

Workers' Compensation Exemptions Construction Industry

An employer in the construction industry who employs one or more part-time or full-time employees, including the owner, must obtain workers' compensation coverage.

Corporate officers or members of a limited liability company (LLC) in the construction industry may elect to be exempt if:

- The officer owns at least 10 percent of the stock of the corporation, or in the case of an LLC, a statement attesting to the minimum 10-percent ownership.
- The officer is listed as an officer of the corporation in the records of the Florida Department of State, Division of Corporations.

- The corporation is registered and listed as active with the Florida Department of State, Division of Corporations.

No more than three corporate officers per corporation or limited liability member are allowed to be exempt. A \$50 fee is required for each application submitted to obtain an exemption. Construction exemptions are valid for a period of two years or until a voluntary revocation is filed or the exemption is revoked by the Division.

For copies of the exemption form, contact the Division's Bureau of Compliance at (850) 413-1609 or go to <http://www.MyFloridaCFO.com/WC/forms.html> and click on Rule 69L-6 and Form number DWC-250, Notice of Election to Be Exempt.

What Your Employee Can Expect From the Insurance Carrier

- Timely provision of medical treatment
- Timely payment of wage replacement benefits
- Timely payment of medical bills
- Timely reporting of the employee's claim information to the Division of Workers' Compensation
- Timely notification of any changes in the status of the employee's claim. This information should be provided to the injured worker by mail on either a Notice of Action/Change form (DWC-4) or a Notice of Denial form (DWC-12)

Non-Construction Industry

An employer in the non-construction industry, who employs four or more part-time or full-time employees, must obtain workers' compensation coverage.

Sole proprietors and partners in the non-construction industry are automatically exempt from the law, but can elect to be covered.

Non-construction industry corporate officers may elect to be exempt if:

- The officer is listed as an officer of the corporation in the records of the Florida Department of State, Division of Corporations.
- The corporation is registered and listed as active with the Florida Department of State, Division of Corporations.

There is no limit to the number of corporate officers who can be exempt and there is no application fee. Non-construction exemptions are valid until a voluntary revocation is filed or the exemption is revoked by the Division.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q) How many days do employees have to report work-related injuries or illnesses?

A) Employers should encourage employees to report accidents as soon as the work related injuries or illnesses occur. By law, however, employees are required to report work related injuries or illnesses within 30 days.

Q) To whom should I report the work-related injury?

A) You should report the accident to your insurance company as soon as you have knowledge of the injury. By law, you have seven days from your first knowledge of the work related injury.

Q) Do I have to report a claim if I do not believe it is a work-related injury or illness?

A) Yes. You should report all claims of work-related injuries or illnesses to your workers' compensation insurance carrier. This includes claims in which there are no witnesses of the injury or illness. It is your workers' compensation insurance carrier's responsibility to investigate all claims and determine if employees are entitled to benefits under Florida's Workers' Compensation Law.

Q) Does the employer pay any part of my workers' compensation insurance premium?

A) No. The law is very specific on this point. It is the employer's responsibility to pay the entire premium for workers' compensation.

Employers who secure workers' compensation coverage can also apply to become a drug-free workplace and may receive a premium discount. To learn more about the Drug-free Workplace Program, please call the Division of Workers' Compensation Customer Service Office at 850-413-1609.

Q) Who should I call if my employees have questions or concerns regarding their workers compensation claims?

A) You should first contact your insurance carrier. If your carrier is unable to answer the question or resolve the problem, you or your employees should call the Employee Assistance and Ombudsman Office at 1-800-342-1741.

Disclaimer:

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EMPLOYER FACTS



IMPORTANT

WORKERS' COMPENSATION INFORMATION FOR FLORIDA'S EMPLOYERS



DIVISION OF WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Florida Department of Financial Services

Your workers' compensation insurance policy covers medical and partial wage-replacement benefits for any employee who sustains a work related injury or illness.

This brochure will give you a better understanding of your role and responsibilities under the workers' compensation system.

Workers' Compensation Notice

The law requires that every employer who has secured workers' compensation coverage post in conspicuous place(s) a notice that contains the employer's insurance carrier information, the expiration date of the policy and an anti-fraud statement. The Division of Workers' Compensation has developed this notice, in poster form, for carriers to provide to their policyholders. Your carrier is required by law to provide you with the poster(s).

Even if employers have purchased workers' compensation policies, they shall be deemed to have failed to secure workers' compensation coverage if they have committed any of the following actions:

- materially understated or concealed payroll,
- *materially misrepresented or concealed employee duties to avoid proper classification for premium calculations, or*
- materially misrepresented or concealed information pertinent to the computation and application of an experience modification factor.

Employers who fail to secure workers' compensation coverage or fail to update information on their workers' compensation insurance application are subject to stop work orders and civil and criminal penalties.

First Report of Injury

As soon as you become aware of a work-related injury or illness, immediately contact your workers' compensation insurance carrier. If you do not report the injury or illness to your insurance carrier within seven days of the date you were informed, you may be subject to an administrative fine not to exceed \$2,000 per occurrence. Most insurance companies have a toll-free number to report work-related injuries. If you report the injury or illness to the insurance carrier by telephone, the carrier will complete

the form and send a copy to you and the employee within three business days. You can also fill out the First Report of Injury or Illness form (DWC-1) and send it to the insurance carrier. The form contains employer, employee and accident information and can be obtained from the Division of Workers' Compensation Web site at www.MyFloridaCFO.com/WC/pdf/DFS-F2-DWC-1.pdf. You must also provide a copy of the First Report of Injury or Illness form to the employee. The employee's signature on the form is preferred, but if the employee is not able or available to sign it, then write "not available" in the employee signature box.

