is, but for the injury occurring at work, the injured employee would be and is expected to be at work performing their job duties.

To support calculation of **wage replacement** or time-loss payments, your **assigned Claims Consultant** rely on supporting information to ensure that time-loss payments are calculated fairly and equitably, following the prevailing laws guiding such calculations. Additionally, your Claims Consultant will liberally interpret the law "for the purpose of reducing to a minimum the suffering and economic loss arising from injuries and/or death occurring in the course of employment."

Due to challenges involved in calculating wages for the purpose of time-loss compensation benefits, it is the industry's best practice to produce the injured employee's precise salary data as soon as a claim is filed. This is not only a best practice, but it is also incredibly helpful in ensuring the correctness of benefits paid at the time of claim inception. The accuracy of wage replacement benefits prevents needless delays in payment of the full benefit amount and any financial hardship that the worker may face

due to inaccurate and/or incomplete information.

In contrast, supplying salary information for claims in which indemnity benefits are NOT due may appear redundant and a waste of your time. It is advantageous to provide wage documentation for all claims, regardless of claim type, for a variety of reasons. According to statistics, 4.6% of claims that are medical-only for 90 days (about 3 months) from the date of injury become lost-time claims within 30 months (about 2 and a half years). Having immediate access to the salary information for the injured worker will ensure timely and accurate issuance of the benefit due without the need to contact payroll staff from your district, whether the indemnity benefit is related to time-loss or a permanent partial disability award occurring at claim closure.

It is critical to act immediately not only for legal reasons, but also because studies have shown that the sooner the workers' compensation process begins, with precise information following an injury, the lower the overall direct and indirect expenses occurring on a claim. Take the opportunity to learn about Washington State's workers' compensation laws and guidelines **Claims Adjudication Guidelines (wa.gov)**. If you have any questions regarding this topic or a claims matter, please contact your assigned **Claims Consultant**.

## Risk Classification Codes

It's almost back to class, and now is a great time to discuss class codes. Class Codes, also known as risk classifications, are codes workers' compensation insurance carriers use to determine rates. Codes are based on the risks associated with each type of work an employee performs. Therefore, codes with higher risks, are assessed higher rates.

Washington Department of Labor and Industries (WDLI) has identified over 300 risk classifications related to various business activities. The PSESD Worker's Compensation Trust is a self-insured risk pool which underwrites risks associated with K-12 education in WA state. Of the 300 risk classification **codes provided by WDLI**, three main codes pertain to educational business activities (WAC 296-17A): 6103-Clerical and Professional, 6104 – All other employees, and 6901 – Volunteers. Each month, members report employee headcounts, payroll, and worker hours within each of the 6103, 6104, and 6901 risk classifications. Usually reporting is straightforward, however challenges may arise when employees perform job duties with activities that don't simply fall into one classification. When analyzing job activities that don't clearly fit in one box, we are always happy to work with our members to determine the best rate classification or to answer any other rate related questions.

As we start the new school year, the accurate reporting of hours is critical to ensure the correct remittance as well as coverage for injuries in the appropriate risk class.

# Member Services Program Update

## Workplace Safety Incentive Program

PSWCT (Puget Sound Workers' Compensation Trust) is excited to announce a new value-added benefit to membership, the Workplace Safety Incentive Program (WSIP). The program's purpose is to support school district members' efforts in cultivating a safe work environment through proactive risk management to prevent injuries and illnesses by offsetting the expense of solutions designed to keep employees safe and healthy.

We have developed this program to support member school districts in preventing risks that can lead to injuries and workers' compensation claims. The program cycle begins from September to July of each school year.

Members are deemed eligible for the WSIP if they participate in four out of five **risk reductions programs** and earn a score of 70% or more in the last completed program cycle.

Allocated funding for this program for the inaugural year totals \$50,000 with a maximum allowed grant amount of \$10,000 per school district. If you are interested in becoming more proactive and reducing the financial barriers to safety, this program is for you!

