



ANNUAL REPORT

FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024

Mike DeWine, Governor · **Jim Tressel, Lt. Governor**



**Industrial
Commission**

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LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

I am pleased to present the Ohio Industrial Commission's (OIC) Annual Report for Fiscal Year (FY) 2024.

Under the leadership of Governor Mike DeWine, the OIC is dedicated to providing outstanding customer service, while seeking ways to streamline and improve the services we offer to the injured workers and employers of Ohio. In the past fiscal year, our agency adjudicated more than 88,000 disputed workers' compensation claims via Webex and across our 12 local offices located throughout the State of Ohio.

As this report demonstrates, we are an agency that proudly strives to modernize operations and enhance our customers' experiences when interacting with the agency, while at the same time making and implementing sensible and fiscally responsible financial choices.

A few of our recent agency highlights include:

- Through streamlined operations and efficiency measures, the agency's Columbus office space footprint in the William Green Building has been reduced, saving an estimated \$200,000 in rental expenditures annually.
- Maintained the agency's annual total expenditure level within a narrow 3.5% variance band that initiated in FY 2013.
- Held FY 2024 expenditures at \$46.3 MM, the tenth consecutive year that agency expenditures have been within the \$44 MM to \$47 MM range.
- Achieved a Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) rate of 36.03 percent in FY 2024 versus the 15 percent statutory threshold in FY 2024. The Encouraging Diversity, Growth and Equality (EDGE) compliance rate is 20.05 percent versus the 5 percent policy requirement for the same period.
- Instituted numerous technological advancements to enhance the OIC staff's ability to provide first-rate customer service in a hybrid environment.
- Continued to maintain a high-level security presence for the agency's customers and employees with security inspections and audits, training, emergency preparedness, and coordinating with the Department of Administrative Services on an updated contract for armed security guards, ensuring the retention of high-quality employees.
- Maintained compliance with all R.C. 4123.511 statutory timeframes.
- Continued to sustain very high court affirmation rates for final hearing orders appealed to court.

It is an honor and a privilege to lead an agency dedicated to our core mission of serving the injured workers and employers of Ohio through expeditious and impartial resolution of issues arising from workers' compensation claims, and through the establishment of adjudication policy. Throughout the next fiscal year, we will continue to provide outstanding customer service to ensure our continued commitment to providing fair, compassionate, and professional hearings for all concerned parties, while remaining on a path of fiscal prudence.

Sincerely,



Jim Hughes, Chairman

ABOUT THE OHIO INDUSTRIAL COMMISSION (OIC)

The OIC conducts more than 85,000 hearings each fiscal year, and most of these hearings take place within 45 days of the original claim appeal. This timeframe means you may expect first-rate customer service as the OIC provides a forum for appealing Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) and self-insuring employer decisions. Since 1912, the OIC has resolved issues between parties who have a dispute in a workers' compensation claim. With each claim, the agency is dedicated to providing information and resources to help customers navigate through the appeals process.

The OIC conducts hearings on disputed claims at three levels: the District level, the Staff level, and the Commission level. The Governor appoints the three-member Commission, and the Ohio Senate confirms these nominations. By previous vocation, employment or affiliation, it is mandated that one member of the Commission represents employees, one represents employers and one represents the public.

During this fiscal year, Chairman Jim Hughes represented the employees; Cheri L. Hottinger represented the public; and Daniel J. Massey represented employers.

COMMISSIONERS



Jim Hughes

Employee Member

Dates of Service: July 2019 - June 2025

Jim Hughes has spent his career demonstrating his passion for public service.

He was appointed by Governor Mike DeWine to be the Chairman and employee member of the Ohio Industrial Commission for a term that began on July 1, 2019.

Jim brings decades of legal knowledge and public policy experience to his role as Chairman. He began his career as a bailiff and court constable in the Franklin County Court of Common Pleas. He later served as assistant prosecutor in the City of

Columbus Prosecutor's Office and then as assistant prosecutor for Franklin County. He also worked previously as an attorney and partner at the Isaac Wiles law firm in Columbus.

In 2000, he was appointed to the Ohio House of Representatives and was later elected to the Ohio House of Representatives in 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006, and 2016; and the Ohio Senate in 2008 and 2012. During his 18 years in the Ohio General Assembly, Jim supported legislation that toughened criminal penalties, protected children, reformed taxes, streamlined regulations, and incentivized businesses to settle in Ohio. He also served on many legislative committees including Civil Justice, Insurance and Financial Institutions, Energy and Public Utilities, Transportation and Public Safety, and Criminal Justice.

Jim has received numerous accolades from several groups over the course of his career. He has been named Legislator of the Year by the FOP Capital City Lodge No. 9, the Ohio Fire Chief's Association, the Ohio Nurses Association, the Ohio Association of Professional Firefighters and the AMVETS Department of Ohio. In addition, he has received the Ohio Association for Justice Workers' Compensation Outstanding Service Award, and the Watchdog of the Treasury Award, among others.

Jim earned his Juris Doctorate at Capital University Law School after completing his bachelor's degree in business administration at The Ohio State University. He and his wife Susan live in Upper Arlington, and have a daughter, Kaela.



Cheri L. Hottinger

Public Member

Dates of Service: July 2023 - June 2029

Cheri Hottinger has dedicated most of her career to helping a wide variety of constituencies, with a particular focus on public service.

Throughout her career, Cheri has accumulated vast business knowledge, beginning in 1995 when she led the operations of the Jay Company, Inc., an industrial electrical contractor, in partnership with the IBEW, Local 1105. In addition to her administrative duties, she worked closely with labor representatives, while serving on the Health & Welfare Board of Local 1105. Cheri was also involved with matters that included

evaluating internal workers' compensation claims, oversight of premiums, safety compliance and risk assessment.

Cheri later entered public service when she was elected Councilwoman-At-Large for the City of Newark, Ohio, a position she held from 2000-2003 and, again, from 2021-2023.

In the summer of 2004, Cheri expanded her civic engagement, when she was named President & CEO of the Newark Area Chamber of Commerce – a position she held for the next 12 years. Cheri's role included facilitating safety councils, training seminars and program development. To help improve the workers' compensation

system for both employers and employees, Cheri was instrumental in bringing the BWC Group Rating Program to the Chamber and its 900+ members. While Cheri was President, the Chamber grew into the Licking County Chamber of Commerce and was listed as the largest Chamber in Central Ohio. During Cheri's tenure, the Chamber was honored with numerous BWC Safety Council of the Year awards, including first, second, and third place designations. Additionally, Cheri was named Chamber Executive of the Year by the Chamber of Commerce Executives of Ohio.

