



NEWSLINE

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DWC and WCAB Continue to Expand Hearing Options at the District Offices

The Division of Workers' Compensation (DWC) and Workers' Compensation Appeals Board (WCAB) continue to improve their ability to hold hearings during the COVID-19 pandemic. The following changes are effective August 17.

Updated Hearing Procedures Starting August 17

DWC will continue to hear all mandatory settlement conferences, priority conferences, status conferences, case-in-chief trials, lien conferences and expedited hearings telephonically via the [individually assigned judges' conference lines](#) as announced in newslines issued on [April 3](#), [April 28](#) and [May 28](#).

Beginning August 17, DWC will have a video option available for trials and expedited hearings only. Parties will continue to use [individually assigned judges' conference lines on the day of trial](#). However, judges will have the option of conducting the trial through the judge's virtual courtroom if needed. If that is required, the judge will provide a link to the parties allowing them to log into the video platform.

DWC will be using the video platform called [LifeSize](#). Stakeholders should download the software prior to a hearing where a video option may become necessary. Neither DWC nor LifeSize will charge for participants to use the platform. However, parties will need to have certain system requirements to fully participate in the video option. Parties will also need to have a web camera. Participants without access to a web camera may use a smart phone with the program, although it is not recommended. Additional information on LifeSize and how to use the program may be found on the [DWC website](#).

All parties scheduled for a hearing should continue to call the conference line for the judge in front of whom the case is set, at the designated time listed on the hearing notice. When prompted, the parties should enter the access code assigned to that line. DWC staff will instruct participants as to the procedure to follow during the call.

DWC is in the process of updating its hearing notices to reflect the judges' conference lines. That change will be implemented on or about August 15.

DWC has also begun hearing Special Adjudication Unit (SAU) lien trials. The same procedure described above will apply for SAU trials.

At this time all other lien trials will be continued. However, DWC anticipates adding lien trials back to the calendar in the near future.

District offices will not hold in-person hearings.

Continuing Filing Procedures

DWC will not accept walk-in filings, walk-through documents or in-person requests at this time. DWC will only accept electronic filing via EAMS and JET File, and paper filing by U.S. mail.

DWC will accept limited email filings pursuant to WCAB's en banc decision dated April 6 and its newslines issued on [April 23](#). Email filings are limited to documents that are subject to a statute of limitations that cannot otherwise be efiled, JET filed or filed by U.S. mail.

DWC will continue to accept an electronic signature on any settlement documents, applications, pleadings, petitions or motions that are sent to the district offices or filed in EAMS. For all e-forms, parties should utilize "S signature" as shown in the [E-forms Filing Reference Guide and the JET File Business Rules](#).

Injured workers who are unable to file utilizing the available options or need assistance may contact DWC's call center at 909-383-4522.

The [WCAB office](#) in San Francisco is operating with limited in-office staff. The WCAB commissioners and staff continue to work remotely. All practitioners are encouraged to regularly check the WCAB and DWC websites for updates about the district offices' and the WCAB's operations during this period.

The [California Department of Industrial Relations](#), established in 1927, protects and improves the health, safety, and economic well-being of over 18 million wage earners, and helps their employers comply with state labor laws. DIR is housed within the [Labor & Workforce Development Agency](#). For general inquiries, contact DIR's Communications Call Center at 844-LABOR-DIR (844-522-6734) for help in locating the appropriate [division or program](#) in our department.