### PROGRAM TIMELINE

- ▶ Once eligibility is determined, notifications will be sent out September 16, 2023, through September 20, 2023. Notifications will have a link to our website where you can apply online!
- ▶ Applications will be accepted through October 31, 2023, on a first-serve basis.
- ▶ Project approval notices will be sent out by November 17, 2023.



- ▶ Once approved, the district can begin executing the project plan, purchasing resources, materials, etc. and attending scheduled check-ins with their assigned **Risk Consultant**.
- ▶ Projects will be completed, receipts submitted, and a final check-in accomplished by July 31, 2024.

### PROJECT EXAMPLES

Projects should be informed by existing claim trends to mitigate and/or prevent recurring injuries and illnesses. Examples are:

- ▶ Slips, trips, and falls are the number one cause of injury and illnesses among our member school districts.
  - > Safety stair tread grips to provide safer footing to prevent slips, trips, and falls.
  - > Safety absorbent rugs and mats provide better traction, reduce slipperiness, and keep liquids from being tracked from one area to another.
  - > Sidewalk leveling services to reduce uneven sidewalk sections.
  - > Task lighting for indoor workspaces or desk area, flood lighting outdoors to illuminate entrances, sidewalks and other walking surfaces. Removal and replacement of PCB lighting.
- ▶ Sprains & Strains, Overexertion
  - > Lifting Aides such as carts, hand trucks/dollies, lifting/moving straps,

bus tire dollies, ladder dolly, storage shelving, bulk storage bins on wheels, carpet sliders.

- > Backpack vacuums, floor scrubbers, microfiber mops, platform stairs for dumpster access.
- ▶ Improper storage and use of hazardous chemicals may lead to harmful exposures, such as spills, burns to skin and eyes, and inhalation of toxins and irritants. To remediate this issue and proactively address hazardous chemicals management, districts may purchase, install, and maintain:
  - > Safety shower and eyewash
  - > Flammable cabinet and/or acid (corrosive) cabinet.
  - > Spill kits for all areas where hazardous chemicals are used or stored.
  - > Clean out and proper disposal of hazardous chemical wastes from laboratories and shops.
  - > Purchase personal protective equipment for laboratories: chemical goggles, chemical resistant gloves, and aprons.
  - > Install on-demand local exhaust ventilation for areas where hazardous vapors and / or dust is generated (science labs, art, CTE).

We look forward to supporting you in this effort. Please stay tuned for more details in the next coming days!

## PSWCT Nurse Program Enhancement

Based on feedback during our collaboration with our school district members in launching PSWCT Nurse, we have enhanced the reporting system to accommodate incident-only reporting when employees decline to receive triage or will not/did not seek medical treatment for their incident.

Employees who decline to receive medical evaluation for their symptoms can opt to report the incident only.

