

PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES
Commission on Health and Safety and Workers' Compensation
Thursday, August 14, 2025, 9:30 a.m.
Elihu Harris State Building
1515 Clay Street, 2nd Floor, Room 1, Oakland, California
and by Zoom

1. Roll Call

The Commission on Health and Safety and Workers' Compensation (CHSWC) public meeting was called to order at 9:32 a.m. by Chair Steiger. A quorum of members was present.

In Attendance: Mitch Steiger (Chair), Jen Hamelin (remote), Shelley Kessler, Kristi Montoya, Chris Pedroza (after roll call), Nicholas Roxborough, and Meagan Subers.

Absent: Sidharth Voorakkara

2. Discussion, recommendation and possible action to approve of minutes of May 30, 2025, public meeting

On a motion by Commissioner Hamelin and second by Commissioner Roxborough, May 30, 2025, CHSWC meeting minutes were approved unanimously by all members in attendance.

3. Testimonial from Stakeholder

Teodora Grozeva, Registered Nurse, spoke about the challenges of long-COVID and how it affected every aspect of her life. Ms. Grozeva said the workers' compensation system had delayed and denied her requests, therefore worsening her condition. Ms. Grozeva asked the CHSWC commissioners to review how care is provided to injured workers.

Commissioners appreciated Ms. Grozeva's testimony and made several comments, expressed concern about her care and noted there were flaws in the workers' compensation system. Commissioners asked about Ms. Grozeva's treatment, including care received from doctors, whether Ms. Grozeva was represented, and whether she had been documenting details of her care.

Public Comment:

David Dugan, Ms. Grozeva's attorney, also answered questions and provided comments on behalf of Ms. Grozeva.

4. Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) Division of Workers' Compensation (DWC) Update

George Parisotto, Administrative Director, DWC

George Parisotto provided a broad and thorough update on the DWC's activities that included expansion of the Subsequent Injury Benefit Trust Fund (SIBTF), the Adjudication Unit, Wi-Fi installation, judges' training, detailed review of various regulations and the regulatory process at DWC, increase in the number of people taking the Qualified Medical Evaluator (QME) exam, the Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule (MTUS), and the formulary.

Other topics he discussed were hybrid work, DWC's vacancy rate of 10 percent, DWC staff working remotely, technology updates including the Electronic Adjudication Management System (EAMS) and Workers' Compensation Information System (WCIS), as well as other technology updates, and why claims filed declined by approximately 10 percent from 2024.

Mr. Parisotto provided updates on DWC's studies including improvements in the medical-legal process, quality of reports, utilization review, medical access study, fee schedule, Independent Medical Review (IMR) and Independent Bill Review (IBR) programs, telehealth, anti-fraud unit, liens, outreach programs, and the DWC call center.

Commissioners provided comments and asked questions including updating forms that have an initial claim denial, the number of doctors in the workers' compensation program and their administrative burden of being in the worker's compensation system, QME exams, medical access study, QME reports, how doctors learn about the workers' compensation system, quality and doctors' reports, and Return-to-Work Supplemental Program (RTWSP) fund, workers' rights amid current conditions, the process of awarding contracts for studies, the number of hearing in district offices, immigration enforcement actions at hearings, MTUS and long-Covid, workers struggles to get treatment in the workers' compensation system, and adjusting the fee schedule.

Public Comment:

There were no public comments.

5. Presentation on School Action for Safety and Health (SASH) program

Monique Hosein, DrPH, Coordinator of Public Programs, Labor Occupational Health Program (LOHP), University of California, Berkeley

Monique Hosein provided an overview of the program, the standards for Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP), information about workshops, webinars, curriculum development, special projects, train the trainer programs, and resources available

through the program. The program is administered by CHSWC and contracted with LOHP which sub-contracts with University of California, Los Angeles, Labor Occupational and Safety Health Program (UCLA LOSH).

Commissioners asked questions and provided comments including CHSWC's administration of SASH, details on IIPP training, common class codes that result in the highest injuries, the impact of SASH training, workplace violence prevention training and de-escalation techniques for schools, and SASH training for trade school and apprenticeships.

Public Comments:

Kevin Riley, Director, UCLA LOSH program, commented on difficulties in obtaining data from DIR. He also discussed the SASH Advisory Board meeting.

