



SAFETY RESOURCES

Winter 2024



This issue contains essential safety articles to help you comply with Ohio's workers' compensation regulations to effectively manage your small business this winter.



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IMPORTANT DATES:

January 2025

- **January 31**
 - Deadline to enroll into the Claim Impact Reduction Program

March 2025

- **March 31**
 - **Deadline** to request change in estimated annual payroll.
 - Drug Free Safety Program annual report due to BWC.
 - **Deadline** to request change in installment plan.
 - **Deadline** for Claim Impact Reduction Program safety education requirement.

April 2025

- **April 16-18**
 - Ohio Safety Congress and Expo.

BWC Recreational Waiver

To help boost morale and create stronger bonds for their employees, employers may sometimes sponsor or host recreational and fitness activities for their employees. These activities could include an afternoon playing Top Golf, creating a workplace softball, kickball, or volleyball team, or have an office Holiday party. Employers may feel cautious about sponsoring or hosting these types of activities for fear of an employee getting injured and filing a workers' compensation claim. The Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation offers a recreational waiver called a C-159 form, which allows employees participating in these type of activities to voluntarily waive their ability to file a workers' compensation claim if injured while voluntarily participating in these activities.

The [C-159 form](#) allows the employer to describe the activities for which the employees wish to waive workers' compensation coverage. The form needs to be signed by both the employer and employee, and the employer must provide the employee with a copy of the waiver. The employer would only submit the completed [C-159 form](#) after an employee files a workers' compensation claim.

For more information: Email [Zachary Stewart](#) or call (614) 932-1565.

Processing Fraudulent Claims

Ohio Department of Jobs & Family Services

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) is still processing many unemployment claims that are suspected of being fraudulent.

Federal law requires ODJFS to send determination notices to employers that were named as the employer in the fraudulent claim. If you should receive a determination that you've already reported as fraudulent, please save it for your records. No further action is needed by the employer.

For more information: Email [Staci Schwartz](#) or call (614) 932-1540

Partial Unemployment Benefits

Employees that work part time or have a reduction in hours could be entitled to unemployment benefits. In order to receive unemployment benefits, the employee first must meet the eligibility requirements determined by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS). The employee must be totally or partially unemployed at the time of filing the application, and the employee must have the required weeks and earnings during the base period of the claim. If the employee meets these requirements and the employee works part time or has a reduction in hours (through no fault of their own) and the gross wages are less than the weekly benefit amount, then the employee could be eligible for unemployment benefits.

The individual is required to report any income paid or payable to them while claiming unemployment benefits. If the gross earnings are less than the weekly benefit amount, then the individual could be entitled to a partial benefit. Ohio law allows an exemption of 20 percent of the weekly benefit amount. An example of this is below:

The weekly benefit amount is \$400, and the gross earnings are \$200.

**TO CALCULATE THE EARNINGS
DEDUCTION:**

$$\begin{array}{rcl}
 \text{\textbf{\$200}} & - & \text{\textbf{\$80}} & = & \text{\textbf{\$120}} \\
 \text{\textit{Total earnings}} & & \text{\textit{Exemption}} & & \text{\textit{Earnings}} \\
 \text{\textit{in a week}} & & \text{\textit{(20% of \$400)}} & & \text{\textit{Deduction}}
 \end{array}$$

**TO CALCULATE THE AMOUNT OF
BENEFITS TO BE PAID:**

$$\begin{array}{rcl}
 \text{\textbf{\$400}} & - & \text{\textbf{\$120}} & = & \text{\textbf{\$280}} \\
 \text{\textit{Weekly Benefit}} & & \text{\textit{Earnings}} & & \text{\textit{Benefit}} \\
 \text{\textit{Amount}} & & \text{\textit{Deduction}} & & \text{\textit{Amount Paid}}
 \end{array}$$

If earnings are greater than the weekly benefits amount, then the individual would not be eligible for a partial unemployment payment.

For more information: Email [Staci Schwartz](#) or call (614) 932-1540



Changes Coming to Annual Payroll True-Up Report

The Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) has announced a change to the deadline for the annual true-up report. Starting with 2024's policy year, **the deadline to complete the payroll true-up report process will be August 31st.**

On July 1, 2025, BWC will open the window for employers to complete the payroll true-up process. Employers must report their actual payroll for the previous policy year (July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025) by August 31, 2025. If the final calculated premium is greater than the previously remitted premium, employers must also pay the outstanding balance by August 31, 2025.

Any overpayment of premium will be refunded or credited to the account. True-up payments must be made online at www.bwc.ohio.gov or by phone at 1 (800) 644-6292.

There will be no grace period for employers who do not complete the payroll true-up process by August 31st, 2025.

Failure to file the annual payroll true-up report and pay any outstanding balance by August 31, 2025, will result in the following penalties:

- Immediate removal from any current group rating or retrospective rating plan.
- Immediate removal from any BWC program, such as the Claim Impact Reduction Program.
- Disqualification from any group rating or retrospective rating plan the following year.
- Disqualification from any BWC program the following year, such as the Claim Impact Reduction Program.
- The BWC will add an additional 10% to the premium owed, and bill the employer.
- The BWC may certify the true-up outstanding balances to the Ohio Attorney General's office for collection.

For more information: Email [Zachary Stewart](mailto:Zachary.Stewart@bwc.ohio.gov) or call (614) 932-1565.

SharedWork Program

The SharedWork Ohio Program is a voluntary layoff aversion program. The program allows workers to remain employed and employers to retain employees during times of reduced business activity. The participating employer reduces employee's hours in a uniform manner. The participating employees will work the reduced schedule each week, and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) will pay them a prorated unemployment insurance benefit.

Ohio employers may apply for the SharedWork program through ODJFS by submitting an application online. There are requirements employers must meet to be approved.

Please visit jfs.ohio.gov/ouc/SharedWorkOhio for additional information and to submit an application online.

Visit the Ohio Department of Jobs & Family Services for more information.

For additional information:

Email [Staci Schwartz](mailto:Staci.Schwartz@jfs.ohio.gov) or call (614) 932-1540.