



Voice-of-the-Customer Initiative

WCD's Attorney Survey

A summary

Workers' Compensation Division

John L. Shilts, Administrator

Jerry Managhan, Deputy Administrator

Committee

Jan Miller, Chair

Kara Olsen

Kathy Thomas

Ana Contreras

Virgil Osborn

Myra Aichlmayr

Kevin Willingham

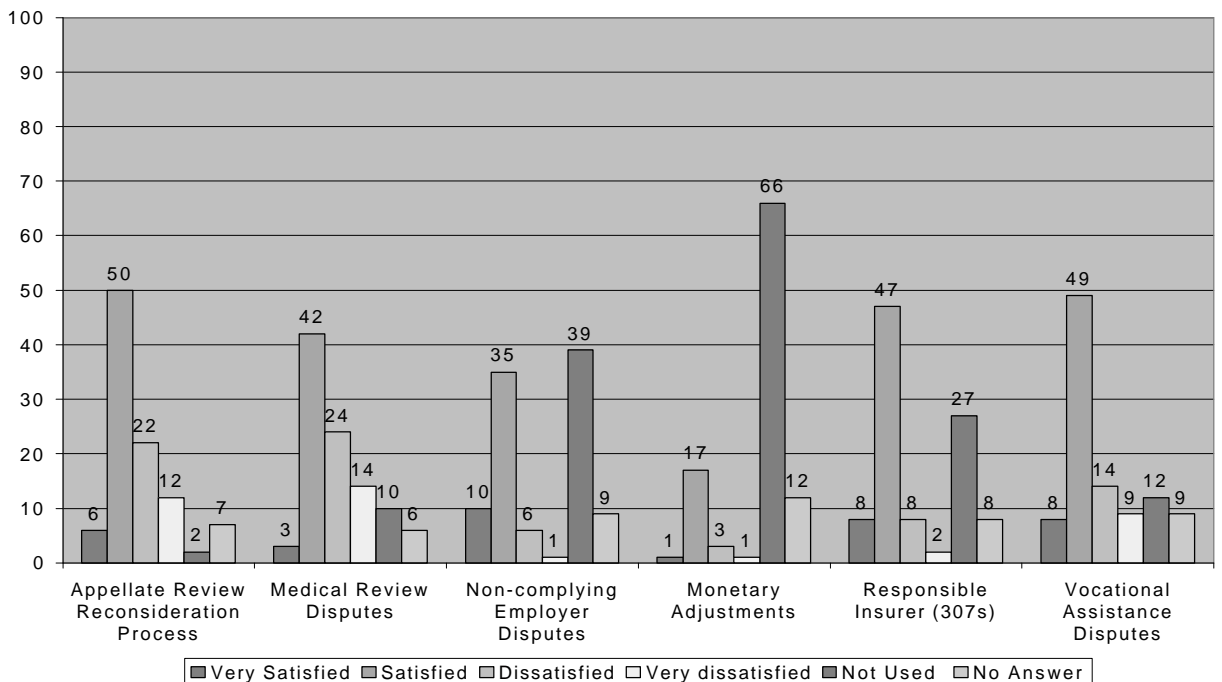
Attorney Survey Analysis

The “Voice of the Customer” initiative began work in December 2001. Its goals are to identify customers’ and stakeholders’ priorities as they relate to workers’ compensation information and services, develop a process to measure satisfaction levels with WCD services, and develop processes and materials for continuous input. The initiative should be completed, with all processes in place, by the end of 2003. As part of this initiative, the VOTC committee completed surveys of employers, injured workers, and injured workers enrolled in managed care organizations. In April of this year, the committee surveyed 309 Oregon attorneys to find out their priorities for information and services.

The number of attorneys who responded to the WCD survey was evenly split. Forty-two percent represented injured workers, 42 percent represented employers/insurers, and seventeen percent did not respond to the question.

Attorneys were asked to rate satisfaction with six WCD administrative review/dispute resolution processes. Fifty-six percent were satisfied with the reconsideration process, 6 percent were very satisfied, 34 percent were dissatisfied, and 12 percent were very dissatisfied. Forty-five percent of attorneys who responded were satisfied with medical review disputes, and 38 percent were dissatisfied. Forty-five percent of attorneys were satisfied with non-complying employer disputes, 7 percent were dissatisfied, and 39 percent had not used the process. Sixty-six percent of attorneys said they have not been involved in monetary adjustment orders. This is not surprising, because WCD issued only two monetary adjustment orders in 2002. When more than one insurer is involved in a claim, WCD may issue an order determining the responsible insurer. This is often referred to as a 307. Fifty-five percent of attorneys were satisfied with this process, 10 percent were dissatisfied, and 27 percent had no experience with the process. Fifty-five percent of attorneys were satisfied with assistance obtained in vocational disputes. However, 22 percent were dissatisfied, and 12 percent have never been involved with this type of dispute.

