

'It's No Accident' is the OHS newsletter of the AMWU.
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Support



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A counselling service for members
and their families **1800 206 316**

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Paid pandemic leave

Months after the COVID-19 pandemic began and unions started calling for paid pandemic leave for all workers, the Morrison Government has entered into an arrangement to provide a Pandemic Leave Disaster Payment (PLDP) to Victoria, Australia's worst-hit state.

The PLDP for Victoria came into effect 5 August and is available to people living in the state who have to do the mandatory 14-day self-isolation or quarantine – but not people just isolating while waiting for test results. To be eligible, you must have no income from paid work and have exhausted or no entitlement to sick leave. More information is available on the Services Australia website.

Data showed nine in 10 Victorians with COVID-19 continued going to work and public places after they first experienced symptoms of the virus. While the introduction of PLDP, and the Federal Government offering the same arrangement to other states, is a positive step, it doesn't go far enough. We need a system of paid pandemic leave nationwide that doesn't force anyone to choose between losing a paycheck, and the health and safety of themselves and the community.

In a further effort to stop community transmission, the Victorian Government has made exposures to the virus notifiable to WorkSafe Victoria. The Victorian Occupational Health and Safety (COVID-19 Incident Notification) Regulations 2020 commenced 28 July, and will apply for 12 months. The new notification rules are much broader than the previous requirement for employers and self-employed persons.

This is something we need to see in all states and territories.

Note: this information was written in early August and may have changed since then. If you need workplace advice, please contact your branch. ●

IT'S NO ACCIDENT

AMWU Health and Safety News



AMWU

August 2020

Save yourself more pain, tell your Delegate when you're hurt at work

More than half a million Australians sustain work-related injury or disease annually. Work-related injury and disease present a significant personal, social, and economic burden. Return to good work (RTW) is beneficial for an injured worker's recovery. Returning injured and ill workers to safe work is a primary objective of all Australian workers' compensation schemes.

In 2012–13, work-related injury and disease cost the Australian economy \$61.8 billion, representing 4.1% of GDP. The majority of the cost (95%) was borne by individuals and society, with workers bearing 77%, the community 18% and employers 5%. Since then, estimates suggest employers are now only meeting between 3–4% of this cost.

When a worker is on workers' compensation, this is not the time to hand over control of their lives to an insurer or the boss. However, being on workers' compensation can make workers feel vulnerable and isolated and it is imperative that our Delegates are there to provide the necessary support and representation these workers need.



The AMWU has some simple advice for members when it comes to workplace injuries.

Injured at work?

- See your own doctor, never a company doctor.
- Fill out an Incident Report .
- Notify your supervisor.
- Advise your HSR (so they can commence an investigation).
- Notify your Delegate (so they can

provide timely support, advice and representation).

- Lodge the Claim Form and Certificate of Capacity with your employer.
- Keep copies of all documents including Incident Report and keep a diary, noting any witnesses.
- Treat all injuries seriously, no matter how minor.

Members don't have to go it alone. Contact your union if you need any help or advice. ●

Injured members checklist

The following is a basic checklist Delegates can follow to ensure the welfare of injured members.



Delegate actions	
	Check all injuries are recorded in the injury record book.
	Create a file of all inward and outward correspondence and make records of every interaction, including in relation to the member's workers' compensation and return to work.
	Guard against allowing an injured member to be persuaded by the employer that making a claim will not be necessary.
	Offer to assist the member completing a claim form. Ensure it has clear details including the time and date, and any additional evidence which will support the claim.
	Offer your availability to represent the member at any meetings held to discuss workers' compensation and return to work (it's an employment meeting).
	Offer your availability to represent the member at any meetings held to discuss workers' compensation and return to work (it's an employment meeting).
	Keep in contact with the injured member, even if they are not at work.
	If in doubt, contact your union.
Advice to give to injured members	
	All injuries must be reported to the supervisor/employer as soon as possible.
	Create a workers' compensation file, keeping copies of all inward and outward correspondence and make records of every interaction in relation to the workplace injury.

	of every interaction in relation to the workplace injury.
	Seek treatment from their own doctor.
	Never attend the employer's preferred medical practitioner for initial assessment or treatment. Our union advises against attendance to a company doctor.
	Never consent to a representative of the employer attending a medical appointment, regardless of what justification they provide.
	Complete a claim form and submit it with a Certificate of Capacity supporting the claim as soon as possible.
	Never agree to anything over the phone and ask for all requests to be put in writing.
	If they receive a request from an insurer regarding a medical appointment, seek advice from our union as soon as possible.
	Follow up with the insurer two weeks after lodging a claim if they have not received advice or a decision.
	Never meet with any representative of the employer/insurer without a Delegate. This includes when developing the rehabilitation/RTW program/plan.
	They should be provided with suitable duties in line with their medical capacity. If not, they should contact the Delegate.
	Should there be a request for a case conference, there must be agreement on the purpose of the case conference and the member has the right to be represented by the Delegate.
	Never participate in an 'early intervention' program unless they have first lodged a claim.
	If the insurer writes to the member disputing any part of the claim, contact our union immediately.
	Following written advice from an insurer disputing liability (and they are in receipt of no other benefits), the member should not participate in any further requests to attend a medical appointment.
	Work with the HSR to ensure suitable health and safety controls are implemented so no one else is injured.