

BULLETIN

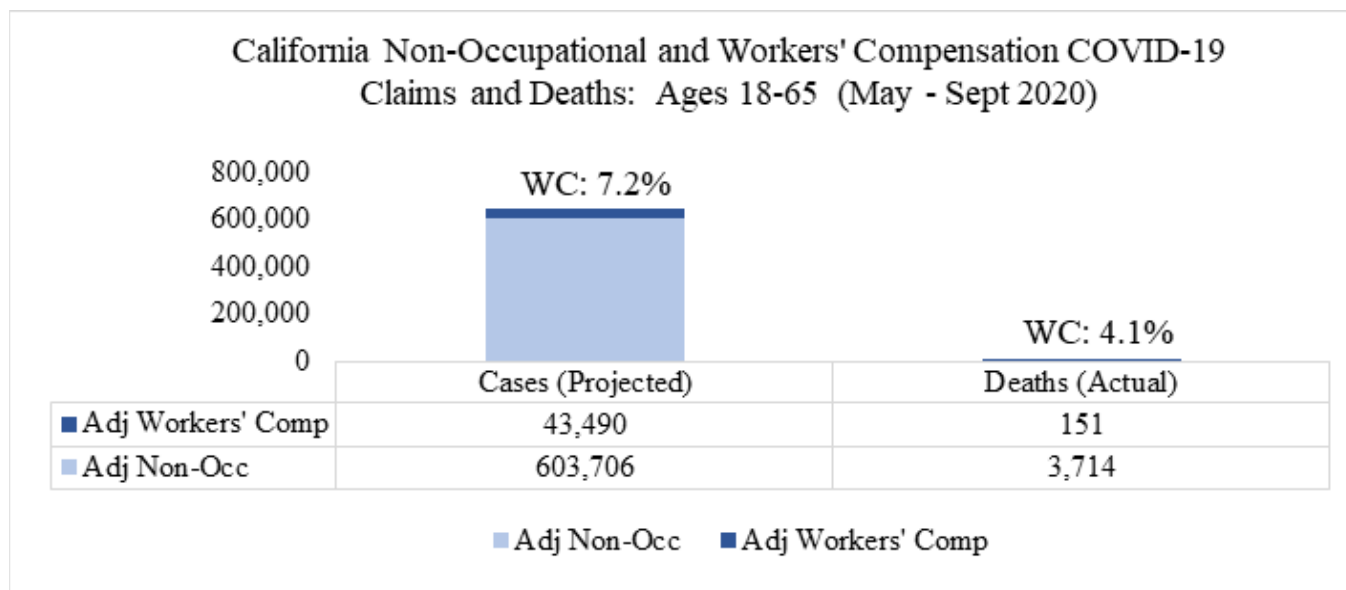
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Only one out of 14 COVID-19 cases involving working-age Californians from May through September of this year has been claimed as a job injury, and only one out of 25 COVID-19 deaths among working age adults in the state has been claimed as work-related according to a new CWCI analysis.

To determine the number of working age Californians (ages 18 to 65) who have had COVID-19, CWCI compiled non-occupational COVID-19 cases reported by the California Department of Public Health (DPH) with work-related COVID-19 claims reported to the state Division of Workers' Compensation (DWC), which the Institute uses for its COVID-19/Non-COVID 19 Interactive Data Application. The DPH dataset had reliable data on the age of the COVID-19 patients beginning in May, which CWCI also was able to capture from the DWC claims data, so the analysis focused on COVID-19 cases from May through September of this year. The COVID-19 non-occupational and workers' comp claim counts reflect the number of claims with injury dates during that 5-month span filed by working age employees and reported to DPH or the DWC as of October 19, with an adjustment factor applied to account for notification delays. In addition, the analysis looked at the number of non-occupational and workers' comp COVID-19 death claims based on the actual number of death claims involving working age individuals with May through September injury dates.

