

WISCONSIN
DWD

Vocational Rehabilitation

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DWD Division of Worker's Compensation

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Initial Screening by WCD

- Automatically screen claims with greater than 13 weeks of Temporary Total Disability (TTD) paid
- Voluntary employment status questionnaire is sent out to determine potential need for vocational rehabilitation
 - Has end of healing (EOH) been reached?
 - Is there a wage loss?
 - Are there permanent restrictions or permanent disability?
- Refer injured workers who potentially qualify for voc rehab to DVR

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Voc Rehab Steps
For Worker's Compensation Claims

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Permanent work restrictions signed by doctor are provided to the employer, who responds within 60 days.	If suitable employment within restrictions and paying at least 90% of AWW is not available, claimant and DVR voc counselor develop Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).	Worker's Comp insurance adjuster reviews IPE.	Benefits paid consistent with accepted plan.

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Benefits of Retraining for WC Claims

- Tuition, school fees, books
 - Laptop or other equipment required for program may be covered if determined necessary by IPE
- DVR requires their consumers who participate in retraining to apply for federal student aid (FAFSA)
 - Grants reduce cost of tuition paid by insurance carrier
 - Scholarships are awarded to injured worker



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Benefits of Retraining for WC Claims

Mileage and meals are paid at state employee rate:

- Travel for school \$0.51 per mile
- Breakfast: \$8
- Lunch: \$10
- Dinner: \$20

<https://dpm.wi.gov/Documents/BCER/Compensation/PocketTravelGuide.pdf>



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Benefits of Retraining for WC Claims

Maintenance = TTD rate

- Not to exceed 80 weeks, unless WCD determines that additional school is necessary to replace average weekly wage (AWW)
- Permanent Partial Disability (PPD) continues to accrue during breaks from school

Case law: Massachusetts Bonding Insurance Co. v. Industrial Commission. 275 Wis. 505 (1957)



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Poll Question

Which of the following is **not** a reason that the Division would approve retraining benefits beyond 80 weeks?

- 1. Prerequisite courses are needed
- 2. Unexpected illness or injury results in dropped courses
- 3. Availability of courses (supported by documentation from school) will not allow timely completion
- 4. Failed coursework



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Additional Info

- Injured worker can work up to 24 hours per week while participating in retraining without reducing the maintenance benefit.
- Employee can still be eligible for voc rehab benefit, even if declared Permanent Total Disability (PTD).
- If injured worker is residing outside of Wisconsin, they can still participate in vocational retraining by working with a private vocational counselor. Private vocational counselors should contact WCD to be certified for Wisconsin worker's compensation claims.



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Questions?

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