

Medical care for work-related injuries and illnesses: Questions and answers



What is the Department of Labor and Industries?

Labor & Industries (L&I) is a department responsible for protecting the safety of workers in the state of Washington. When someone is injured at work or develops a work-related illness, L&I pays for medical treatment. L&I also works to maintain safe workplaces for all employees regardless of their legal status.

Who can file a claim through L&I?

Any worker who is injured on the job or who develops an occupational disease has the right to file a claim and seek medical treatment. There are some situations in which a worker is not covered by L&I, including, for example, cooks and gardeners in private homes or people working in exchange for food or housing. For more information, go to www.Lni.wa.gov and enter *workers not covered* in the Search box.

How can I file a claim? What are the steps to follow?

1. Tell your employer that you were injured or need treatment for a work-related illness.
2. Get medical treatment. For your first visit, you can go to any doctor: they do not have to be in L&I's Medical Provider Network. But if you need medical treatment after that first visit, you will need to see a doctor in our network.
3. Complete your portion of the accident report, then:
 - a. The doctor will fill out their part of the accident report and send it to L&I.
 - b. An L&I claim manager will decide if L&I will accept, or *allow*, your claim. The claim manager also decides what other information is needed from you, your employer, or your doctor.

How do I know the status of my claim?

L&I will mail information to you that explains the status of your claim and tells you how to contact your claim manager. These communications will be in your language of preference.

You will also receive copies of all correspondence that L&I sends to your doctor and your employer. That information will be written in English. You can also get information about your claim through L&I's Claim and Account Center at www.Lni.wa.gov.

Can I get fired if I file a claim?

It is against the law for your employer to fire you just because you file a claim. (However, if your injury happened because you violated a safety rule, your employer may fire you.)

If you believe you have been fired just for filing a claim, contact L&I for help at 1-866-324-3310. Within 90 days of the date that you believe you were unfairly fired, you must also complete a form, *An Industrial Insurance Discrimination Complaint*, and send it to L&I. This form is available in English (F262-009-000) and Spanish (F262-009-999) at www.Lni.wa.gov.

Once L&I has accepted my claim, will I receive any bills from any doctor while being seen for an injury?

You should not receive any medical bills related to your injury. But please continue to check your mail and, if you do receive a bill related to your L&I claim, contact the department.



Washington State Department of
Labor & Industries
Workers' Compensation Services

Upon request, foreign language support and formats for persons with disabilities are available. Call 1-800-547-8367. TDD users, call 711. L&I is an equal opportunity employer.

L&I pays for medical care only for conditions that are recognized, or *allowed*, as part of an accepted claim. Some provider visits or tests may require pre-approval from L&I.

What type of visits may require pre-approval?

Some visits to specialty doctors, occupational therapy, physical therapy, surgeries and imaging appointments may need pre-approval, also called *prior authorization*.

How long from the date of injury do I have to open a claim for a work injury?

You have up to one year to file a new claim for a work injury. For a work-related illness or disease, you can file a claim for up to two years from the date that a doctor tells you in writing that you have a work-related disease.

If my claim has been closed but I am still having issues, how long do I have to request re-opening of the claim?

You have up to seven years after claim closure to file to re-open your claim for benefits.

- After seven years, if approved, your claim may reopen for medical treatment.
- After seven years, if you want to reopen your claim for additional benefits such as wage replacement, an award for permanent partial disability, vocational services, or a pension, the approval of the L&I Director is required.

What percentage of my wages will be reimbursed by L&I?

If your claim is approved, wage-replacement benefits (also called *time-loss compensation*) can replace some — but not all — of the wages you were earning. The benefit depends on your marital status and number of dependents.

Some of my prescriptions have not been covered by L&I because my claim was not yet approved. Can I get reimbursed?

You can submit a *Statement for Pharmacy Services* form with a receipt. L&I will decide whether to reimburse the costs of the prescriptions. This form is available in English (F245-100-000) and in Spanish (F245-100-999).

For more information about claims, or to download forms

Go to www.Lni.wa.gov.