Cheri was also a co-founder of Grow Licking County Community Improvement Corporation and Newark Development Partners Community Improvement Corporation. Cheri served as a board member and treasurer for Grow Licking County CIC and focused on the economic development and growth of the county. A significant portion of her efforts involved attracting new businesses to Licking County, while working to retain and expand operations of existing employers. Cheri pursued similar economic development efforts with Newark Development Partners CIC, with a particular focus on the City of Newark. One of the most important projects during Cheri's tenure was the renovation of downtown Newark, a public-private partnership that has revitalized the local economy.

In 2016, Cheri made a career change by joining Park National Bank as a Vice President and Business Development Officer for the Commercial Loan Department. She continued to serve the Licking County community in this new role.

Currently, in addition to her duties at the Ohio Industrial Commission, Cheri serves as the Chairperson of the Self-Insuring Employers Evaluation Board.

Cheri and her husband, Jay, live in Newark and have three daughters and a granddaughter. Cheri is an avid Buckeyes fan and can frequently be found at the stadium on game days.



Daniel J. Massey

Employer Member

Dates of Service: July 2021 – June 2027

Dan brings decades of experience both within and outside state government.

He began his career as an Ohio assistant attorney general where his practice was both in litigation and agency representation. During his tenure, Dan's clients included the Ohio Department of Transportation, the Ohio Department of Commerce, and the Ohio Department of Insurance. He also represented various boards and commissions, including the Ohio State Dental Board and the Ohio State Racing

Commission.

While working in state government, he also headed the legislative program within the Ohio Attorney General's Office and was involved in the enactment of the Ohio Consumer Sales Practice Act and the lobbying disclosure law.

After leaving government service, he practiced law in Columbus. He maintained both a legislative and corporate practice and was instrumental in the passage of the alternate retirement system legislation, which allows certain public employees to join a private, defined contribution plan. He also served as a hearing officer for the Ohio State Racing Commission.

Prior to his appointment to the Ohio Industrial Commission, Dan worked at the law firm of Murray, Murphy, Moul and Basil in Columbus.

He has both a bachelor's degree and law degree from Capital University. He and his wife, Marilyn, live in Columbus. They have two children and four grandchildren.

FISCAL YEAR HIGHLIGHTS

In fiscal year (FY) 2024, the Ohio Industrial Commission (OIC) heard 88,302 claims at all adjudicatory levels. The statutory requirement from the filing of a motion or appeal to the date of a hearing timeframe is set at 45 days. For Filing to Hearing, Allowance docket issues averaged 38 days, while Appeal docket issues averaged 37 days. The agency performance benchmark for the filing of a motion or appeal to the mailing of an order is set at 52 days. For Filing to Mailing, Allowance docket issues averaged 42 days, while Appeal docket issues averaged 41 days.

The Industrial Commission Online Network (ICON) has made it easy for parties to file motions and appeals online. First level motions and appeals filed on ICON this fiscal year totaled 34,980. Second level and above ICON filings, inclusive of appeals filed to DHO and SHO orders, totaled 42,244 in FY 2024.

INVENTORY

Motion/Appeal Filings

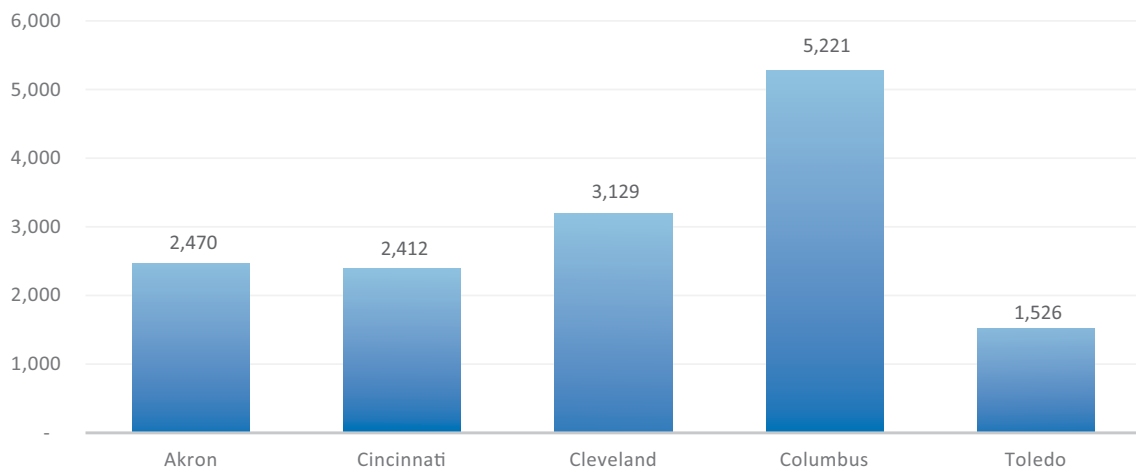
OIC workloads and performance are initiated by and heavily dependent upon the volume of new motion and appeal filings. OIC inventory volume is volatile depending on appeal filings, claim flows from the Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC), docketing volume, and other factors.

Approximately 87,410 new first level motions and appeals were filed during FY 2024 for 55,446 separate claims.

Hearing Inventory

Statewide average monthly DHO/SHO inventory, inclusive of medical inventory, was 14,761 for FY 2024. Regional breakdown of average inventories for FY 2024 is as follows: Columbus - 35 percent; Cleveland - 21 percent; Akron - 17; Cincinnati - 16 percent; and Toledo - 10 percent.

