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DWCNewsline

Division of Workers' Compensation
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DWC encourages external users to become e-form filers

Filing electronically benefits filers and the workers' compensation system overall

The Division of Workers' Compensation (DWC) is seeking more participants for its e-forms trial, which allows filers to electronically submit forms and documents directly into its Electronic Adjudication Management System (EAMS).

Using a logon and password to access EAMS, e-form filers fill out electronic forms on their computer and file them over the Internet. Users receive immediate confirmation of submission of their forms and documents. Assuming there are no errors in the submission, users generally see their documents in the case within two hours of submission. Users can view case information and status on cases in which they are participants. They pick the conference date when e-filing a declaration of readiness to proceed under most circumstances. And sometimes they get unanticipated benefits.

“Within a few days of implementing this program, we saw exciting results,” said Don Barthel, of law firm Bradford & Barthel, LLP, a participant in the e-forms trial. “Response times dramatically improved. In one instance, e-filing permitted me to have a matter taken off calendar—and thus avoid five hours of driving—under circumstances where such a timely OTOC would have previously been impossible.”

There are nearly 300 users currently in the e-forms trial, but the division would like to add more. Anyone who files forms can join, from injured workers to attorneys, claims administrators to lien claimants.

“Until now we've taken a go-slow approach to the e-forms trial to make sure that we had adequate staff to handle all of the e-filing and questions that filers might have,” said Court Administrator Keven Star. “Now that we have the knowledge to make it work on a larger scale, we want more people to have this opportunity to efficiently file their documents. For the month of June there are 80 e-filers getting trained on how to file electronically. DWC is eager to have similar sized groups going forward.”

The only other current filing method for EAMS is through paper OCR forms, which are downloaded from the DWC Web site and scanned at district offices. DWC is working with external partners on a new filing method that will allow bulk filing of certain documents by the end of 2010.

The e-forms trial started in September 2008, shortly after EAMS launched, to reduce the amount of paper coming in to the system. Accordingly, participants must agree to file almost all of their documents electronically as long as they are in the trial. User names and passwords are assigned by office location.

New applicants are added to the e-forms trial every couple of months. The next round is scheduled to start in August.

To apply for the e-forms trial, participants should fill out an application, and take the computer based training course. (See [EAMS Web site](#).) Once accepted into the trial, participants will be trained by DWC staff via webinar, where they will be able to ask questions.

Barthel gave kudos to E-forms Trial Administrator Judge Chuck Ellison and Jackie McConnie, who works directly with e-form filers to help them correct errors, on the training and service his organization received to become and remain an effective e-form filer.

Benefits of e-filing:

- No waiting in line at the district offices
- Currently the fastest method of getting documents into EAMS
- Filing can be done 6 a.m. until 8 p.m. Monday through Saturday (except Thursday, which is 6 a.m. until 6 p.m.), from any PC. (Submissions made outside of normal business hours will be processed the next business day)
- EAMS Help Desk assistance available from 7 a.m. until 6 p.m. weekdays (except for furlough days)

Existing e-filers can also benefit from periodic additional webinar training. Some e-filing rules have recently changed, such as the number of forms on which an “s signature” may be attached and the s signature verification no longer being required. Currently, e-filers may file regular declarations of readiness to proceed either by OCR or by e-form, whichever works best to get a quicker date at their local district office.

For more testimonials from e-filers, see the current edition of the [EAMS Insider](#) newsletter.

For more information on the e-forms trial, email EAMS@dir.ca.gov.

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