

COMP BITS

JULY 2017 NEWSLETTER

- A recent Ohio Supreme Court decision found that a post-accident positive drug test from which the employee was terminated did not preclude the payment of temporary total benefits even though the claimant did not have a job to return to as a result of the positive drug test.
- Voluntary abandonment issues are now very obscure and require a more complex approach to dealing with removal from employment.
- A recent study found that 18% of injured workers do not return to work within a year of the date of injury. Aggressive claims management must be the immediate focus. Soft tissue injuries may require a defense medical exam almost immediately.
- The Ohio Department of Job & Family Services has launched a new procedure to make courtesy calls to employers and TPAs early in the adjudication process. These are in an effort to improve the quality of claim decisions and to expedite information.
- The payroll True-up period began July 1st and ends August 15th for private employers. The quickest and easiest way to true-up is online. The August 15th deadline is critical. If you do not complete the true-up by that date you may not be eligible for current or future alternative rating and premium discount programs.
- Employers who were billed premium for policy year ending 6/30/16 for private employers or 12/31/15 for public employers and who are current in meeting their policy requirements will receive a one-time rebate beginning in July for 66% of their premiums for the policy year that ended 6/30/16.
 - Checks will arrive in a white envelope labeled IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS ENCLOSED
 - BWC must have your current mailing address and FEIN on file in order to mail your rebate – you can verify this information through www.bwc.ohio.gov
 - Rebate recipients may receive an IRS 1099 tax document – these will be mailed no later than 1/30/18
- *House Bill 27*, which contains the BWC's 2-year budget, recently passed in the Ohio House. Four items of interest to employers in the bill are:
 - Changes the current allowed time to file a claim from 2 years to 1 year from the date of injury.
 - Extends the current allowed time to file an Industrial Commission appeal to common pleas court from 60 days to 150 days.
 - Revises the types and amounts of controlled substances that will result in a rebuttable presumption that an employee was under the influence at the time of injury.
 - Allows BWC to dismiss permanent partial applications for injured workers who fail to attend a medical examination scheduled by BWC. Currently those applications are suspended.
- Keep your identity safe! Regularly review your account statements, and monitor free credit reports. Any suspicious or fraudulent activity should be reported immediately. Get a copy of your credit report from the 3 major reporting agencies at least once a year and request fraud alerts and security freezes. You can get more information from the FTC at <http://www.consumer.gov/idtheft>.
- Note that the IRS will never:
 - Call to demand immediate payment using a specific payment method such as a prepaid debit card, gift card or wire transfer. Generally, the IRS will first mail you a bill if you owe any taxes.
 - Threaten to immediately bring in local or other law enforcement groups to have you arrested for not paying.
- The workers' comp group-rating marketing campaigns have begun. **Be careful what you sign!**
- **CALL US FOR ALL OF YOUR INSURANCE NEEDS!**