



Washington Self-Insurers Association

**Legal Issues Workshop
November 5th & 6th, 2025
AGENDA**

Wednesday, November 5th

8:30 – 9:30 am Understanding the Appeals Process at the BIIA & Superior Court
Bob Battles, Business Member, BIIA

This session offers a practical overview of the appeals process before the Board of Industrial Insurance Appeals (BIIA) and Superior Court. Topics will include strategies for case preparation, key procedural requirements, options for settlement, and considerations for remote proceedings. Attendees will gain insights to help them effectively navigate appeals from initial filing through resolution.

9:30 – 10:00 am Inside L&I: Hot Issues & The Road Ahead
Stephanie Scheurich, SI Program Manager, Department of Labor & Industries

Hear directly from leadership on what's shaping the future of workers' comp in Washington. This session offers an insider's perspective on emerging priorities, policy changes, and the agency's strategic direction, giving you the context you need to prepare your organization for what's coming.

10:00 – 10:30 am The Ombuds Office Annual Update: Key Issues in Worker Advocacy
Ciara High, Ombuds, Department of Labor & Industries

Get the latest from the Ombuds Office on trends, challenges, and wins for injured workers. From their annual report to hot-button concerns, this session sheds light on how the Ombuds is influencing the workers' comp landscape.

10:30 – 10:45 am Networking Break

10:45 – 11:45 am **Tech Tools & Traps for Legal Teams in Workers' Comp**
Moderator: Cameron VanDyck, Director of Member Services, WSIA
Anita Booker-Hay, Chief Justice, BIIA
Ryan Miller, Attorney, Hall & Miller
Sanjeeve Batta, Owner, Gardiant
Krishna Balasubramani, Attorney, SBH Legal

From phishing scams to AI document review—know what's helping and what's hurting. Learn about the latest BIIA website changes, technology upgrades (and delays) at L&I, and the most effective digital tools for managing claims and appeals. Discover how to boost efficiency while avoiding costly cyber pitfalls.

11:45 am – 12:45 pm **Lunch**

12:45 – 2:15 pm **Case Law Update: Key Decisions Reshaping Worker's Comp**
Kelly Myers, Attorney, Gress Clark Young & Schoepper

Stay ahead of the curve on precedent-setting rulings. We'll break down the Cockrum decision on intentional injury and latent disease, the Jilbert case's implications for medical causation testimony, and a preview/review of Washington Supreme Court cases impacting claims handling.

2:15 – 2:45 pm **Pro-Active Penalties to Manage Claims**
Chris Bishop, Attorney, Wallace Mann Capener Bishop & Debney

Did you know that TPAs/SIEs aren't the only ones that can be penalized by LNI? A discussion on how to be proactive about requesting penalties on claims against workers, claimant attorneys, providers, and possibly others.

2:45 – 3:00 pm **Networking Break**

3:00 – 4:00 pm **Benefit Rates Update: What's Changing & Why It Matters**
Kris Tefft, Executive Director, Washington Self-Insurers Association
Heather Breiman, Claims Manager, CorVel

Get the numbers right—because they add up fast. Learn about upcoming pension and time-loss rate changes, plus new legislation cutting wait times for benefits and expanding "stay-at-work" incentives. This session ensures you're aware of and ready to implement changes smoothly.

4:00 pm **Adjourn**

Thursday, November 6th

8:30 – 9:30 am Mental Health Claims: Stress, PTSD & Cumulative Trauma
*Jennifer Jutte, PhD, ABPP, MPH, Associate Medical Director for
Psychology, Department of Labor & Industries*

Addressing the fastest-growing category of workers' comp claims. Learn the legal thresholds for compensability, recent statutory changes, evidentiary standards, and how mental health claims impact vocational outcomes—especially for first responders and healthcare workers.

9:30 – 10:30 am Best Practices in Claim Handling: What Attorneys Need to Know
Heather Breiman, Claims Manager, CorVel

Bridge the gap between legal strategy and claims management. Hear directly from industry experts on what claims teams need from attorneys to achieve the best outcomes.

10:30 – 10:45 am Networking Break

10:45 – 11:45 am LEP Policy & Application: Getting It Right the First Time
Aurora Levinson, Attorney, Reinisch Wilson

Avoid costly errors in Loss of Earning Power claims. This session walks through LEP eligibility, documentation, calculation, and dispute resolution strategies and will dive into L&I's new LEP policy.

11:45 am – 12:45 pm Lunch

12:45 2:15 pm AI in Workers' Comp: Promise, Pitfalls & Practice
Shawna Fruin, Managing Partner, Reinisch Wilson

From legal research to claim file review—AI is changing the game. Explore how adjusters, attorneys, and even workers are using AI, with real-world examples of both success and failure. Discuss ethical considerations and your professional duty of technological competence.

2:15 – 2:45 pm

GFFD for All: Expanding the Scope Beyond Workers' Comp

Elyse Waters, Attorney, SBH Legal

Sarah Coehn, Attorney, SBH Legal

Understand how “Good Faith, Fair Dealing” principles apply across insurance claims. Review key issues pending at the BIIA and their potential impact on privilege and discovery.

2:45 – 3:00 pm

Networking Break

3:00 – 3:30 pm

Legislation Update: What's New & What's Next

Kris Tefft, Executive Director, Washington Self-Insurers Association

Your rapid-fire refresher on recent and upcoming legislative proposals from the Department of Labor & Industries, employer community, and worker advocates. This session is meant to educate on upcoming changes that may impact your daily operations.

3:30 – 4:00 pm

Recap & Vision: Where We Go From Here

Shawna Fruin, Managing Partner, Reinisch Wilson

Chris Bishop, Attorney, Wallace Mann Capener Bishop & Debney

Ryan Miller, Attorney, Hall & Miller

Close out with a clear view of the road ahead. Join workshop leaders to summarize key takeaways and share insights on future trends in workers' compensation law.

4:00 pm

Adjourn