

Work Comp Connection



November 2013 Newsletter

Division of Workers Compensation:
Serving Kansas for more than 100 years

Wichita Office Moving to Permanent Location

The Wichita Workers Compensation office will move a few blocks north, to 266 N. Main St., the week of Nov. 18. The office will be closed from Tuesday, Nov. 19, through Friday, Nov. 22.

Phones will be disconnected, however the office can be contacted via email during this time. New phone numbers and an automated calling tree system will replace the current phone numbers.

Watch for the new phone numbers and updates on the move in the [Latest News](#) section online.



Mediation Within Workers Compensation

Mediation is a means of resolving disputes in an informal and nonadversarial atmosphere. Issues that can be mediated are not restricted to medical or temporary total disability benefits.

The parties involved use a neutral third party to facilitate the discussion. The mediator's job is to assist the parties in identifying the issues in dispute and establishing common goals. The mediator has no decision making authority or interest in the outcome of the dispute.

The Division's mediators have received special training in the mediation process and meet or exceed the requirements established by Kansas law and the Kansas Supreme Court. They receive training in conflict resolution techniques, neutrality, agreement writing, ethics, role playing, communication skills, case evaluation and the laws governing mediation.

Mediation is not mandatory or a prerequisite to a hearing, but it can be utilized at any point during the workers compensation process. It only works if the parties are willing to participate and discuss the issues in good faith. Without full participation and good intentions by the parties, success through the mediation process is limited.

This process does not promise to resolve all disputes, but it does provide a forum for sincere and meaningful discussion on the issues. If no agreement is reached, only that fact is made part of the docket file assuring neither party is prejudiced in later hearings.

Communications are confidential. If the dispute is resolved, the mediator can produce a written agreement or an agreed order to memorialize the terms of the resolution.

The Division encourages mediation in workers compensation cases by offering professional mediation free of charge. Professional mediators elsewhere charge a fee that can exceed \$100 per hour depending on the dispute.

With nothing to lose and much to gain, mediation through the Division of Workers Compensation is a cost effective way of resolving disputes within the workers compensation system.

There are no procedural requirements for requesting a mediation conference. For more information, contact wc@dol.ks.gov.

Who's Working for You?

The Applications unit receives applications and motions submitted for hearings. The unit processed 14,070 applications and motions in fiscal year 2013. The unit also sends notice of hearings to the parties involved in a case. They maintain 95 percent compliance through notices of hearings being emailed.

The unit consists of five employees who have nearly 64 years of combined experience at the Division. Team leader Margie Kufahl has worked at the Division for 27 years, Elizabeth Spiker has 20 years experience, Sandi Ray has seven and Anja Brent has worked at the Division for one and a half years. Diane Graves, another team member, has been with the Division for eight years. Diane assists with processing applications and resolving employer and insurance discrepancies. Together, they ensure that the proper documentation included in applications and that it is correct. They enter and code the information into the Division database, assign an Administrative Law Judge and create a docket number to the case.



The unit is the beginning of a claim within the Division of Workers Compensation. The docket becomes the official Division documentation that present and future proceedings rely on for information. The Division of Workers Compensation offers six applications for hearing forms. The various forms are available for attorneys and claimants on the [forms and publications page](#) online. To contact the unit regarding questions about applications, call 785-296-4000.



Gary K. Jones joins the Division in mid-November to replace Nelsonna Potts Barns as an Administrative Law Judge in Wichita. He received his law degree from the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, Ark.; a Master of Arts in Education from the University of Kansas in Lawrence, Kan.; a Bachelor of Science in Education from the University of Missouri in Columbia, Mo.; and an Associate of Arts with an Emphasis in English from Longview Community College in Lee's Summit, Mo.

Before starting his own practice in 2005, Gary worked for Turner and Boisseau in Great Bend, and Smith, Shay, Farmer and Wetta LLC in Wichita. He has also practiced law for Martin and Churchill, and Churchill LLC. Prior to becoming an attorney, Gary taught high school English and was publications editor in the Wichita State University public relations office.

Fast Facts

Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) Release 3 testing with Tier 3 EDI partners began Oct. 1, and will continue through Dec. 20. Check the [Tier 3 Implementation Schedule](#) for your testing date if you are a Tier 3 partner.

The Overland Park office has moved to the ANB Bank building, 2nd floor, 11900 W. 87th St., Lenexa, KS. At the intersection of Quivira Rd. [See a map of the new location.](#)

The [Accident Report](#), form K-WC 1101-A, has been updated on the Forms and Publications page. The employer must send this form to its insurance carrier, third party administrator or pool association for electronic submission to the Division.

The Annual Workers Compensation Seminars are funded by sponsor contributions and exhibitor and attendee fees. They are not supported by taxpayer dollars.



Contact wcseminar@dol.ks.gov
about 2014 booth sales.

**2014 Medical Fee
Schedule
Coming in Nov.**