

N E W S R E L E A S E

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SB 863 Return-to-Work Program Offers Supplemental Payments for Injured Workers

Oakland—The Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) today launches the Return-to-Work Supplement Program for injured workers. This fund – which will quickly get an additional \$5,000 to each eligible injured worker who has a disproportionate loss of earnings – is an important component of the workers’ compensation reforms in [Senate Bill 863](#).

“This program is another example of the benefits that SB 863 brought about for injured workers,” said DIR Director Christine Baker. “Many workers face economic hardship when they suffer disabling work injuries and this supplement will help them regain some of those lost earnings.”

DIR inaugurated the new program today with an [online portal](#) as well as kiosks that connect to the portal in its Division of Workers’ Compensation (DWC) [offices](#) across the state, allowing injured workers to easily file the application. All completed applications will be reviewed for eligibility within 60 days from the date of filing. Payment to workers will be made within 25 days of the eligibility determination.

Governor Brown’s landmark worker’s compensation reform, [SB 863](#), became law on Jan. 1, 2013, with benefits to workers that included a 30% increase – more than \$800 million per year – in permanent disability indemnity rates for workers, and an independent medical review (IMR) system for resolving medical treatment disputes with review by a physician to ensure that injured workers receive timely and appropriate medical treatment. Included in the major benefit increase is up to \$120 million annually in Return-to-Work special funds, for injured workers whose employers do not offer them continued employment after the injury at approximately the same pre-injury income levels.

SB 863's cost savings to businesses are also significant, resulting in lower medical loss, indemnity and medical severities. The recent proposal by the WCIRB for a reduction of 10.2% in pure premium rate from the approved average of Jan. 1, 2015, can be attributed in large part to the reforms' cost-saving efficiencies.

[Regulations](#) for the Return-to-Work Supplement Program were approved by the Office of Administrative Law (OAL) and filed with the Secretary of State on April 6, 2015. These regulations were implemented today and are authorized by Labor Code section 139.48.

For media inquiries contact Erika Monterroza at (510) 286-1164 or Peter Melton at (510) 286-7046.

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The [California Department of Industrial Relations](#), established in 1927, protects and improves the health, safety, and economic well-being of over 18 million wage earners, and helps their employers comply with state labor laws. DIR is housed within the [Labor & Workforce Development Agency](#). For non-media inquiries, contact DIR's Communications Call Center at 1-844-LABOR-DIR (1-844-522-6734) for help in locating the appropriate [division or program](#) in our department.