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BWC to Offer Grant Savings for Wholesale, Retail Employers

Ohio BWC Administrator/CEO Stephen Buehrer announced a grant program to reduce or eliminate occupational injuries and illnesses in the wholesale/retail trade sector. As part of BWC's ongoing research partnership with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) to enhance safety practices for Ohio's workforce, the program provides funds to employers in this sector to purchase safety equipment while participating in a study that will guide future programming and establish best practices for accident and injury prevention.

Participating employers will receive 2-to-1 matching funds, up to \$40,000, through BWC's SafetyGRANT\$ Program to purchase equipment that can reduce workplace injuries and illnesses. In return, employers agree to take part in a two-year follow-up study with BWC and NIOSH to determine the cost effectiveness of these interventions in reducing occupational injuries.

BWC entered into a research partnership with NIOSH last fall to examine why injuries occur, and how to help Ohio businesses prevent accidents in the future. This study of the wholesale/retail trade sector represents the first major collaboration resulting from the partnership. The goal is to reduce injuries and illnesses, particularly musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) and traumatic slip/trip/fall injuries that are prevalent in this industry. MSDs account for 40 percent of lost-time claims in this industry; sprains and strains account for 77 percent of these MSDs.

Eligible employers pay into the State Insurance Fund and operate in the wholesale/retail trade sector, or perform delivery operations of large items (e.g., appliances, furniture, vending machines, furnaces, water heaters, etc). Half of the participating employers will receive funds when the study begins this winter; the other half will receive them in spring 2012.

Did you Know... Sheakley UniComp rated first among all MCOs in Ohio for the Bureau's Return to Work Measurement (DoDM) for the 4th Quarter 2010.