Figure 1. Satisfaction with administrative review/dispute resolution processes



Respondents were also asked to share any comments they had about these processes. Comments about the reconsideration process revealed attorneys find the process inconsistent and arbitrary. Strong statements indicated the medical review dispute process takes too long. The Medical Review Unit recognized this problem and is currently eliminating the existing backlog of disputes. The vocational assistance dispute process also received a large number of comments about the process taking too long. The non-complying employer, responsible insurer, and monetary adjustment processes received very few comments.

Attorneys were also asked to rate the helpfulness of fourteen services that WCD provides. Many of the respondents have rarely used some of the services. Several services that aren't used often include fraud and abuse investigations (76 percent), training workshops (65 percent), E-mail workcomp.questions@state.or.us (57 percent), E-mail notification/WebBoard (57 percent), and policy interpretations (53 percent). All these services are available and accessible to attorneys, so this may be a potential marketing area for WCD. Services which were rated as "very helpful" included Web site databases (29 percent), rule and bulletin subscription service (27 percent), toll-free phone numbers (26 percent), Web site case orders (24 percent), Web site interactive forms (21 percent), and benefit consultants (21 percent). For each service, only a small percent indicated services were "not helpful." Policy and rule interpretations ranked the highest as "not helpful" (eight and six percent).

Table 1. Helpfulness of WCD Services

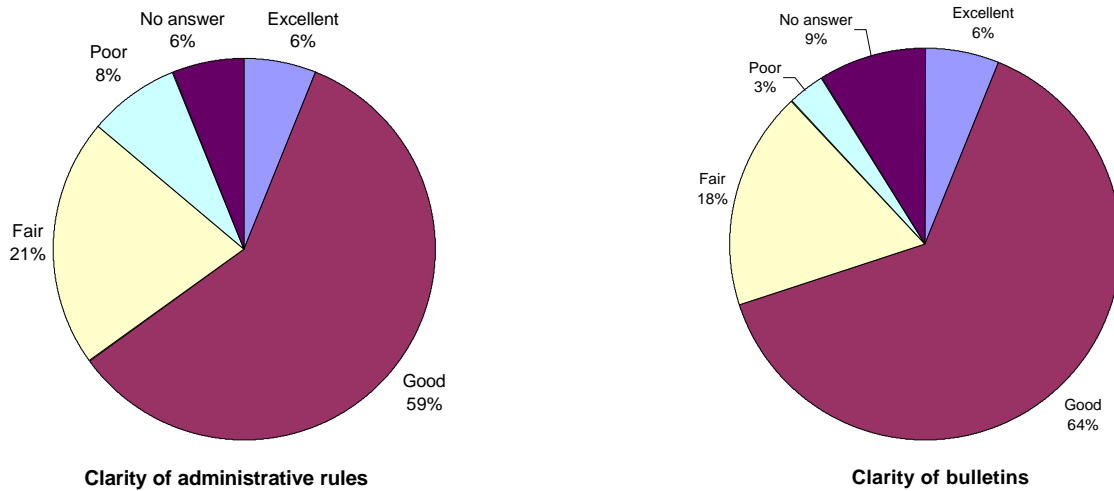
| WCD service | % Very Helpful | % Helpful | % Not helpful | % Did not use | % No answer |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|-----------|---------------|---------------|-------------|
| Website databases | 29 | 24 | 2 | 32 | 12 |
| Rule & bulletin subscription service | 27 | 41 | 2 | 21 | 9 |
| Toll free phone numbers | 26 | 24 | 1 | 36 | 13 |
| Website case orders | 24 | 24 | 2 | 37 | 12 |
| Benefit consultants | 21 | 29 | 3 | 36 | 11 |
| Website interactive forms | 21 | 20 | 3 | 45 | 11 |
| Claim file requests | 17 | 30 | 3 | 38 | 12 |
| WC educational conference | 11 | 29 | 2 | 47 | 12 |
| E-mail notification/web board | 10 | 19 | 1 | 57 | 12 |
| Rule interpretations | 9 | 28 | 6 | 40 | 16 |
| Training workshops | 6 | 17 | 1 | 65 | 12 |
| E-mail 'workcomp.questions' | 4 | 8 | 2 | 75 | 11 |
| Policy interpretations | 4 | 22 | 8 | 53 | 12 |
| Fraud or abuse investigations | 1 | 8 | 4 | 76 | 11 |

Attorneys were also asked, “What services or information do you need but are not currently receiving?” They identified better customer service from employer index staff, accessible on-line orders such as the Van Natta reporter or the Workers’ Compensation Supplemental Reporter (WCSR) publications, bulletin updates, and a toll free number for contacting the Appellate Review Unit. If WCD offered continued legal education credits (CLEs), 6 percent of attorneys responded they would be very interested, 50 percent were somewhat interested, and 14 percent would not be interested.