AVERAGE MONTHLY INVENTORY* FY 2024



*Rounded

HEARING ACTIVITY

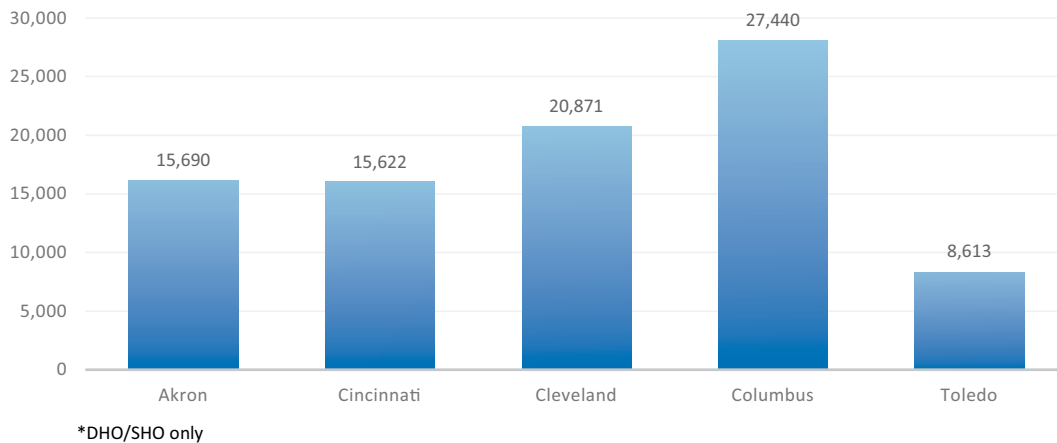
Formal hearings and administrative reviews account for the majority of Industrial Commission activity. In FY 2024, the OIC made approximately 145,422 decisions on issues arising from workers' compensation claims.

During FY 2024, the OIC performed 57,120 administrative reviews and heard a total of 88,302 claims at all adjudicatory levels. Claims heard is inclusive of hearings at the DHO, SHO, Deputy, and Commission venues. Administrative reviews incorporate issues that do not initially require formal adjudication via hearing (Hearing Administrator issues, Commission requests, etc.). These issues receive review and processing at the claims examining, word processing, and hearing officer levels but are not typically reflected in routine production reports under DHO or SHO dockets. However, these issues may still subsequently result in a hearing under the normal adjudicatory process. If a hearing is required, then that hearing is reported according to the standard hearing process.

Claims Heard

The total DHO hearing volume accounts for 70 percent of the overall hearings during FY 2024 at 61,984 claims heard, while the SHO volume is recorded at 26,252 claims heard. Deputy venue claims heard totaled 16 in FY 2024 while the Commission venue recorded 50 claims heard. Total claims heard is inclusive of continuances, referrals, dismissals, and other final determinations made as a result of a hearing.

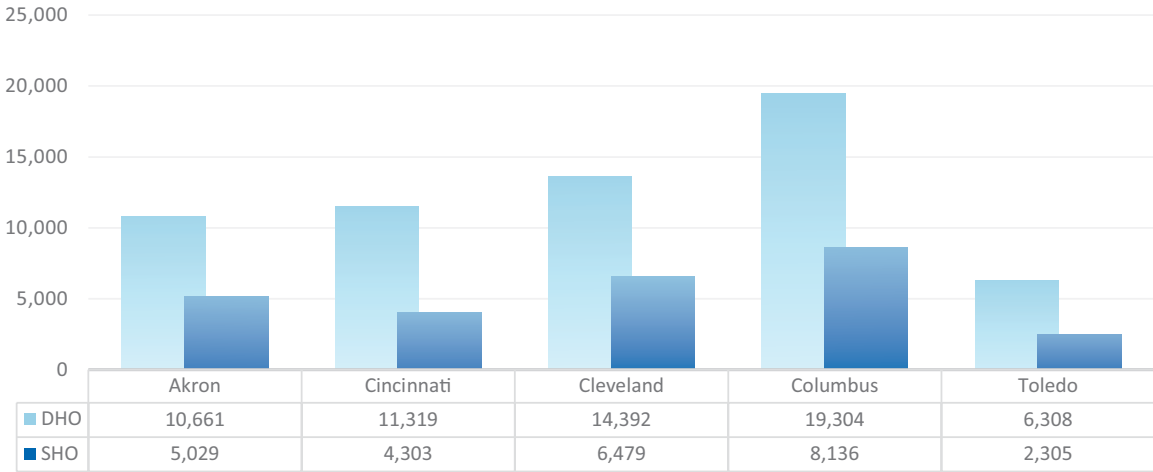
CLAIMS HEARD BY REGION* FY 2024



Regionally, the rounded distribution of FY 2024 claims heard at DHO and SHO hearing levels is as follows: Columbus at 31 percent; Cleveland at 24 percent; Akron and Cincinnati each at 18 percent; and Toledo at 10 percent.

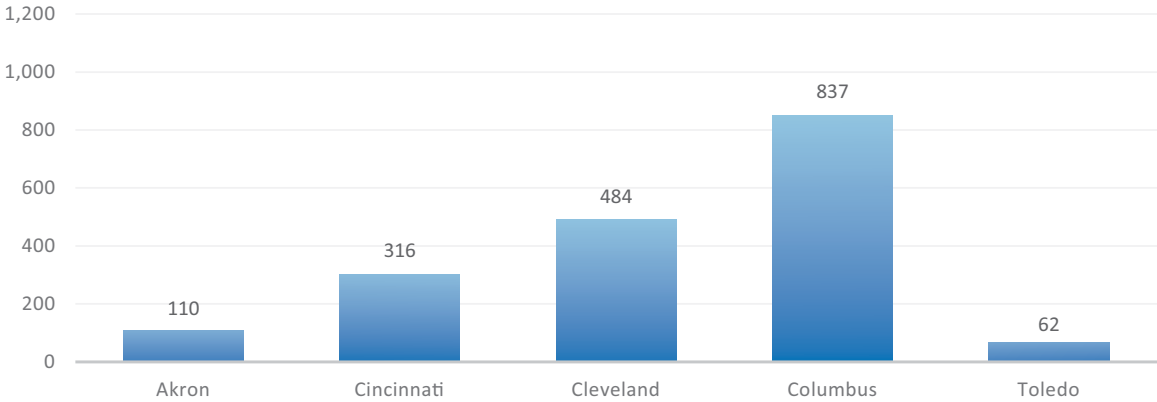
DHO and SHO hearings were conducted on 245 days during FY 2024. An average of 360 claims were heard per hearing day at the DHO and SHO hearing levels. District level hearings averaged 253 claims heard per day (rounded), while Staff level hearings averaged 107 claims heard per day (rounded).

