

ICC Insider

Volume 2 Issue 2

February 2005

New Information Forthcoming from the ICC:

- Injury Compensation Handbook
- ICC Pocket Cards



"I find that the harder I work, the more luck I seem to have."

—Thomas Jefferson



Inside this Issue...

Winter Weather Adds "Gust to" the Challenges...	2
Compensation Benefits—Do They Ever Actually...	2
OWCP Announces New ACS Telephone Access Number and...	2
Leave Buyback 101—Back to the Basics	3
ACS Medical Authorization Processing...	3
The ICC Staff Have Been Asked...	3
Just For Fun—Workers' Compensation Word Find	4

New "Pipeline Program" Facilitates Returning Injured Employees to Workplace

The Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) has authorized the *Pipeline Reemployment Program for Defense Employees for all Department of Defense (DOD) Components*. The "Pipeline Program" removes the barriers of funding and full-time equivalent (FTE) availability, and provides DOD installations with the necessary overhire and civilian pay authorities, thus clearing the way for agencies to return injured employees to suitable, productive work.

The DLA Injury Compensation Center (ICC), has identified 27 partially-recovered employees eligible for placement under the Program. Collectively, these individuals earn nearly \$58,000 in compensation each month. This is money the Agency is paying to work-capable individuals without the benefit of any services being performed.



The Pipeline Program covers the costs of re-employing injured workers for 1 year.

The ICC is coordinating requests for Pipeline FTE allocations and funding with the Civilian Personnel Management Service. Under the Program, FTE allocations will be made upon approval of the request for funding by OSD. Funding, available for a period of up to 1 year, will be dispersed each fiscal quarter and given to DOD installations that have returned injured employees to work.

The ICC will be working closely with the Agency's Human Resources offices and DLA Managers to identify and develop positions, and initiate job offers. All Agency supervisors and managers are encouraged to review the labor requirements of their organizations. If you have a job that needs to be done, we want to hear from you!

ICC Issues Memorandum Clarifying Handling of Workers' Compensation Claim Information

Program guidance was issued to all supervisors on January 12, 2005, in response to an increase in the number of requests for the sharing of information related to workers' compensation claims.

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) is the legal guardian of all workers' compensation data. Agencies do not have the authority to

distribute this data, which is protected under the Privacy Act, without DOL approval. The DLA ICC is the Agency's designated office of record and should be the sole recipient of information.

The Memorandum is available on the ICC's web site at: <http://www.hr.dla.mil/hr/bnfts/owcp/owcp.htm>.

WINTER WEATHER ADDS “GUST TO” THE CHALLENGES OF WORKPLACE SAFETY

Plunging winter temperatures and inclement weather conditions this time of year increase the potential for workplace injuries and illnesses. Slips, trips, and falls are common as employees make their way to and from their offices; and typically, Federal agencies see a marked increase in the number of workers’ compensation claims filed for sprains, strains, and fractures to various body parts. Less noticeable however, is another epidemic: the health effects of working in cold weather.

All Federal workers should know that prolonged exposure to freezing or cold temperatures may cause serious health problems. Employ-

ees who are in poor health, or those who take certain medications may face increased risks. The Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) has developed a “Cold Stress Card” that provides tips and suggested precautions for employees working in cold weather.

The Card includes danger signals to watch for such as uncontrolled shivering, slurred speech, and clumsy movements. The Card also offers advice that will help employees protect themselves. Employees are encouraged to dress properly by wearing layers of clothing that can



be adjusted to changing weather conditions. They are also encouraged to take short, frequent breaks in warm, dry shelters. Refreshments should consist of warm, sweet beverages, and high-calorie foods such as hot pasta dishes. Caffeine and alcohol should be avoided. Most importantly, all employees are encouraged to use the buddy system by working in pairs.

Free copies of OSHA’s “Cold Stress Card” may be obtained by visiting OSHA’s website at: www.osha.gov, or by calling toll-free: 1-800-321-OSHA.

Compensation Benefits—Do They Ever Actually End?

The Federal Employees’ Compensation Act (FECA) provides benefits for civilian employees of the United States who have suffered work-related injuries or illnesses. Employees who fully or partially recover from their injuries are expected to return to work.



The FECA is administered by the Office of Workers’ Compensation Programs (OWCP). OWCP retains the

sole authority to make all determinations regarding benefits entitlement.

An injured employee’s entitlement to compensation ends when:

- the employee returns to full duty in the job held when injured, or is otherwise reemployed in a job which results in no loss of wages.

- the employee refuses an offer of a suitable job, and the cause for refusal is not reasonable. OWCP determines

the suitability of the job offer and decides the reasonableness of the refusal.

- the employee abandons a suitable job.

- OWCP receives medical evidence showing that the employee no longer has limitations resulting from the work injury, or that the employee’s disability is not causally related to the work injury.

- the employee is convicted of defrauding the Federal Government with respect to a claim for benefits.

OWCP Announces New Telephone Access Number and Enhancements to Automated Phone System

Effective January 3, 2005, callers wishing to speak with a customer service representative will have to do so via a newly established toll-call number: (850) 558-1818.

This is the phone number for inquiries regarding medical authorizations and billing. Injured workers, medical providers, pharmacies, and agency

representatives may utilize this number. All callers should be prepared to provide the injured worker’s claim number, and may be asked for other identifying information.

Alternatively, general claims information may be obtained by contacting the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) Service at toll-free (866) 335-8319. Information acces-

sible through the IVR includes bill payment history and authorized medical care.



Medical providers will be able to check to see whether certain services are payable under the claim, and they will be able to obtain information regarding issued bill payments.