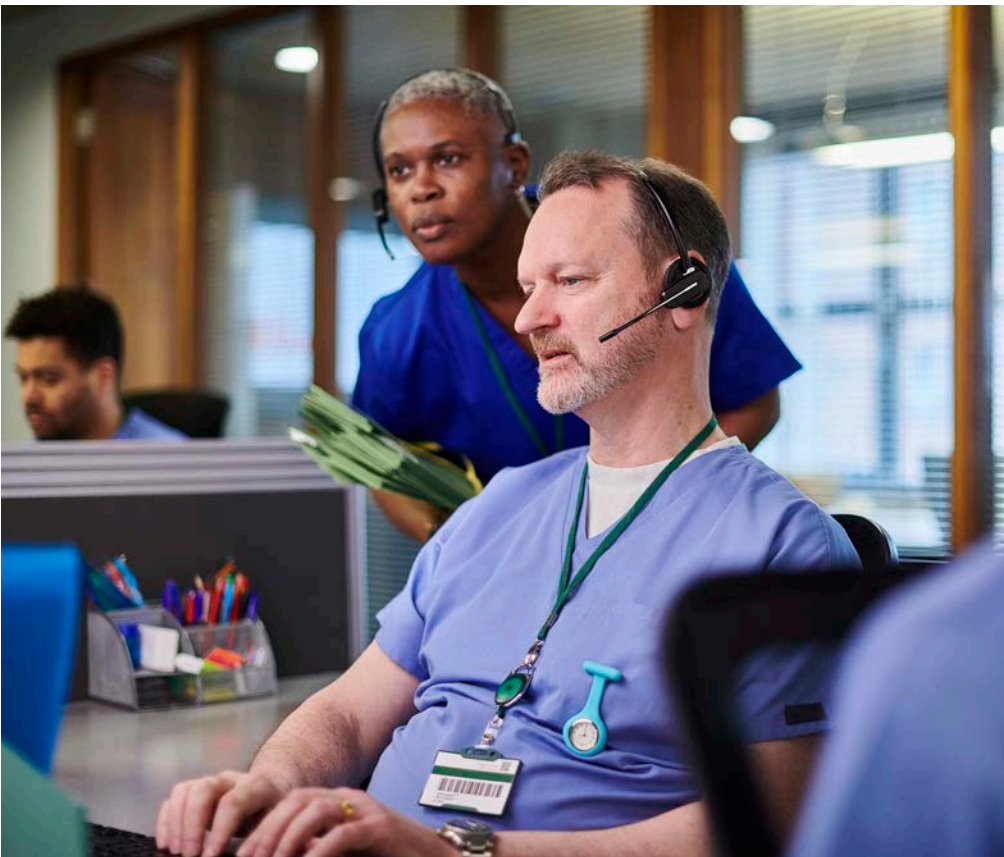
This new option will allow for instant and easy reporting of those very minor incidents that don't require a complete triage evaluation.

A reporting specialist will document the incident details and collect the employee's information for the report.

Employees who choose to receive triage for their symptoms will be directed to a nurse to assess their injury concern and recommend the best course of action.

As **previously communicated**, PSWCT Nurse will be the exclusive method to report workplace injuries effective September 01, 2023. Online reporting will be redirected to PSWCT Nurse.

Member districts who need additional support with training of personnel to fully adopt and operationalize this program within their environment may contact Member Services at [memberservices@pswctup.org](mailto:memberservices@pswctup.org).



Implemented in 2020, PSWCT Nurse has transformed pre-claim services by empowering injured workers to access an industry-wide, best practice approach to reporting injuries.



HYBRID

WASHINGTON STATE  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

## School Environmental Health and Safety - Autumn Workshop

**Tuesday, November 7, 2023**  
**9:00 am – 4:00 pm**

The Washington State Department of Health, in collaboration with the Puget Sound Workers' Compensation Trust & Unemployment Pool, brings you the yearly School Environmental Health and Safety – Autumn Workshop in a hybrid format. Expert presenters from multiple areas will inform participants about the latest regulations, changes, and trends in School Environmental Health and Safety, and will provide guidance on application. A detailed agenda with subjects and speakers will be sent closer to the event date.

Registration is required for participation. This is a hybrid event with limited in-person seating. We look forward to reconnecting with you in person and welcome you back to the PSESD Conference Center.

**REGISTER NOW**

## Strengthen Your Return-to-Work Culture

The Puget Sound Workers Compensation Trust and Unemployment Pool's Return-to-Work Managers (RTWM) continue to support our school districts with implementation of return-to-work best practices. Towards that end, we are ushering in an era of additional support through mutual accountability and effective workplace interactions via an appropriately documented interactive process.

### WHAT IS RTW?

RTWMs educate our Member Districts with effective strategies to retain their valued employees that have been injured on the job, in their job of injury, or in alternate positions. This is implemented by creating a culture based on sustainable and repeatable procedures that adheres to the needs of the employee and the employer. A best-practice return-to-work (RTW) culture provides injured workers, who cannot perform their job of injury, with the opportunity to recover while working in an approved modified/light capacity. Having a RTW culture is fiscally responsible, supports an employment retention strategy, and strengthens staffing stability.