DHO/SHO CLAIMS HEARD FY 2024



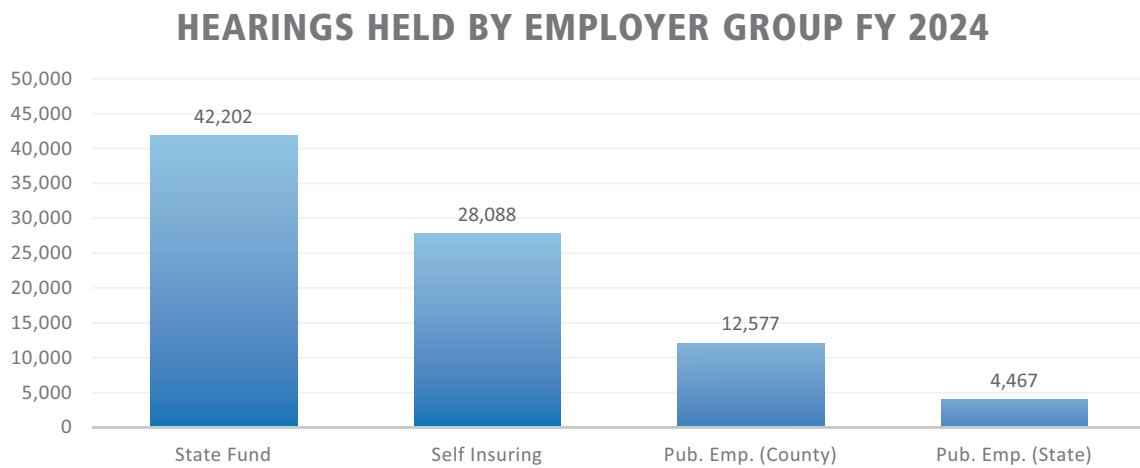
A total of 1,809 hearings held utilized interpreter services during FY 2024.

HEARINGS HELD REQUIRING INTERPRETERS FY 2024



Hearings Held by Employer Group

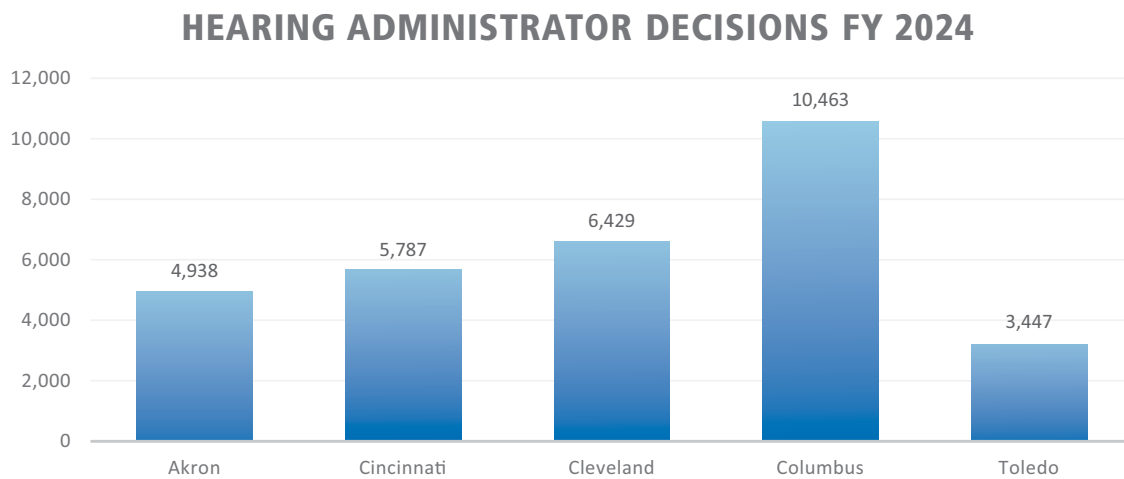
Hearings were conducted for approximately 22,824 different employers in FY 2024. Hearings for claims of private state funded employers accounted for 48 percent of all hearings, while self-insuring employers accounted for 32 percent; public county employers accounted for 14 percent; public state employers' claims accounted for 5 percent (rounded).



Hearing Administrator

Hearing Administrators perform a variety of functions that facilitate the adjudication process. In addition to processing approximately 17,220 continuance requests during FY 2024, they also processed 11,052 requests to cancel scheduled hearings. Additionally, Hearing Administrators processed requests for extensions related to permanent total disability filings and requests regarding other miscellaneous issues.

Statewide, Hearing Administrators made decisions on, or referred to hearing, approximately 31,064 issues during FY 2024. Regional volumes of Hearing Administrator activity are presented in the graph below.

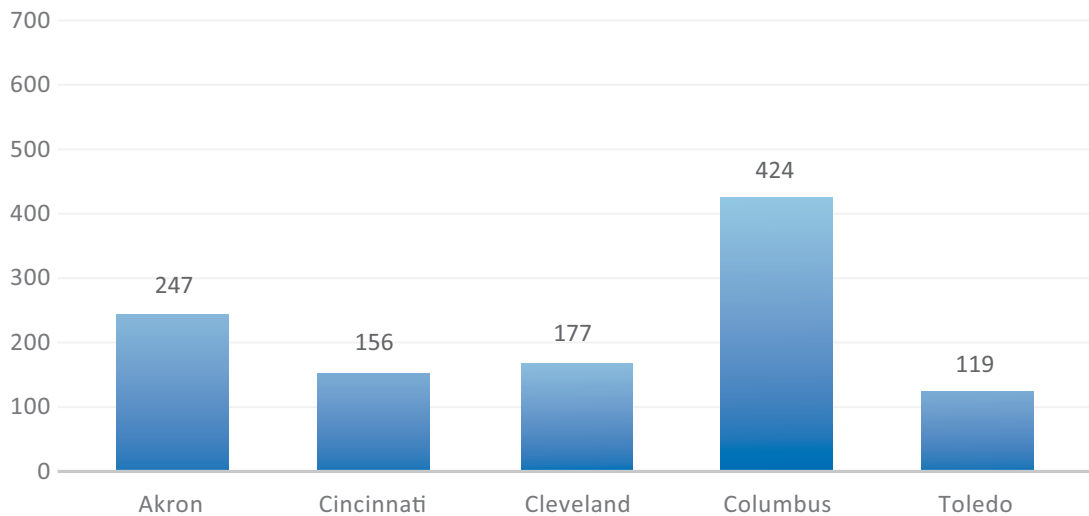


Medical Activity

The Industrial Commission schedules medical exams for injured workers that have filed for permanent total disability benefits related to work injuries. Most of these claims will result in a subsequent hearing. The volume of claims within the OIC medical section as of June 30, 2024, was 109 claims.