Leave Buyback 101—Back to the Basics

Question: If an employee uses sick or annual leave due to an on-the-job injury, can the leave be restored and compensation paid instead?

Answer: Such leave may be repurchased, subject to the employer's agreement, if the claim is approved and medical evidence shows that the employee was unable to work because of the injury during the period claimed.

Many employees wonder why it costs them money to have leave restored that was used in connection with a work-related injury. The answer is simple: while on leave, an employee receives pay at 100 percent of his/her usual wage

rate; whereas, compensation is paid at either 66 2/3 percent (without dependents) or 75 percent (with dependents). The injured employee must refund to the Agency the difference between the compensation entitlement and the amount of paid leave received. Hence the name "leave buyback."



The Agency retains the sole discretion in granting an employee's leave buyback request. Such approval is contingent upon the availability of official leave records. **Any claim for leave buyback must be submitted within 1 year of the date the leave was used or the claim was accepted, whichever is later.**

All requests shall be submitted for a minimum of 10 hours of leave unless no further claims are anticipated. Forms required for leave buyback are the CA-7, CA-7a, and CA-7b, which are available at: <http://www.hr.dla.mil/hr/bnfts/owcp/SC810.html>.

Leave buyback entails changing of the employee's leave record to leave without pay (LWOP) in order for compensation to be paid. Employees should understand that a LWOP status can result in the loss of leave accruals and in contributions to the Thrift Savings Plan. Additionally, because compensation is a tax-free benefit, leave buyback can also affect the employee's income taxes.

Medical Authorization Processing—New Templates for Faxed Requests

Effective January 3, 2005, a new, uniform process was implemented for medical authorization requests. This change is expected to expedite the authorization process, resulting in more timely responses.

Affiliated Computer Systems (ACS), contractor to the OWCP, has developed three standardized templates for medical providers to use to fax authorization requests. These three templates cover a broad

range of standard services: general medical and surgical procedures, requests for physical and occupational therapy, and the purchase or rental of durable medical equipment.

All templates are available on the DLA ICC web site: <http://www.hr.dla.mil/hr/bnfts/owcp/owcp.htm>

Medical providers should fax their

authorization requests directly to ACS at (800) 215-4901. Injured employees and medical providers should understand that ICC cannot make ANY authorization determinations.



For faster service, all medical providers are encouraged to make their requests online via ACS web portal at: <http://owcp.dol.acs-inc.com>.

The ICC Staff Have Been Asked...

Q: How will I know whether my claim has been accepted by the DOL?

A: In very simple cases, the injured employee receives a postcard from DOL advising that medical expenses up to a set amount—at present the amount is \$1,500.00, will be paid without further information from the



employee and no formal adjudication by DOL claims personnel. These are considered "Short Form Closure" cases.

In most other cases, the injured employee receives a formal letter from DOL signed by a claims examiner. This letter specifies the accepted injury-related medical conditions and provides information

explaining how to claim further benefits.

Q: Are compensation payments subject to Federal income tax?

A: Not at present. Employees receiving compensation benefits should refer to instructions provided by the Internal Revenue Service each year.



CONTACTING THE ICC

Defense Logistics Agency, J-1
 Injury Compensation Center
 8725 John J. Kingman Road, STOP 6231
 Fort Belvoir, VA 22060-6221

ICC Business Hours: 6:00am—6:00pm (EST)
 Toll-Free Phone: 1-866-737-9724
 Phone: (703) 767-7494 or (703) 767-2958
 DSN Prefix 427
 Fax: (703) 767-7128 or (703) 767-8348 DSN 427
 Email: ICC@dla.mil
 Website: <http://www.hr.dla.mil>

Individuals and families can promote good health by making smart choices. Some offered tips:

1. Wash Your Hands
2. Use Safety Belts
3. Reduce or Stop Tobacco Use

Source: Office of Personnel Management;
www.opm.gov/healthierfed/healthchoices.asp



The DLA Injury Compensation Center (ICC) was established to provide comprehensive claims processing assistance to the entire Agency and its serviced customers. Concurrent with its operational responsibilities, the ICC is also focusing on cost reduction by performing extensive chargeback review and case management. All Agency workers' compensation case files are maintained by the ICC, located at DLA Headquarters in Fort Belvoir, VA.

The ICC officially opened for business on November 4, 2002 and is currently staffed by a team of six (6) Specialists and three (3) Assistants under the direction of the DLA Injury Compensation Program Manager.



"He who dares, wins." — Anonymous

Just For Fun—Workers' Compensation Word Find Offers a Lighter Side of Learning

F O R M S Y D H J A Y F T N U
 B B W I D Y R E W C M M R L M
 J T S T Q X N U X W L I E K Z
 L N X K P T J V J F X A A N X
 O C C U P A T I O N A L T B P
 C Y U X J U P M Z E I C M I B
 N O I T A S N E P M O C E L N
 Y R E V O C E R P D S D N L J
 M B K D U A R F E M Z Z T S L
 C O N T R O V E R S I O N Z V

BILLS
 CLAIM
 COMPENSATION
 CONTROVERSION
 FORMS

FRAUD
 INJURY
 OCCUPATIONAL
 RECOVERY
 TREATMENT

Everybody loves a puzzle. If you're feeling game, give this one a try. It incorporates some of the more common terms used in the workers' compensation program. The solution is available on our website:

<http://www.hr.dla.mil/hr/bnfts/owcp/owcp.htm>



Source: Discovery School's Puzzlemaker;
www.puzzlemaker.com Create and print customized puzzles using your own word lists.