Workplace Fatalities

Employers must also report deaths resulting from work-related injuries or illnesses to the Division of Workers' Compensation within 24 hours. To report a workplace fatality, call 1-800-219-8953 (in Florida) or 850-413-1611, or fax the First Report of Injury or Illness form containing the fatality information to 850-413-1980. To access the form, go to <http://www.MyFloridaCFO.com/WC/forms.html> and click on DWC-1.

Medical Benefits

As soon as you notify your carrier about your employee's work-related injury, the carrier will:

- Determine the compensability of the injury
 - Provide an authorized doctor
 - Pay for all authorized medically necessary care and treatment related to the injury or illness
 - Provide a one-time change of physician within five business days of receipt of your written request
- Authorized treatment and care may include:

- Doctor's visits
- Hospitalization
- Physical therapy
- Medical tests
- Prescription drugs
- Prostheses
- Travel expenses to and from authorized providers or pharmacies.

Upon reaching maximum medical improvement (MMI), the employee is required to pay a \$10 copayment per visit for medical treatment. MMI occurs when the treating physician determines that the employee's injury has healed to the extent that further improvement is not likely.

Wage Replacement Benefits

Workers' compensation benefits for lost wages will start on the eighth day that the injured employee is unable to work. The injured employee will not receive wage replacement benefits for the first seven days of work missed, unless he or she is out of work for more than 21 days due to the work-related injury. In most cases, the wage-replacement benefits will equal two-thirds of the employee's pre-injury regular weekly wage, but the benefit will not be higher than Florida's average weekly wage. If the employee qualifies for wage replacement benefits, he or she can expect to receive the first benefit check within 21 days after the carrier becomes aware of the injury or illness, and bi-weekly thereafter. The injured employee will be eligible for different types of wage replacement benefits, depending on the progress of the claim and the severity of the injury.

- Temporary Total Benefits: These benefits are provided as a result of an injury that temporarily prevents the employee returning to work and the employee has not reached MMI.

- Temporary Partial Benefits: These benefits are provided when the doctor releases the employee to return to work, and the employee has not reached MMI and earns less than 80 percent of the pre-injury wage. The benefit is equal to 80 percent of the difference between 80 percent of the pre-injury wage and the post-injury wage. The maximum length of time the injured employee can receive temporary benefits is 104 weeks or until the date of MMI is determined, whichever is earlier.

- Permanent Impairment Benefits: These benefits are provided when the injury causes any physical, psychological or functional loss and the impairment exists after the date of MMI. A doctor will assign a permanent impairment rating, expressed as a percentage of disability to the body as a whole. If you return to work at or above your pre-injury wage, the permanent impairment benefit is reduced by 50%.

- Permanent Total Benefits: These benefits are provided when the injury causes the employee to be permanently and totally disabled according to the conditions stated in law.
- Death Benefits: Compensation for deaths resulting from work-related injuries or illnesses include payment of funeral expenses and dependency benefits (each are subject to limits defined by law). A dependent spouse may also be eligible for job training benefits.

Wage Statement Form

You must complete and provide a wage statement form (DFS-F2-DWC-1a) to your carrier for any employee who is entitled to wage replacement benefits, within 14 days after knowledge of the accident. You must also complete this form upon the termination of the employee or upon termination of fringe benefits for any employee who is collecting wage replacement benefits within seven days of such termination. To access the form go to, <http://www.MyFloridaCFO.com/WC/forms.html> and click on DWC-1a.

Employee Assistance Office

If you have any questions or concerns about your employees' workers' compensation benefits, call your workers' compensation insurance carrier. If the insurance carrier does not provide the information that you have requested, you can call the Division of Workers' Compensation, Employee Assistance Office (EAO) at 1-800-342-1741. This office helps prevent and resolve disputes between injured workers and employers/carriers.

EAO specialists are knowledgeable about the workers' compensation system and may be able to answer your questions. EAO has offices throughout the state that you can call or visit. You can find EAO statewide locations at www.MyFloridaCFO.com/WC/organization/eao_offices.html.

In addition, the Division of Workers' Compensation has a Web site section on "Frequently Asked Questions for Employers," which can be accessed at <http://www.MyFloridaCFO.com/WC/faqfaqempmys.html>.

Petition for Benefits

To begin the judicial procedure for obtaining benefits that you believe are due and owing under the law and have not been provided by the employer or insurance carrier, a Petition for Benefits form must be filed with the Office of Judges of Compensation Claims. The form can be accessed at www.jcc.state.fl.us/jcc/forms.asp.

Anti-Fraud Reward Program

Workers' compensation fraud occurs when any person knowingly and with intent to injure, defraud or deceive any employer or employee, insurance carrier or self-insured program, files false or misleading information. Workers' compensation fraud is a third degree felony that can result in fines, civil liability and jail time. Rewards of up to \$25,000 may be paid to individuals who provide information that lead to the arrest and conviction of persons committing insurance fraud. To report suspected workers' compensation fraud, call 1-800-376-0445.