

October 2010

WORKERS' COMPENSATION NEWS

[BWC Board of Directors](#)

The Board of Directors unanimously approved BWC's proposal to make rule revisions to several employer programs regarding application deadlines. These revisions will be effective for policy years starting January 1, 2011. The **Individual Retrospective Rating Program** participation deadline will be changed from December 1st to the last business day of October and the **Group Retrospective Rating Program** deadline to participate will be changed from the last Friday of September to the last business day of October. The deadline to participate in a **Group Experience Rating Program** will remain the last business day in August. Also, the participation deadline for **Drug-Free Safety Program** and **Deductible Program** will remain the last business day of October.

During the previous board meeting on August 27th, the BWC Board of Directors approved revisions to the PEC small deductible discount table and the PEC large deductible pricing. The highest small deductible discount offered to PEC's before the revision was 25.4%, with the approved changes the highest discount will be 15.4%. The large deductible pricing revisions reflect the deductible levels with the aggregate limit and the pure premium table reaches \$25 million. These revisions will become effective for the January 1, 2011 policy year.

The BWC Board of Directors next meeting will be Friday, October 22, 2010 at 8:00 a.m.

[BWC Net Assets as of August 31st](#)

BWC reported that as of August 31, 2010 their net assets were at \$4.5 billion, which is a \$1.2 billion increase from August 31, 2009 of \$3.3 billion.

[Employer Rate Letters Now Electronic](#)

BWC is transitioning away from mailing rate letters to Ohio employers, and will begin sending electronic notifications regarding employer rates via ohiobwc.com. Employers must have an e-account to view their rate information.

This electronic notification is for rate letters only; all Ohio employers will continue to receive their payroll reports each year via mail.

To set up an e-account

Employers can create an online BWC account by clicking [here](#) and following the instructions.

To view your rate information

Employers with an existing BWC e-account can view your new rates by clicking [here](#).

SAFETY NEWS

Drug-Free Safety Program

The Drug-Free Safety Program (DFSP) will begin for Public Employers on January 1, 2011. The DFSP will offer a 4% discount for participants in the Basic Level, a 7% discount for participants in the Advanced Level and will allow group rated employers participating in the Advanced Level to earn an additional 3% discount on top of their earned group rating discount. The program will also allow employers who have participated in Drug-Free Workplace Program and had exhausted their 5 years of participation to become eligible again.

The application deadline for this program period is October 29, 2010.

To learn more about program requirements for participation in the Basic or Advanced levels, drug testing requirements and training opportunities, please contact a Sheakley representative at 800-877-5055 x 2014 or [click here](#) to visit our website.



Sheakley Gearing Up to Launch On-line Safety Store

Sheakley is all about helping our clients take care of business and is committed to assisting our clients with every aspect of their safety program. We have teamed up with top safety vendors to offer employers the best available source to acquire safety equipment, construction supplies, and personal protective clothing and remediation supplies. Over the next several weeks we'll be rolling out our Sheakley Safety Supply online store. "We've been preparing for this for the last year and we're excited to provide this new service to our clients and help them save money while providing quality safety products," said Angie Wright, Sr. Vice President. Stand by! We'll be adding this new feature soon!

UNEMPLOYMENT NEWS

Ohio Unemployment Rate – August

Ohio unemployment rate for August 2010 is 10.1%, an encouraging decrease from the 10.9% in August 2009. The U.S. rate for August 2010 is at 9.6%.

The number of first-time unemployment claims in Ohio from the first week in September was 11,157, which is a 29 percent drop from last year. Some economists consider last year one of the worst unemployment years in decades which means the 29 percent drop does not give us an accurate picture of our unemployment crisis. Looking back to 1999, the last year when Ohio achieved significant job growth, unemployment claims are currently running at twice that year's rate.

In 2001, Ohio had 5.6 million workers; today we are just over 5 million. The state of Ohio has lost 376,500 jobs since the recession began in December 2007. Solid job growth for Ohio would have us averaging about 6,000 new unemployment claims a week, not the aforementioned 11,157. National economic growth is projected to pick up in 2011, when we may see a slight decrease in unemployment.

LEGISLATIVE NEWS

House Bill 448 – School Bus Seat Belts (Chandler)

The House Bill (introduced February 2010) requires all school buses purchased, leased, or rented after January 1, 2014, that transport students to and from school to be equipped with a seat belt assembly for all passengers. The bill was referred to the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee and an emergency hearing took place in June to quickly advance this measure through legislation after reports of a recent death of a young student in a school bus accident. At this time, the bill is still with the House Committee.

House Bill 586 – Hiring Decisions (Reece)

The House Bill (introduced September 2010) prohibits employers from using a consumer report or investigative consumer report for employment purposes. The bill is proposing that the report contains information concerning the person's consumer creditworthiness, credit standing, or credit capacity and this information should not be used for any matter directly or indirectly related to employment. The bill will not apply to financial institutions using the report to consider a person for employment in a supervisory, managerial, professional, or executive position. A violation of this bill would result in a misdemeanor of the first degree.

Ohio High Risk Health Insurance Pool

The Ohio Department of Insurance has created a high risk pool and open enrollment programs for people who have been denied health-care coverage due to pre-existing conditions. Ohio is asking health insurance companies to notify people that have had their coverage denied, of these government-run alternative programs. Ohio's high risk pool is being administered by Medical Mutual of Ohio, who began taking applications on August 1st. Ohio Department of Insurance estimates that nearly 5,000 Ohioans could eventually participate, as of this month close to 400 have been enrolled. The federal funded pool will be available through 2013 to high-risk Ohioans that have been uninsured for at least six-months. In 2014 the requirement for all Americans to have health insurance is expected to go into effect.

To learn more about these changes and how they will impact your business, please contact our office at 513-326-4675 x2044 or visit our website at www.sheakley.com.