A total of 1,123 specialist exams and medical reviews were performed on behalf of the OIC during FY 2024.

MEDICAL SPECIALIST EXAMS AND REVIEWS FY 2024



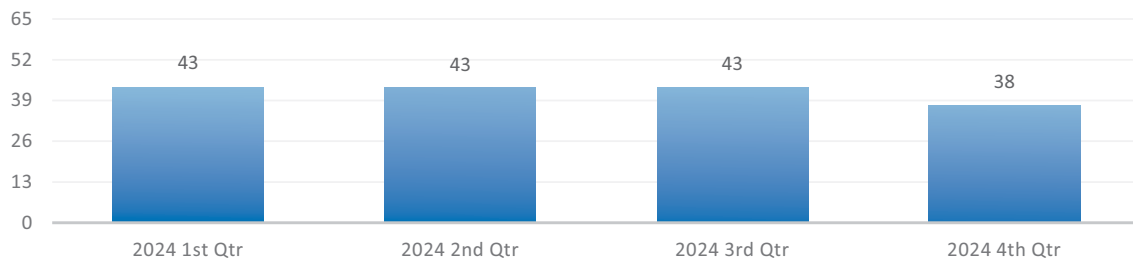
PERFORMANCE

OIC hearing timeframes for DHO, SHO, and Commission hearing venues are mandated by R.C. 4123.511. On average, all OIC offices performed within the statutory limits requiring a claim to be heard within 45 days of a motion or appeal filing. The OIC benchmark for Filing to Mailing is set at 52 days; this performance measure is based on the entirety of the hearing process and combines the two statutory periods Filing to Hearing (45 days) and Hearing to Mailing (7 days).

District Hearing Officer Performance

DHOs conduct hearings on two formal docket types – Allowance (primarily injury allowance, compensation, and treatment issues) and C-92 (permanent partial disability issues). Only Allowance docket issues fall under timeframe requirements outlined in R.C. 4123.511. DHOs heard a total of 49,511 Allowance docket claims during FY 2024. Of those, 42,213 qualified for inclusion in time studies. Per statute, appeals or motions heard on DHO Allowance dockets must be heard within 45 days of filing. In FY 2024, Allowance dockets averaged 38 days for the statutory Filing to Hearing period. On average, the DHO Allowance process (Filing to Mailing) was completed within 42 days during FY 2024.

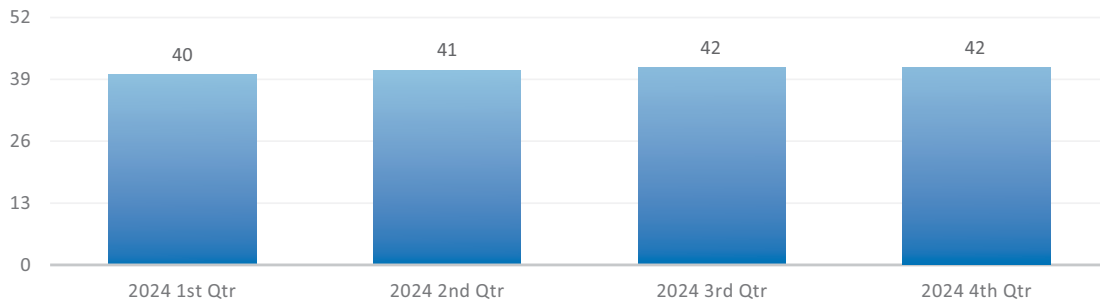
DHO ALLOWANCE FILING TO MAILING PERFORMANCE FY 2024



Staff Hearing Officer Performance

SHOs conduct hearings on five formal docket types – Appeal (primarily injury allowance, compensation, and treatment issues), PTD (permanent total disability), Reconsideration (permanent partial disability issues), VSSR (violations of specific safety requirements), and Miscellaneous (other issues not designated to a pre-defined docket type). Only Appeal docket issues fall under timeframe requirements outlined in R.C. 4123.511. SHOs heard a total of 22,687 appeal claims during FY 2024. Of those, 20,667 qualified for inclusion in time studies. Per statute, Staff hearing level appeals must be heard within a 45-day period. In FY 2024, SHO Appeal processes averaged 37 days for the statutory Filing to Hearing period.

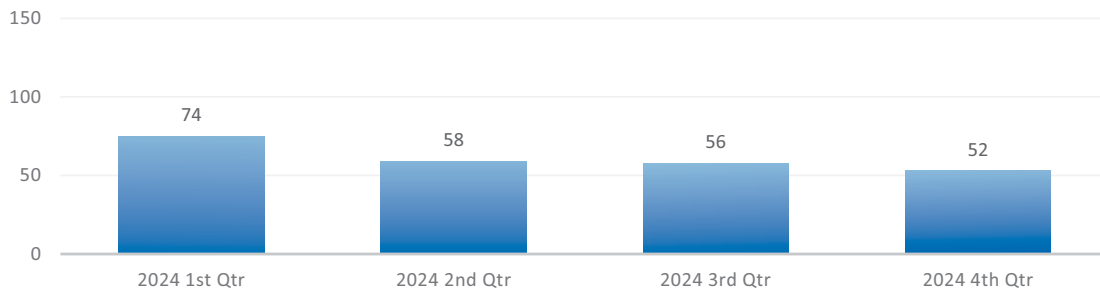
SHO APPEAL FILING TO MAILING PERFORMANCE FY 2024



Commission Performance

Commission Appeal dockets fall under timeframe requirements outlined in R.C. 4123.511. For hearings conducted during FY 2024, the Commission venue average for the statutory 45-day Filing to Hearing period is compliant at 36 days. The Commission venue average for the Filing to Mailing timeframe is 59 days.