The development of a structured and focused RTW program is anchored by national best practices that create realistic expectations for key participants, and includes the following elements:

Having **Policies or Procedures** that staff may refer to in case an on-the-job accident occurs.

Placing emphasis on the importance of **Documentation** throughout the interactive process and why.

**Communicating and Coordinating** with all participants to ensure the process is shared as the RTW culture is built.

As the RTW culture permeates the organization and programs are set in place, managers and supervisors will be equipped with the tools to promptly place injured workers safely in transitional or alternative work assignments. RTWMs will be offering an in-depth training on September 28<sup>th</sup> in which we will share our **Re-Imagined Return-to-Work Incentive Program**.

### THE ACCOMMODATION PROCESS

While an accommodation through alternative work assignment is being considered, efficient and effective communication through various channels must take place to ensure all parties are included in this relationship building process, thus creating an inclusive RTW culture. These parties include the injured worker, employer of injury, and the attending provider. This communication ensures that the needs of the injured worker are met while adhering to the restrictions presented by the attending provider. An employer with a comprehensive RTW culture will confirm that these expectations are met. This RTW approach enables an injured worker to regain their sense of purpose and can be a significant milestone in their physical recovery, and emotional and mental well-being.

### DOCUMENTATION

Documentation of events and activities allow for the opportunity to establish consistent and repeatable practices in the return-to-work process. The Job Offer Letter is the official document that identifies the modified/light capacity job that was agreed upon, the wage for the work offered, pattern of work, and most importantly, the accommodation that was made.



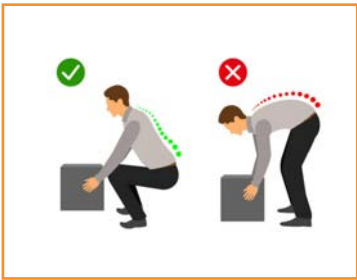
RTWMs encourage a complete interactive process between the employer, attending provider

and injured worker based on written documentation and agreement by all parties. One might say, that if nothing is written, it did not take place. For this very reason, Washington State Department of Labor and Industries and your RTWMs require Job Offer Letters that contain all pertinent information regarding the accommodation. A Job Offer Letter that is not signed does not ensure that the interactive process has taken place, nor does it secure any party to an understanding. Time loss payments stop with the notification from the employer that the worker has returned to work. Without this communication, time loss can conceivably continue until discovered by the Trust.



# BACK-TO-SCHOOL SAFETY AND PREPARING YOUR WORK AREA

With the beginning of the new school year around the corner, school districts are feverishly preparing to complete summer projects, building renovations, and deep cleaning to welcome back students and teaching staff. Here are some helpful tips to keep the schools clean, well-organized and safe while getting work areas ready!



## Organize Your Space - Moving Furniture, Supplies, or Boxes

- ▶ If the item(s) is heavy or awkward, please coordinate with other team members or your custodial staff prior to moving those items.
- ▶ Use mechanical devices to move heavy objects, i.e., hand truck, carts, lifting straps.
- ▶ Use proper body mechanics, do not rush, take time to complete the lift safely.
- ▶ Avoid overreaching for items keep them close to your body.
- ▶ Bend at the knees to lift and move your feet, do not twist at the waist.



## Remember Ladder Safety When Reaching Items from Heights

- ▶ NEVER use a chair or desk as a substitute for a step ladder! Take time to get the right ladder for the job. Please ask for help if you need to reach any items that require a larger ladder.
- ▶ Maintain 3 points of contact when using ladders, DO NOT carry items up or down the ladder, get help if needed.



## Pest Proof Your Workspace

- ▶ Messy and cluttered workspaces attract pests, keep yours clean and organized.
- ▶ Do not store food or perishables in your classroom.
- ▶ Store as many items in plastic totes as possible to keep them safe.
- ▶ If possible do not eat in classrooms, especially in carpeted areas.
- ▶ Consider removing upholstered furniture from your space as they harbor dust mites, pests, and allergy triggers.



