



Memo

To: Agency and Local Health & Safety and L/M Chairs
Date: 10/22/08
Subject: 2007/2008 Workers' Compensation Annual Report Attached

One of the victories associated with the Stop Workplace Violence Campaign was legislation requiring the president of the Civil Service Commission to prepare an annual report describing occupational injuries, illnesses and workers' compensation claims in state agencies. The first report was released in September and covers workers' compensation claims filed from April 1, 2007 - March 31, 2008.

The report helps PEF identify the extent, severity, and cost of work-related injuries, assisting us in our advocacy efforts and helping guide prevention efforts at the agency and local level.

Covering all bargaining units, the report counted 15,846 work-related workers' compensation claims filed during that time period. More than a quarter of the injuries (4,271) resulted in lost time, accounting for 247,975 lost workdays. This is equivalent to the state losing 1240 full time employees to occupational injuries and illnesses. Workers' compensation costs were \$18.7 million for wage replacement and \$19.7 million for medical services. This does not include the cost of ongoing workers' compensation claims that were established in prior years.

Studies have shown the indirect costs are five to 10 times greater than the direct workers' compensation costs and include overtime, replacement workers, administration of benefits and training. On an annual basis the state budgets \$170 million for direct workers' compensation costs, pays the State Insurance Fund \$22 million to administer the claims, and pays \$600,000 for the operation of the Accident Reporting System.

The most common causes of serious injury, workplace violence and back injuries, are very preventable. Their prevention can save the state millions of dollars and help reduce chronic staff shortages in some of our institutional settings

PEF activists are strongly encouraged to use this report to encourage formation of local and agency health and safety committees where they don't exist and also to advocate for prevention programs. This report can be found on the Civil Service Web site or at www.pef.org and click on Health and Safety.

In solidarity,

Kenneth Brynien, President

CC: Statewide Officers
Executive Board
Roger Scales
Brian Curran