

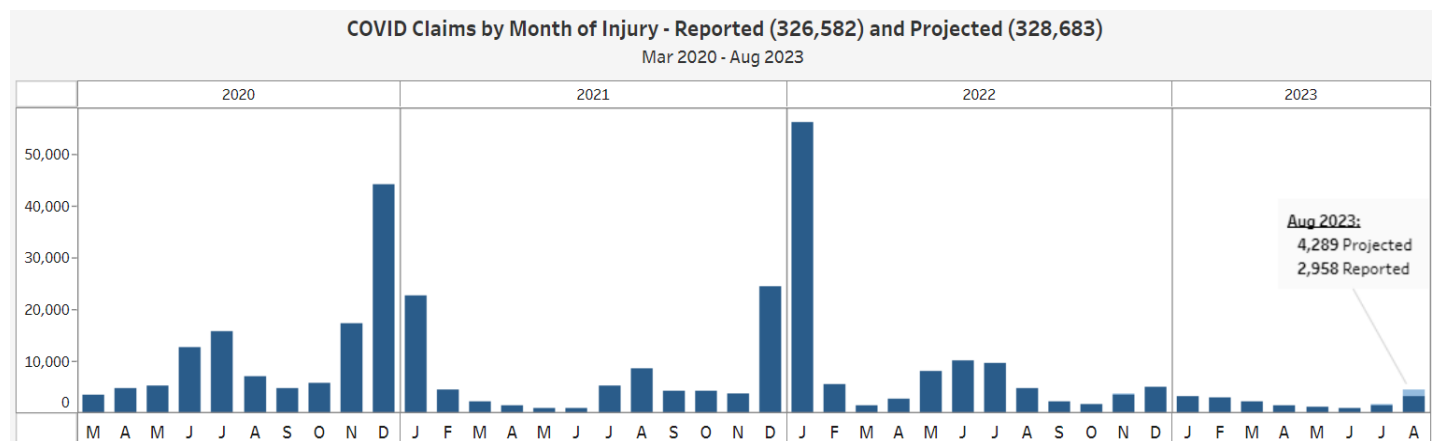
BULLETIN

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New data from CWCI's COVID-19/Non-COVID 19 Claim Application shows a late summer increase in the monthly volume of COVID-19 claims reported to the DWC, with the number of reported COVID-19 claims for August more than tripling from the June level to nearly match the 2023 high point from January, though the total number of COVID-19 claims reported for this year is still well below the corresponding totals for 2020, 2021, and 2022.

The latest update to the CWCI application contains data on 2.46 million COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 claims reported for the 43 months since the pandemic was declared (March 2020 - September 18, 2023). A total of 326,582 (13.3%) of those claims were COVID-19 claims, including 1,670 death claims. Over the past year, COVID-19 claim volume has fluctuated, climbing to a peak of 4,866 claims (9.6% of all reported claims) last December, then dropping steadily to just 855 claims (1.2% of all claims) in June. However, by mid-summer, as new subvariants of the coronavirus began to spread, COVID-19 claim numbers rebounded, climbing to 1,311 claims in July (2.6% of all claims) and 2,958 claims in August (5.7% of all claims).



Additional claims from this summer are still being reported, but CWCI projects the ultimate COVID claim count for June will be 898 cases, the ultimate July count will be 1,468 cases, and the ultimate August count will be 4,289 cases. Though the July and August totals represent a significant increase, to put them into perspective, the recent increases bring the total projected COVID-19 claim count for the first 8 months of 2023 to 16,970 claims, compared to 48,415 COVID claims for January through August of 2020 (when there were no COVID claims until March); 45,339 claims in 2021; and 98,026 claims in 2022. Clearly, while COVID-19 remains a concern in California workers' compensation, and a year-end surge is possible, so far in 2023 COVID-19 claims have represented much less of a problem than in the first three years of the pandemic.

To gain insight into how the summer surge in COVID-19 claims developed, CWCI analysts used data from the application to track changes in the volume and distribution of reported COVID-19 claims by industry and by region for June (the low point for this year) and for August, which was the recent peak. While not fully developed, the comparisons of the June and August distributions shown in the following tables, document the scope of the surge, reveal recent shifts in the mix of COVID claims among various sectors and regions, and underscore how quickly COVID-19 claims can increase in different industries and different parts of the state.