## Indoor Air Quality and Chemicals

- ▶ Chemicals can be hazardous (flammable, corrosive, reactive and/or toxic). Please use only pre-approved chemicals in all areas (laboratories, custodial chemicals, art CTE, maintenance shops, etc). Keep Hazardous Materials Out Of Reach. Hazardous materials, such as cleaning supplies and chemicals used for instruction, should be properly labeled and securely stored. You should also know where to find safety data sheets addressing how to properly treat exposure to hazardous materials you might have in your classroom.

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## Indoor Air Quality and Chemicals (continued)

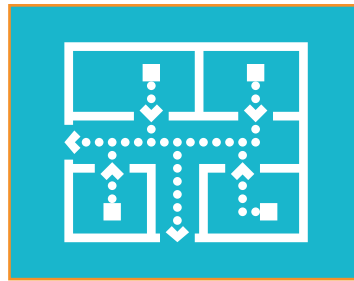
Follow the recommendations of the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) regarding purchase and use of school supplies:

- ▶ Refrain from bringing in scented items such as air fresheners, essential oils, plug-ins, sprays, and diffusers. Students and staff can have chemical sensitivities and scents can cause irritation and potentially trigger asthma attacks. Why load the indoor air with an unnecessary mix of volatile chemicals?
- ▶ Use only district approved cleaners and only custodians should disinfect.
- ▶ Staff should always consult with the school or district to ensure compliance with internal policies and procedures.
- ▶ Do not overcrowd classrooms, keep them custodian – friendly. Dust is an asthma trigger.
- ▶ Classroom decorations: Keep decorations at minimum, especially the flammable ones. Don't hang items from the ceiling T-bars without special clips to prevent fraying fiberglass. Remove or clean items when dusty.
- ▶ Wildfire smoke can affect indoor air quality. Follow the WA State Department of Health's guidance on ventilation and activities during wildfire smoke.



### Keep Exits Clear:

- ▶ Make sure that all exits – both doors and windows – remain clear of obstructions and clutter. This is especially important in laboratories, art and CTE classes with lots of unusual equipment, carts, chemical containers etc.



### Be Familiar with the Evacuation Plan

- ▶ Ensure that a current evacuation plan and the associated map with the highlighted exit routes are posted near the door.
- ▶ Ensure that all staff and students are familiar with the exit routes in case of emergency.



### Eliminate Tripping and Slipping Hazards

- ▶ Keep classrooms and shops organized and free of clutter.
- ▶ Do not use floor for storage.
- ▶ Keep items put away when not in use to prevent tripping.
- ▶ Do not leave unattended drawers or cabinet doors open.
- ▶ Reduce the number of electric cables as much as possible and use cable covers.
- ▶ Immediately clean up spills from the floor, even if it's only water.

The Environmental Health and Safety team of the PSWCT is here to support member districts with health and safety. Please contact us with any questions or requests.

- ▶ **Elizabeth Jakab**
- ▶ **Jessica Guy**
- ▶ **Steve Lyons**

### REFERENCES

- ▶ **Washington State Department of Health's web page has excellent school EH&S resources. Please bookmark, peruse and refer to it often.**
- ▶ **Ladder Safety DOs and DON'Ts (OSHA)**
- ▶ **School Supply List Guidance for Healthy Classrooms (wa.gov)**
- ▶ **Classroom Cleaning Tips for Teachers | Washington State Department of Health**
- ▶ **Ventilation and Air Quality for Reducing Transmission of Airborne Illnesses (wa.gov)**

## Outdoor Heat Exposure - Permanent Rule Update

EFFECTIVE JULY 17, 2023

The Department of Labor & Industries (L&I) Division of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH) filed a Permanent Rulemaking Order (**CR-103P**), to update the requirements for General Occupational Health Standards – Outdoor Heat Exposure. This new rule now applies year-round to all employers with employees performing work in an outdoor environment rather than May through September. Some of the new/revised requirements are highlighted below:

### NEW REQUIREMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- ▶ **Access to shade:** Adds the requirement to provide one or more areas of shade for employees that is large enough to accommodate all employees to sit fully in the shade during a meal or rest period. The provided shade must also be close to areas where employees are working. The rule also provides alternatives that employers may use in lieu of shade.
- ▶ **Drinking water:** Adds clarification that drinking water must be suitably cool in temperature, which has been standard under **DOSH 10.15**, DOSH Directive 10.15 but was not specific in the old standard.
- ▶ **Rest Periods:** At 90 degrees Fahrenheit or above, workers are allotted an additional 10-minute, paid, break period every two hours. Additional requirements for rest periods apply when temperatures exceed 100 degrees Fahrenheit.

- ▶ **Exception:** Does not apply to incidental exposures where an employee is not required to perform a work activity outdoors for more than 15 minutes in any 60-minute period. This exception may be applied every hour during the work shift.

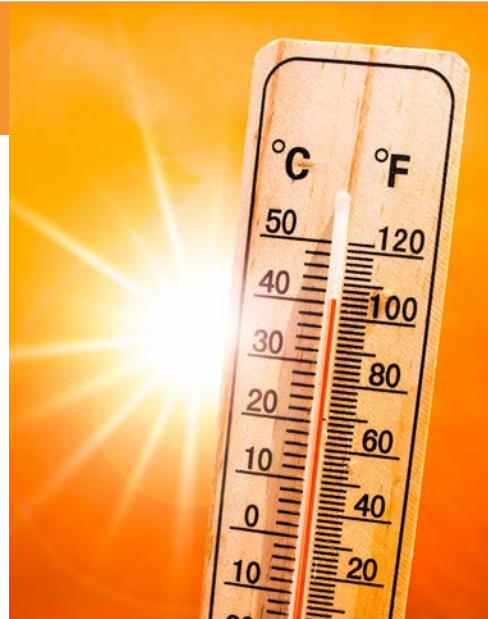
### UPDATED PROGRAM TEMPLATE IS NOW AVAILABLE!

An updated/revised **Outdoor Heat Exposure Prevention Plan** is available for your convenience. It is paramount that you incorporate this revised program into your district's Accident Prevention Program (APP) and distribute copies to all sites with 11 or more employees.

### ON-LINE RESOURCES

- ▶ **LNI/DOSH: "Be Heat Smart"**
- ▶ **OSHA: Heat Hazard Recognition**
- ▶ **OSHA/NIOSH: Heat Safety Tool App**

Please contact your Risk Consultant, **Steve Lyons**, ASP, CSRM or **Jessica Guy**, CSP, CSRM, with any questions you may have.



## PSWCTUP Quick Links

- ▶ **Accident Prevention Program**
- ▶ **Return-to-Work Incentive Program**
- ▶ **Physical Ability Evaluation Program**
- ▶ **PSWCT Nurse Triage Program**
- ▶ **Claims Management Single Point of Contact**

## Online Resources

- ▶ **L&I HELSA Update**
- ▶ **OSHA: Water. Rest. Shade.**



## Contact Us

- ▶ **Member Services**  
**memberservices@pswctup.org**
- ▶ **Return to Work Managers**  
**WCTRTW@psed.org**
- ▶ **Risk Consultants**  
**WCTRiskStaff@psed.org**

## KEY MILESTONES OF THE WORKERS' COMPENSATION CLAIM LIFECYCLE SERIES

### HYBRID | PART IV

#### The World of Litigation and Board Appeals

**Thursday, September 14, 2023**

**10:00 am – noon including 15–20 min Q&A**

The fourth segment of our five-part series will explore the appeals process and the role of the Board of Industrial Insurance Appeals. Participants can expect to leave with a general understanding of the entire appeal process and the employer's role in that process. Evidentiary standards, Board structure, appeal considerations, and the different types of resolutions will be addressed. Participants will also learn the basics of testifying and the difference between depositions and live testimony.