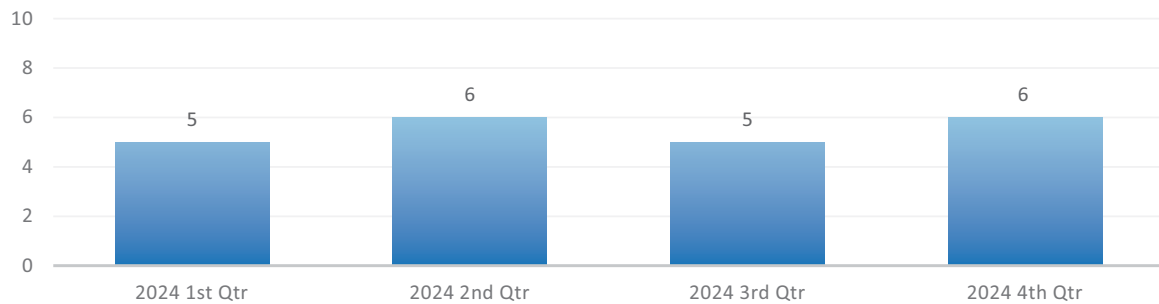
COMMISSION FILING TO MAILING PERFORMANCE FY 2024



SHO Refusal Order Performance

Appeals to SHO orders are discretionary in nature and processed centrally by the Commission Level Hearing Section in Columbus. Per mandate, if an appeal is refused, it is to receive a refusal order within 14 days of the expiration period in which an appeal may be filed to an SHO order.