6. Report from the Executive Officer

Melissa Flores, Executive Officer

- General updates

Ms. Flores acknowledged the appointment of the new Director of the Department of Industrial Relations, Jennifer Osborn, who was previously the Chief Deputy Director at the State of California Department of General Services.

Ms. Flores also acknowledged the updated mandate for Governor's new return to office, four days a week, has been postponed until July 2026, and which has been updated with a collective bargaining agreement of two days a week in the office.

- AB 1400 Study on Carcinogens among Mechanics and Cleaners of Firefighting Vehicles RFP update

Ms. Flores provided an update on the RFP evaluation process explained in the background memo provided (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/chswc/Meetings/2025/08-14-25-AB-1400-RFP-Deficiencies-Memo.pdf>).

She offered suggestions and asked for direction from the Commission about the contracting process, including the scope of work (SOW). Mike Wilson of Cal/OSHA provided an overview of the draft SOW presented to the Commission and referenced the memo provided (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/chswc/Meetings/2025/08-14-25-AB-1400-Studies-Memo.pdf>).

Ms. Flores discussed navigating the contracting process using either an RFP or University of California model agreement. After explaining the difference and recommending that the study be conducted by UCLA LOSH, she asked the Commission for their guidance, and they agreed with moving forward with

engaging UCLA for a proposal.

Commissioners asked questions and provided comments including expanding the scope of the study to include NorCal or maintaining the original scope, bias going into the study, cost, complexities and outcomes of industrial hygiene sampling, completion of the study even though the law has sunset, consideration of adding length of employment as among the factors and including retired and former employees in the study.

Public comments:

Janice O'Malley from the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSME) commented that it would be appropriate for LOSH to conduct the study, due to their experience and location. She did note that capturing the list of chemicals workers are exposed to does not capture everything, like residue on skin, clothing, and vehicles, and inhalation. She suggested a broader worksite focus and worksite assessment.

Dr. Kevin Riley of UCLA LOSH said that they had already been reviewing the needs for a study and observed that process is somewhat in reverse of what they are used to. He shared that typically the UC would take the lead in putting the SOW together. Mr. Riley offered to come back to the Commission with a revised scope of work, including consideration of the time and money available to complete the proposed work.

- SB 623 Study on PTSD Injury Claims Filed by Public Employees update

Ms. Flores recommended and requested the Commissioners input on contracting with the UCs to complete this study. Chair Steiger summarized that the Commission agreed with her approach to utilize the interagency agreement option with the UCs/CSUs.

- Review draft charter for potential advisory subcommittee

Ms. Flores offered to postpone the discussion on a subcommittee, in the interest of time for the day's meeting. (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/chswc/Meetings/2025/08-14-25-Studies-Reports-Advisory-Committee.pdf>)

7. Standing Written Reports

Presented by Melissa Flores, Executive Officer, CHSWC

There were no comments or questions from the Commission.

a. Legislative Update

(<https://dir.ca.gov/chswc/Meetings/2025/08-14-25-Legislative-Update.pdf>)

- b. **Mandated Reports & Other Studies Status**
(<https://dir.ca.gov/chswc/Meetings/2025/08-14-25-Legislative-Mandates.pdf>)

8. Other Commission matters

Ms. Flores stated that she is beginning the planning for 2026 meetings dates and would be sending a survey to the commissioners for responses on scheduling availability and conflicts.

Commissioner Roxborough asked to agendaize for the September meeting a discussion of the heat standard for farm workers. He asked to hear from Cal/OSHA and the labor unions about the potential of a health monitoring device for farmworkers. Commissioner Roxborough acknowledged that workers' concerns about monitoring by other enforcement bodies like ICE would have to be examined.

Commissioner Kessler shared that her union in 1882 proposed the Labor Day holiday and wished everyone a nice Labor Day.

9. Public comment: Opportunity for members of the public to address the Commission on matters within the Commission's authority

Chair Steiger provided the opportunity for public comments and there were none.

10. Adjournment

On a motion by Commissioner Hamelin and 2nd by Commissioner Subers, Chair Steiger adjourned the meeting at 1:00 p.m. by unanimous consent of all members in attendance.

Approved:

Mitch Steiger, Chair

Date

Respectfully submitted:

Melissa Flores, Executive Officer, CHSWC

Date