As noted in the chart below, the results show there were 647,196 COVID-19 cases among working-age Californians from May through September, of which 43,490, or 7.2 percent, resulted in workers' compensation claims. More than 17,000 Californians have died from COVID-19 this year, but about three quarters of those deaths have involved individuals over the age of 65, which is beyond the "working-age" parameter used in this analysis. Over the five-month study period, the DPH data showed that 3,714 working-age Californians succumbed to COVID-19, while the DWC data revealed 151 of those cases – or 4.1 percent – have thus far resulted in workers' compensation death claims. While both the workers' compensation COVID-19 claim counts and the number of COVID-19 death claims are subject to change, and could very well increase as the state's economy opens up, at this point the vast majority of COVID-19 cases among working-age Californians have not resulted in workers' compensation claims.



In addition to analyzing the proportion of California COVID-19 cases that have resulted in workers' comp claims, this week the Institute completed the latest update to its COVID-19/Non Covid-19 interactive app, which integrates data from DWC's WCIS database, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and CWCI's IRIS database, and is updated every 2 weeks to

allow users to stay current with overall claim trends and those specific to COVID-19 claims. Version 5 of the app is based on claims reported as of October 19 for the first nine months of AY 2020, and features data derived from 951,749 California workers' compensation claims from January through September of AY 2019 and from the corresponding period of AY 2020, including all COVID-19 claims reported during that period. Among the overall trends noted in the October 19 update to the CWCI COVID-19/Non-COVID-19 interactive application:

- The slowdown in the growth of COVID-19 WC claims that began in August continued in September. As of October 19, DWC had reports on 3,316 COVID-19 claims with September injury dates, bringing the total COVID-19 claim count for the first three quarters of the year to 47,412 claims, or 9.0 percent of all California WC claims reported for AY 2020.
- After rising steadily during the spring and early summer, COVID-19 claim volume has dropped sharply for two consecutive months, suggesting that it may have peaked in July. As of October 19, DWC had recorded 11,761 COVID-19 claims with June injury dates; 14,098 with July injury dates; 5,973 with August injury dates, plus the 3,316 claims from September. The August and September claim counts are relatively green, with more claims likely to be filed over time, but the initial claim counts from both these months were well below the early counts from June and July, which suggests that COVID-19 claim volume is trending down.
- As of October 19, the updated claim count for 2020 included 261 COVID-19 death claims, which was up from 241 reported on October 5.
- CWCI projections, based on historical claim development from 2019 and the far less stable development pattern for COVID-19 claims in 2020, indicate there could ultimately be 12,752 COVID-19 claims with June injury dates; 15,253 with July injury dates, 6,770 with August injury dates and 5,334 with September injury dates, while for the first three quarters of AY 2020, CWCI now projects there could ultimately be 52,934 COVID-19 claims.
- The economic slowdown continues to have a moderating effect on overall workers' comp claim volume. The latest update shows DWC has reports on 425,280 claims with January through September injury dates, down 19.2 percent from the comparable period of AY 2019, while CWCI's projected total claim volume for this period is 461,819 claims -- 12.3 percent below the total from the same period last year.
- Denial rates for COVID-19 claims seem to have plateaued this summer, holding within a narrow range, as denial rates on claims from June through August ranged between 28.6 and 29.3 percent. Denial data on September claims is still too green for a meaningful comparison as claims administrators have 30 to 45 days to deny claims (depending on the injured worker's occupation) if the presumption of compensability applies, and up to 90 days to deny the claim if the presumption doesn't apply, so many of these claims remain under investigation.
- Notification time lags are significantly longer for COVID-19 claims than for non-COVID-19 claims reported within the same time frames, which has been the case throughout 2020. For example, looking at results for claims with July injury dates, the average time elapsed from injury date to employer notification was 3.3 days for AY 2019 non-COVID claims and 3.6 days for AY 2020 non-COVID claims, but 5.5 days for AY 2020 COVID claims. Similarly, among July injury claims, the average time from employer notice to claims administrator notice was 4.9 days for AY 2019 non-COVID claims; 5.1 days for AY 2020 non-COVID claims; but 8.5 days for AY 2020 COVID claims. Thus the injury date to claims administrator notification time lag for July 2020 COVID-19 claims was 5.3 days longer than for the July 2020 non-COVID claims (14.0 days vs. 8.7 days) and it was 5.9 days longer compared to the July 2019 non-COVID claims (14.0 days vs. 8.1 days).

CWCI will continue to update the COVID-19/Non-COVID-19 app and expand its features as more data becomes available. In the meantime, the application is available to the public and can be accessed from the CWCI website [here](#).

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