

Work Comp Connection



Kansas
Department of Labor

October 2015 Newsletter

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

August DigiComp Update

In the July 2015 DigiComp Planning Project update (discussed in the September newsletter) we addressed the need for training for both internal and external users of the new system. Possible training options for internal users were given and now we are in the process of exploring possible training options for all external stakeholders who will be using the system. Examples of external stakeholders are legal staff, insurance carriers, employers and self-insureds.

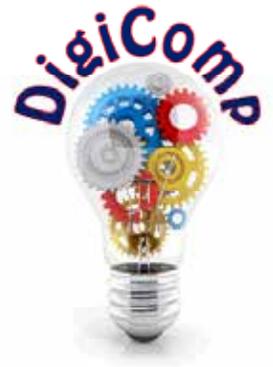
Possible training options include:

- User manuals (step-by-step written instructions)
- Webinars
- Self-help videos
- Regional training

The DigiComp Timeline Web page has been redesigned making it more user friendly. We encourage you to visit the Timeline Web page at www.dol.ks.gov/WorkComp/DigiCompTimeline.aspx to learn how the proposed training options will work.

The DigiComp Communications Team will continue to provide monthly updates to keep you informed about the status of the DigiComp project. The November *Work Comp Connection* newsletter will provide an update about dashboards, which will include a look at automated workflows and their impact on business processes.

Send questions and suggestions to DigiComp@dol.ks.gov.



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Fast Facts

- Find the [Latest News](#) about Workers Compensation online.
- Depending on your occupation, it could be several years before you need to report continuing education documentation for credit purposes. Certification documentation from past Workers Compensation Seminars can be reissued up to five years from the date attended. Contact WCSeminar@dol.ks.gov for assistance.
- Public WiFi is available in lobbies and hearing rooms in all Kansas Workers Compensation regional offices.



Workers Compensation Mediation

Mediation is a means of resolving disputes in an informal and non-adversarial 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 mediation 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.

2016 Workers Compensation Appeals Board Hearing Dates and Locations

*NOTICE: The Board will hold oral arguments on Thursday, May 12, 2016, at the Crawford County Courthouse in the district courtroom at 120 West 4th St., Pittsburg, KS 66762. Please keep this in mind when scheduling future oral arguments. A minimum of four claims will need to be set for hearing that day or the hearing location will revert to Topeka.

Lenexa	Topeka	Wichita
	January 7, 14, & 21	
	February 4, 11, & 18	
March 22	March 3 & 15	
	April 7 & 14	April 22
	May 5 & 12*	May 20
June 9	June 2	June 17
	July 7 & 14	July 22
	August 4 & 11	August 19
September 8	September 1	September 16
	October 6 & 13	October 21
	November 3 & 17	
	December 8 & 15	

Who's Working for You?

Sue Picard joined the Division in September as an Administrative Specialist working in the Ombudsman Unit. She will be answering the telephone and completing general clerical work.

Sue is a native of Menomonee Falls, Wis., and she relocated to Topeka within the past year. She is retired from the United States Air Force where she worked in both active and reserve duty status.

