

Top 10 workers' compensation questions for small employers

1 Do I need workers' compensation insurance?

If you employ one or more subject workers, you must purchase a workers' compensation policy. Every worker in Oregon is a subject worker unless the worker falls under an exemption. If you pay someone to work for you, and you are in charge of the way the job is done, that worker is probably a subject worker. You should check with an insurance agent or a workers' compensation insurer to ask about insurance.

2 How do I buy workers' compensation insurance?

Resources available for locating workers' compensation insurance companies include the following:

- Your insurance agent
- The internet
- Department of Consumer and Business Services (DCBS) website at www.oregon.gov/DCBS/SBO
- Or contact the Small Business Ombudsman for Workers' Compensation at 503.378.4209

If you are turned down by at least one insurance company, your agent can help you apply to the Oregon Workers' Compensation Insurance Plan (the Assigned Risk Plan) at 800.622.4123 or www.ncci.com.

3 What does workers' comp do for me?

Workers' compensation insurance protects workers by paying for medical treatment and lost wages; it protects employers by shielding them from liability lawsuits that might result from work-related injuries or illnesses. Without insurance DCBS can fine you, and you will be responsible for all claim costs paid by the state guarantee fund if your subject worker is injured.

The workers' compensation system is designed to:

- Prevent or reduce worker injuries and illnesses
- Provide appropriate medical treatment and benefits to help injured workers recover and return to work as soon as possible
- Resolve disputes quickly and fairly

4 How are claims filed?

A claim is most commonly filed when an injured employee fills out a Workers' Compensation Claim Form (801) or a medical practitioner or emergency room facility completes a Worker's and Physician's Report for Workers' Compensation Claim Form (827) when the employee first seeks medical treatment. Filing a claim for a work related injury or illness is required by law.

Learn more

Visit saif.com to find out more about coverage, request a quote, or sign up for our quick and easy email tips.



5 Who can file a claim?

Claims are filed by employees who sustain on-the-job injuries or illnesses. If you have questions regarding coverage, you should contact your insurer or DCBS.

6 Why should I care about returning employees to work?

One of the most important things you can do to assist your employee in recovering from an occupational injury or illness is to provide physically appropriate modified work as soon as the attending physician outlines temporary work restrictions. In addition to impacting your employee's recovery time, proactive return-to-work efforts may also reduce your workers' compensation claim costs. Both you and your employee will benefit by maintaining the employee's productivity within your business operation.

7 Why should I care about workplace safety?

Oregon law requires you to provide a safe workplace for your employees. A safe workplace is not only a requirement for Oregon business owners; it also makes sound business sense. Safety programs and policies, along with a commitment to safety demonstrated by owners and management, have a positive effect on employee morale, product/service quality, production and profit.

8 What about hiring and firing?

A strong workplace safety culture starts with the hiring process. A process for recruiting, interviewing, hiring, training, orientation, performance reviews and progressive discipline will help you hire and keep the best possible employees while guiding them to perform safely on the job.

9 How does the insurance company calculate my price?

The first step in determining the proper price, or premium, for a business is to identify the correct classification for the business. There are over 550 classes in the Oregon workers' compensation system. Each class groups businesses together that share common exposures to hazards. The National Council on Compensation Insurance (NCCI), the rating organization for Oregon, calculates a base rate for each class based on payroll and losses for work subject to that class. Insurance companies then add their expenses to the base rates, so rates vary by insurance company.

One or more of the classes that best describe your business are assigned to your policy. Your premium is based on your businesses' payroll and the rate for the class(es) assigned. This develops a premium for your insurance coverage. Additional factors may be applied to modify your premium. Some modification programs are required by NCCI and some may be programs unique to your insurance company. A DCBS assessment, a percentage of your premium, is also charged.

10 How do I report my payroll?

Workers' compensation insurance carriers generally provide you with an employer's payroll report to report your subject payroll for each classification assigned to your policy. Payroll reporting frequency varies depending on your estimated annual premium, or type of bill plan offered. Some carriers offer payroll reporting via their website. Your subject payroll determines your actual premium due.