Volume and Distribution of Reported Calif WC COVID-19 Claims by Industry, June 2023 vs. August 2023

Industry	June 2023		Aug 2023		June to Aug 2023 Change	
	# of Claims	% of COVID Claims	# of Claims	% of COVID Claims	# of Claims	% Change
Health Care	270	35.5%	1,143	42.4%	+ 873	+323.3%
Public Safety	193	25.4%	569	21.1%	+ 376	+194.8%
Manufacturing	46	6.1%	145	5.4%	+ 99	+215.2%
Admin/Waste	44	5.8%	61	2.3%	+ 17	+38.6%
Education	42	5.5%	209	7.8%	+ 167	+397.6%
Retail	39	5.1%	112	4.2%	+ 73	+187.2%
Other Services	31	4.1%	37	1.4%	+ 6	+ 19.4%
Transportation	14	1.8%	45	1.7%	+ 31	+221.4%
Information	11	1.4%	24	0.9%	+ 13	+118.2%
Finance	10	1.3%	90	3.3%	+ 80	+ 800.0%
Accommodation	9	1.2%	65	2.4%	+ 56	+622.2%
Wholesale	8	1.1%	53	2.0%	+ 45	+562.5%
Professional/Technical	8	1.1%	27	1.0%	+ 19	+237.5%
Agriculture	8	1.1%	26	0.9%	+ 18	+225.0%
Food Service	8	1.1%	23	0.9%	+ 15	+187.5%
All Other*	114	13.3%	329	11.1%	+215	+188.6%
All	855	100%	2,958	100%	+2,103	+246.0%

*All Other includes industries with <1% of June & Aug COVID claims and unknowns. % of COVID claims excludes unknowns from the calculation.

The number of COVID-19 claims increased in all industry sectors between June and August, but results varied, with the health care sector particularly hard hit, as the number of COVID claims in this sector climbed by 873 cases (323.3%), so health care workers accounted for 41.5% of the summer surge. Public safety/government workers saw an increase of 376 COVID cases, up 194.8% from June to August, as they again ranked second in terms of COVID claim volume, but that increase lagged the 246% statewide increase, so this sector's share of the COVID claims fell from 25.4% to 21.1%. Among major sectors, the biggest percentage increase in COVID claims was in finance, as this sector started with a relatively low 10 claims in June but ended with 90 claims in August, for a net increase of 800%. The story was similar in the accommodation sector, which went from 9 COVID claims in June to 65 in August (+622.2%); the wholesale sector, where COVID claim volume jumped 562.5% from 8 claims in June to 53 in August; and the education sector, which went from 42 claims as the school year ended to 209 claims in August (+397.6%) as instruction ramped up again.

Regional data show the Central Valley had the biggest increase in COVID claims this summer, becoming the #1 region for COVID claims in August as claim volume jumped by 589 cases (+284.5%) from June, but as noted above, most of those were *not* claims by agricultural workers. L.A. County's COVID claim count rose by 461 cases, which was the second largest increase as it went from 175 claims in June to 636 claims in August (+263.4%), while the Inland Empire/Orange County went from 118 COVID claims in June to 470 in August (+298.3%). The Bay Area, which ranked first for COVID claims in June saw its tally climb by 305 cases (+144.5%) which was less than the statewide increase, so it fell to the #3 spot in the regional rankings, with 17.7% of the August COVID claims, while San Diego, which had only 48 claims in June had the biggest percentage increase, as its COVID claim count increased 358.3% to 220 in August.

Volume and Distribution of Reported Calif WC COVID-19 Claims by Industry, June 2023 vs. August 2023

Region	June 2023		Aug 2023		June to Aug 2023 Change	
	# of Claims	% of COVID Claims	# of Claims	% of COVID Claims	# of Claims	% Change
Bay Area	211	24.8%	516	17.7%	+ 305	+144.5%
Central Valley	207	24.4%	796	27.2%	+ 589	+284.5%
L.A. County	175	20.6%	636	21.8%	+ 461	+263.4%
Inland Emp./O.C.	118	13.9%	470	16.6%	+ 352	+298.3%
San Diego	48	5.6%	220	7.5%	+ 172	+358.3%
Central Coast	46	5.4%	169	5.8%	+ 123	+267.4%
N. Counties/Sierra	36	4.2%	91	3.1%	+ 55	+152.8%
Out of State	9	1.1%	25	0.9%	+ 16	+177.8%
Unknown	5	0.6%	35	1.2%	+ 30	+600.0%
All	855	100%	2,958	100%	+ 2,103	+246.0%

CWCI continues to monitor COVID-19 claim activity and posts updates on its COVID-19/Non-COVID-19 Interactive Application. The latest update to the app can be viewed by clicking [here](#).

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