



**pennsylvania**

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & INDUSTRY  
BUREAU OF WORKERS' COMPENSATION

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## **CHANGES COMING**

### **Workplace Safety Committee Training Requirements**

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[Act 57](#) of the PA Workers' Compensation Act, enacted on June 30, 2021, now requires that all committee members receive training on **Substance Abuse and Opioid Painkiller Use** in order for a committee to be certified. The CWSC audit process will also begin confirming receipt of this training.

#### **TIMELINE & PROCEDURES**

Committees seeking Pennsylvania certification will need to show compliance with this standard **by Thursday, October 28, 2021**. The Bureau of Workers' Compensation's Health & Safety Division, responsible for certification of Workplace Safety Committees, has prepared training materials and other necessary documents for this update. The certification applications will include the additional training component as of the October 28<sup>th</sup> implementation date.

*What does this mean for your committee?*

- **For committees who have already submitted or will submit applications before the change goes into effect**, you will *not* need to update your training prior to October 28, 2021 to maintain certification. However, you must ensure that the *next* annual training includes the Substance Abuse & Opioid Painkiller Use training component.
- **For committees who will not be filing an application for the current period until after October 28, 2021 and have not yet received annual training**, you *will* need to ensure that your members receive training on all required topics during your current policy period. If you receive training through our PATHS program, your training will meet the new requirement. \*
- **For committees who have already completed their annual training but are not due to submit an application until after October 28, 2021**, members *will* need to obtain training in the additional topic to be considered eligible for certification. Members may retake the entire annual training OR may attend an abbreviated session on just the new topic. The PATHS\* program will present the new

materials separately on several occasions to help committees meet this requirement during the transition.

**\* Full PATHS training schedules, including opioid training mini sessions, can be viewed on our training calendar at [www.dli.pa.gov/PATHS](http://www.dli.pa.gov/PATHS). Effective immediately, all upcoming WSC initial and recertification courses will include the Substance Abuse & Opioid Painkiller Use topic. Please direct policy and application questions to [RA-LI-BWC-Safety@pa.gov](mailto:RA-LI-BWC-Safety@pa.gov), and training questions to [RA-LI-BWC-PATHS@pa.gov](mailto:RA-LI-BWC-PATHS@pa.gov).**

## **BACKGROUND**

This change in training requirements was signed into law on June 30, 2021 ([Act 57](#)) as an amendment to the Pennsylvania Workers' Compensation Act. It was introduced as part of the effort to help combat the opioid crisis in the Commonwealth. Recently, Governor Tom Wolf signed the 13th renewal of his January 2018 opioid disaster declaration, which works to address the opioid crisis by focusing on three areas: prevention, rescue, and treatment.

Workplace Safety Committee members are in a unique position to help with prevention efforts since they already receive training in substance abuse awareness and prevention. Awareness about the serious risk of opioid misuse and the danger of developing an Opioid Use Disorder will help in this prevention effort. When Workplace Safety Committee members share information about the risks of opioid painkiller use with the employees that they represent, knowledgeable employees can caution their families and friends about the risks, too. In this way, good prevention practices can spread throughout the community. Workplace Safety Committee members are also trained in hazard detection and accident prevention and already know the benefits of preventing incidents. Every injury avoided decreases the potential for opioid misuse.

*Thank you for helping keep Pennsylvanians healthy and safe!*