Another question attorneys were asked was, “If WCD could only assist you with only one thing, what would it be?” They made several suggestions about easy access to case law, as well as a significant case summary and the capability to research case law online or by hard copy. They also identified quick resolution of disputes, payment for areas of workers’ compensation they currently provide without compensation, and clarity and organization of administrative rules. Comments were made about the unfairness of the system to injured workers. Employer/Insurer and injured worker attorneys completed this survey, so further analysis is needed before this information can be used for policy or process changes. There is an obvious potential for bias; however, an analysis of the survey results by attorney type may also be useful.

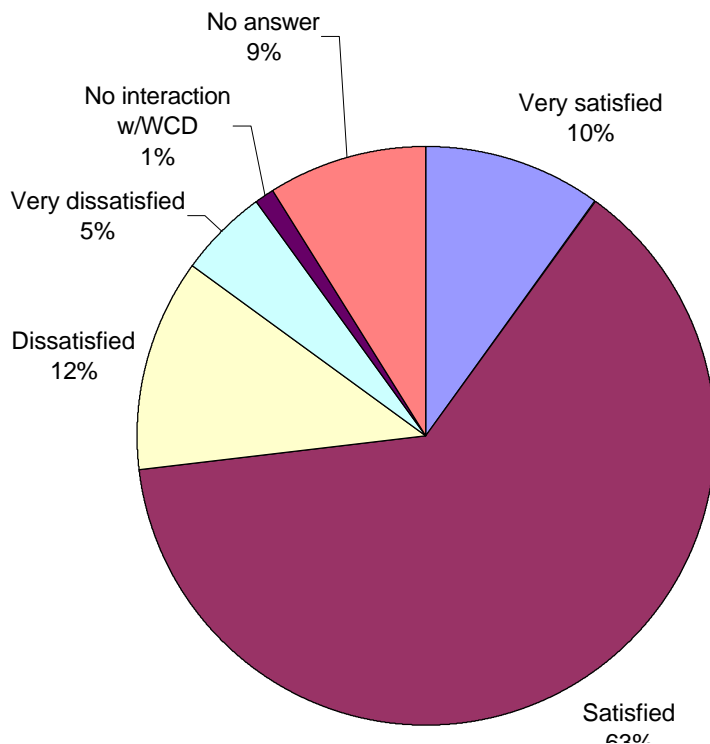
To determine satisfaction with workers’ compensation administrative rules and bulletins respondents were asked to rate their clarity. Six percent indicated administrative rules are excellent, 59 percent said they are good, 21 percent said they are fair, and 8 percent consider them poor. Six percent did not answer the question. Bulletins were rated as follows; excellent (6 percent), good (64 percent), fair (18 percent), poor (3 percent), and 9 percent did not answer the question.

Figure 2. Clarity of administrative rules and bulletins



Attorneys were asked to rate overall satisfaction with the Workers' Compensation Division. Ten percent were very satisfied, 63 percent were satisfied, 12 percent were dissatisfied, 5 percent were very dissatisfied, 1 percent had no interaction with WCD, and 9 percent chose not to answer. They were also asked to share any comments about their experiences with the Workers' Compensation Division. The negative comments regarding WCD processes included medical review, reconsideration, rehab review, and the Workers' Compensation Board. However, the majority of comments praised workers' compensation staff who were described as helpful, responsive, customer-oriented, professional, accessible, easy to work with, and positive.

Figure 3. Overall Satisfaction with Workers' Compensation Division



Methodology

The attorney survey was tested on Workers' Compensation Board attorneys. As a result of the test, some changes were made to the survey. The final survey was mailed April 2003, to 309 attorneys who identify workers' compensation as an area of practice and who are members of the Oregon State Bar Association. Attorneys who work at the Workers' Compensation Board, Department of Justice, or are employed by WCD were excluded from the survey. A second mailing was completed May 2003. Although this is not a statistically valid survey, the final response was 139 or 45 percent.