**REGISTER NOW**

Registration is required for participation. This is a Hybrid Session with limited in-person seating.

### HYBRID | PART V

#### Knock, Knock, Look Who's Back

**Thursday, October 26, 2023**

**10:00 am – noon including 15–20 min Q&A**

The final session of our five-part series will delve into claims that have returned to the claim process after closure. We will explore re-opening applications, the medical standards, and the legal implications. Participants can expect a crash course in negotiation strategy and theory as we dive into the world of settlements. We will also be discussing aggravations, pensions, and the different types of disability structures. By the end of this session, participants who have completed the full series should have gained insight and understanding into the full Workers' Compensation claim lifecycle, as well as learned a few tips on how to be successful in their role.

**REGISTER NOW**

Registration is required for participation. This is a Hybrid Session with limited in-person seating.

### WEBINAR

#### Return-to-Work Incentive Program (RTWIP) Re-Imagined

**Thursday, September 28, 2023**

**10:00 am – noon**

The Puget Sound Workers' Compensation Trust & Unemployment Pool (PSWCT/UP) has re-imagined the Return-to-Work Incentive Program (RTWIP) application submission process based on participant feedback! Return-to-Work Managers, Christian Porter and Aliza Hauser, will walk you through claim eligibility criteria and the new automated application process. We hope this informative session will support the ease in submitting applications through our new process, as well as increase participation. We look forward to sharing this with you!

**REGISTER NOW**



### HYBRID

#### School Environmental Health and Safety - Autumn Workshop

**Tuesday, November 7, 2023**

**9:00 am – 4:00 pm**

The Washington State Department of Health, in collaboration with the Puget Sound Workers' Compensation Trust & Unemployment Pool, brings you the yearly School Environmental Health and Safety – Autumn Workshop in a hybrid format. Expert presenters from multiple areas will inform participants about the latest regulations, changes, and trends in School Environmental Health and Safety, and will provide guidance on application. A detailed agenda with subjects and speakers will be sent closer to the event date.

Registration is required for participation. This is a hybrid event with limited in-person seating. We look forward to reconnecting with you in person and welcome you back to the PSESD Conference Center.

**REGISTER NOW**

### WEBINAR

#### Asbestos Programs in Schools

**Thursday, November 30, 2023**

**10:00 am – noon**

In response to the hazards of asbestos exposure in older buildings, the Federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) enacted the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) in 1987. AHERA, developed specifically for schools, has a multitude of compliance requirements. With the recent increase in staff turnover that school districts are experiencing, we are offering support to the environmental health and safety contacts to ensure that they are up to date and properly managing this important program. Our expert speakers are Jeff Rogers, Environmental Health and Safety Manager, Tacoma Public Schools, and Donna McNeil, President, NOW Environmental Services. They will present a very useful overview on what AHERA is, what a district needs to have in place to be EPA compliant, how districts can bring their AHERA program up to speed in the most expedient and cost-effective manner, and real-world strategies on how to use the program to keep students, employees, and contractors safe from asbestos.

**REGISTER NOW**

### WEBINAR

#### Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Monitoring and Assessment Tools

**Thursday, December 7, 2023**

**10:00 am – noon**

It has been scientifically proven that Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) greatly influences student and staff health, and performance. Recently, more school districts are choosing to purchase tools that aid in assessment of individual situations or install long-term monitoring equipment. The broad range of IAQ applications extends from measuring temperature and ventilation air flow in occupied areas, to monitoring air humidity, dust/particles, airborne chemicals, and smoke, and they sometimes even provide noise measurements and motion detection.

A group of IAQ professionals from the Washington State Department of Health, the Smart Buildings Center at the Northwest Energy Efficiency Council (NEEC), and the Puget Sound Workers' Compensation Trust and Unemployment Pool have teamed up to look at different available options, and present the top five tools that seem to be the most effective and lowest cost alternatives for schools. They will also introduce the free "Lending Tool Library" available through NEEC.

**REGISTER NOW**