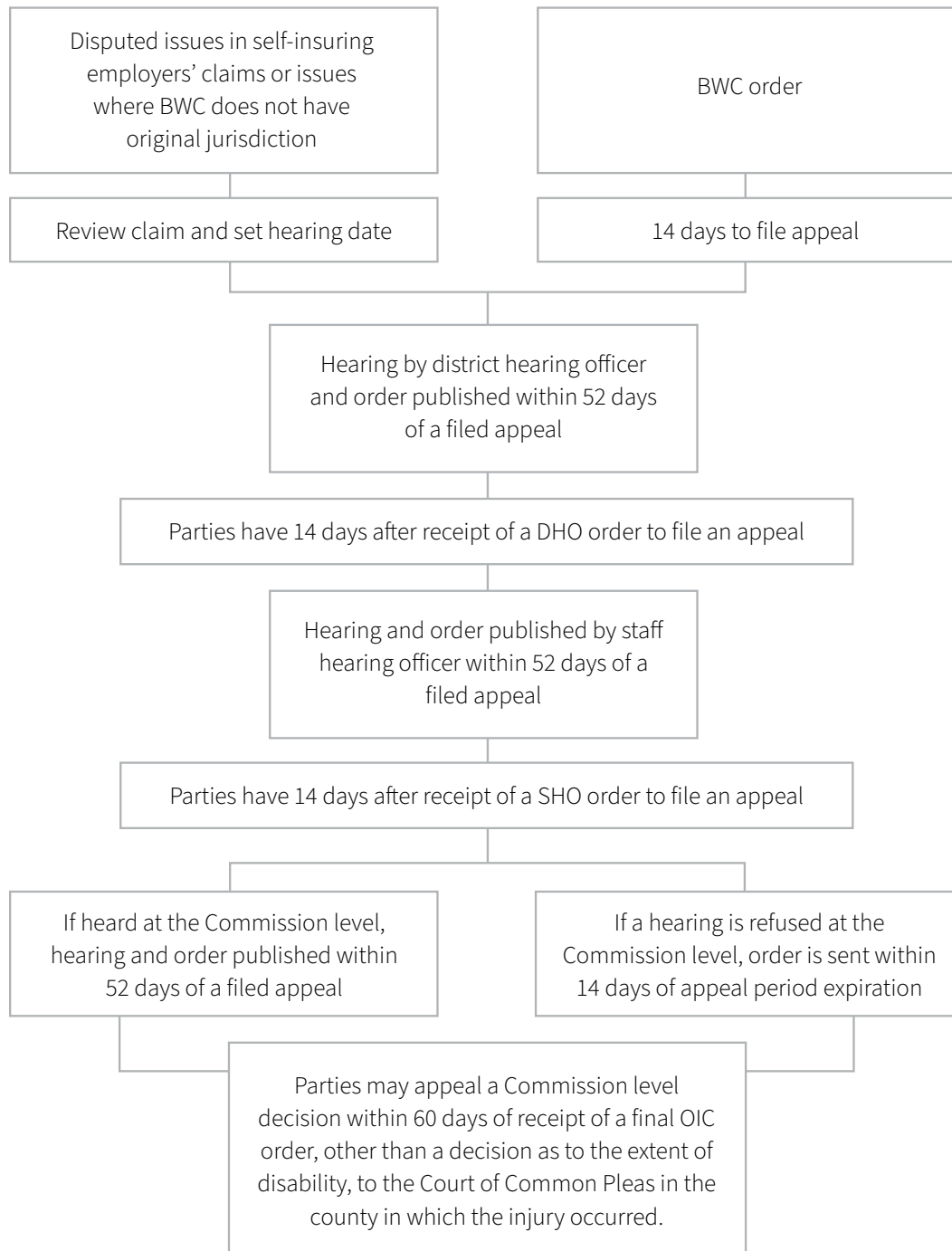
SHO APPEAL ORDER EXPIRATION DATE TO REFUSAL ORDER MAILING DATE FY 2024



APPENDIX

ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING LEVELS CHART

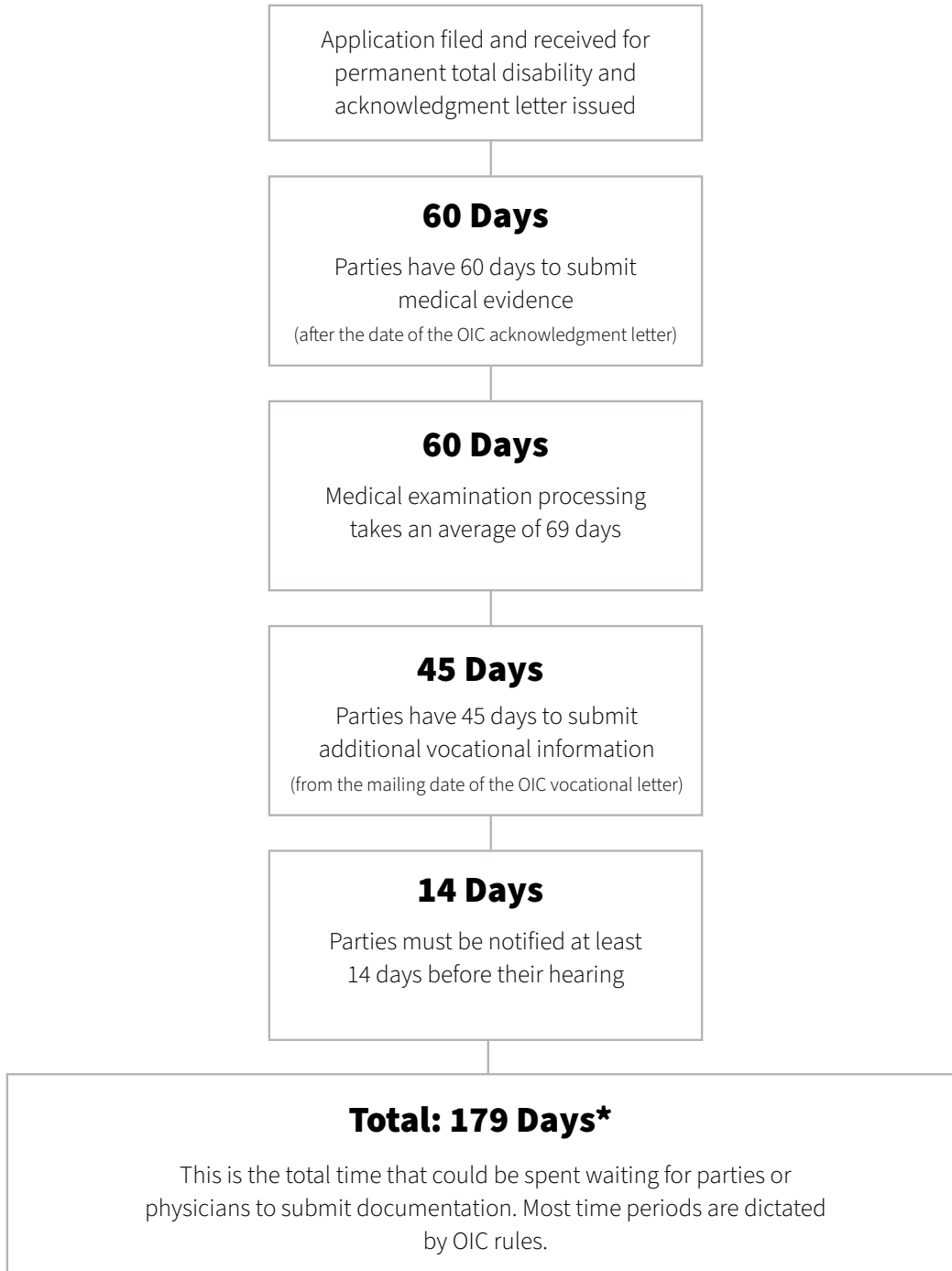
Administrative Hearing Levels Flow Chart*



*Only includes the allowance and appeal processes.

PTD TIMELINE

Permanent Total Disability (PTD) Timeline



*The entire PTD Process averaged 198 days during FY 2024.

OFFICE LOCATIONS & CONTACT INFORMATION

Customer Service and Interpretive Services

800-521-2691; toll free, nationwide
614-466-6136; Franklin County

Email: AskIC@ic.ohio.gov
Web: www.ic.ohio.gov

AKRON REGION

Akron

Oliver R. Ocasek
Government Office Building
172 S. Broadway St., Suite 504
Akron, Ohio 44308

Tel: 330-643-3550
Fax: 330-643-1468

Youngstown

242 W. Federal St., Suite 303
Youngstown, Ohio 44503

Tel: 330-792-1063
Fax: 330-792-2473

CINCINNATI REGION

Cincinnati

125 E. Court St., Suite 600
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Tel: 513-357-9750
Fax: 513-723-9811

Dayton

1242 E. Dayton-Yellow
Springs Rd.
Fairborn, OH 45324

Tel: 937-264-5116
Fax: 937-264-5130

CLEVELAND REGION

Cleveland

615 Superior Ave. NW.
Cleveland, Ohio 44113

Tel: 216-787-3001
Fax: 216-787-3483

COLUMBUS REGION

Columbus

William Green Building
30 W. Spring St., 7th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Tel: 614-466-4683
Fax: 614-644-8373

