
HOUSE BILL 1918

State of Washington 59th Legislature 2005 Regular Session

By Representatives Conway, Wood and Chase

Read first time 02/10/2005. Referred to Committee on Commerce & Labor.

1 AN ACT Relating to implementing recommendation no. 2 of the joint
2 legislative audit and review committee's report no. 98-9 with regard to
3 reporting of industrial insurance injuries; creating a new section; and
4 providing an expiration date.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** (1) The legislature finds that:

7 (a) In 1998, the joint legislative audit and review committee, in
8 its performance audit of the Washington industrial insurance system,
9 reported that one of the most significant causes for delayed benefit
10 payments to workers and lack of employer involvement in claims was the
11 manner in which claims were reported. Under this system of reporting,
12 the worker generally reports the injury to a physician who, in turn,
13 reports the injury to the department.

14 (b) The performance audit further reported that adopting a system
15 in which the employee reports to the employer and the employer reports
16 to the department would speed the first payment of benefits to the
17 worker and involve the employer, from the beginning of the claim, in
18 assisting in the management of the claim, including returning the
19 worker to work.

1 (c) The performance audit also recognized that there would be
2 instances in which workers would be reluctant to report injuries to
3 employers and that, therefore, the system of physician reporting should
4 be retained as an alternative, and employer reporting should be tested
5 on a widespread basis.

6 (2) The department of labor and industries shall develop and
7 implement an initiative to encourage the reporting of industrial
8 insurance injuries by the worker to his or her employer and by the
9 employer to the department. Under this initiative, the department must
10 take steps to educate workers and employers about the benefits and
11 importance of prompt reporting of injuries.

12 (3)(a) The department must conduct a study of:

13 (i) Claims that are not reported promptly, including but not
14 limited to a review of the circumstances of such claims, the type of
15 injuries involved in such claims, and the reasons for the failure to
16 report such claims promptly; and

17 (ii) The effect of the educational initiative required under
18 subsection (2) of this section on reducing delays in benefits payments
19 and improving employer involvement in assisting with claims management.

20 (b) By December 1, 2006, the department must report on the results
21 of the study to the appropriate committees of the legislature.

22 (4) This section expires July 1, 2007.

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