Cambridge

2130 E. Wheeling Ave.
Cambridge, Ohio 43725

Tel: 740-435-4000
Fax: 740-435-4010

Logan

12898 Grey St.
Logan, Ohio 43138

Tel: 740-380-9685
Fax: 740-385-2436

Mansfield

240 Tappan Drive N., Suite A
Ontario, Ohio 44906

Tel: 419-529-1352
Fax: 419-529-3084

Portsmouth

1005 Fourth St.
Portsmouth, Ohio 45662

Tel: 740-354-2334
Fax: 740-353-6975

TOLEDO REGION

Toledo

One Government Center,
Suite 1500
640 Jackson Street
Toledo, Ohio 43604

Tel: 419-245-2740
Fax: 419-245-2652

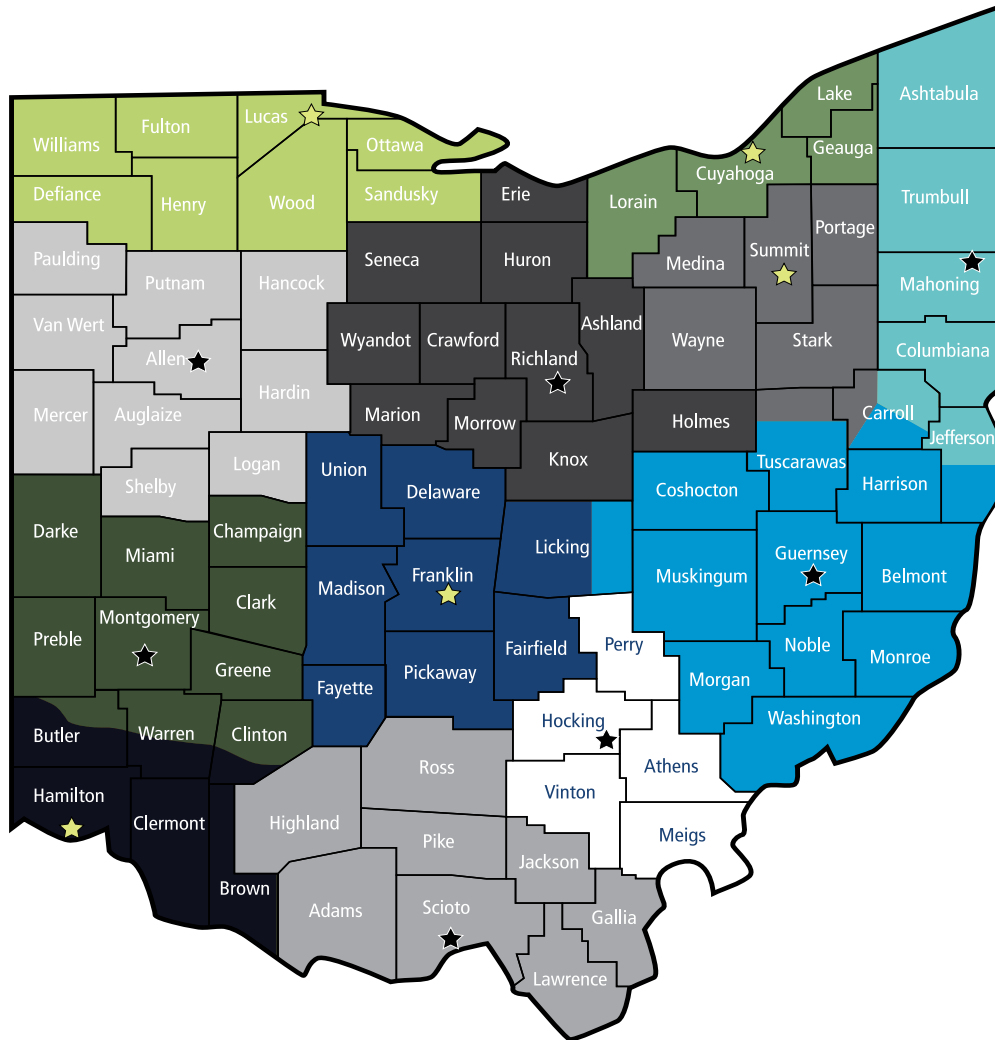
Lima

2025 E. Fourth St.
Lima, Ohio 45804-0780


Tel: 419-227-7193
Fax: 419-227-7150

DISTRICT OFFICE ASSIGNMENT MAP

The OIC's 12 local offices in 5 regions blanket the state. OIC office locations are carefully chosen to provide the most accessibility throughout the state.



Offices Servicing Each County

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
|  Akron |  Columbus |  Mansfield |
|  Cambridge |  Dayton |  Portsmouth |
|  Cincinnati |  Lima |  Toledo |
|  Cleveland |  Logan |  Youngstown |

★ OIC District Office Location ☆ OIC Regional Office Location

GLOSSARY OF WORKERS' COMPENSATION TERMS

Adjudicate: To make an official decision about a dispute; to settle judicially.

AWW: Acronym for 'Average Weekly Wage'. All indemnity benefits are determined by a percentage of the average weekly earnings of the injured worker.

Claim Form: The form filled out by an injured employee to initiate a workers' compensation claim. This form has important legal ramifications.

Commission Level: If an injured worker or employer is dissatisfied with the decision of a staff hearing officer, they may file an appeal to the Commission level. The three Commissioners may either refuse to hear the appeal or accept it for a hearing.

Compensable: A claim for which workers' compensation benefits are due.

Contested Claim: A workers' compensation claim where: (1) the employer rejects liability for it; or (2) the employer fails to accept liability for it; or (3) the employer fails to timely respond to a demand for benefits.

Denial Letter: The document sent to the employee by the employer or insurance company advising that the claim for workers' compensation benefits has been denied.

District Level: If a workers' compensation claim is contested, it is set for a hearing before a district hearing officer (DHO). A hearing will be held at the Commission office nearest the injured worker's residence. If either party is dissatisfied with the decision of the DHO, an appeal must be made in writing or online and filed within 14 days of receipt of that decision.

Hearing Administrator: Hearing administrators are responsible for preparing claims for hearings and ensuring a smooth hearing process for every party involved in a claim. Their duties include reviewing and processing requests to continue and cancel hearings, issuing subpoenas, conducting depositions and submitting interrogatories, and ensuring that claims have sufficient information for hearing.

Indemnity: A benefit delivered by payment of money. Distinguished from benefits delivered by a service, such as medical treatment.

Industrial Injury: An injury that occurs during or because of work.

ME: A medical exam

Occupational Disease: A disease contracted in the course of employment, which by its causes and the characteristics of its manifestation or the condition of the employment results in a hazard which distinguishes the employment in character from employment generally, and the employment creates a risk of contracting the disease in greater degree and in a different manner from the public in general.

Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation: (BWC) a state agency that administers the collection of premiums from employers and the payment of compensation and medical benefits to injured workers who have been determined to have compensable claims.

Ohio Industrial Commission: (OIC) a state agency that handles all hearings on contested workers' compensation claims.

OSHA: the Occupational Safety and Health Administration

PD or PPD: Permanent Disability or Permanent Partial Disability Indemnity.

Permanent Total Disability: The inability to perform sustained remunerative employment due to the allowed condition(s) in the claim(s). The term "permanent" as applied to disability under the workers' compensation law does not mean that such disability must necessarily continue for the life of the injured worker but that it will, within reasonable probability, continue for an indefinite period of time without any present indication of recovery therefrom.

Self-Insuring Employer: An employer who is granted the privilege under the Ohio Revised Code of paying workers' compensation and benefits directly to its employees.

Staff Level: Appeals from the district hearing officer's (DHO) decision will result in a second hearing before a staff hearing officer (SHO). The law guarantees injured workers and employers the right to appeal a DHO's decision to the SHO level.

TD, TTD or TDI: Temporary Total Disability Indemnity

TPD: Temporary Partial Disability Indemnity

Vocational Rehabilitation: An entitlement to injured workers who are precluded from returning to their usual and customary occupation due to disability arising out of a work injury.



Timely, Impartial Resolution of Workers' Compensation Appeals

30 West Spring Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215

www.ic.ohio.gov, (800) 521-2691

Mike DeWine, Governor
Jim Tressel, Lt. Governor

Jim Hughes, Chairman
Cheri L. Hottinger, Member
Daniel J. Massey, Member



An Equal Opportunity Employer and Service Provider

The Ohio Industrial Commission is committed to providing access and inclusion and reasonable accommodation in its services, activities, programs, and employment opportunities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other applicable laws.

