


L&I: Do as I say not as I do

Below is an e-mail BIAW Insurance Programs Administrator Tom Kwieciak sent to state Department of Labor & Industries (L&I) Retro Advisory Chair Frank Romero. Kwieciak did some checking

and after revealing the facts, asked the same question to Dr. Michael Silverstein (L&I's Assistant Director, WISHA Services) posed to attendees of a Retro Advisory Committee meeting.

Not surprisingly, as of press time, Silverstein and L&I have not replied to the e-mail. 

From: Tom Kwieciak, BIAW Insurance Programs Administrator
Sent: Tuesday, April 22, 2003 12:01 PM
To: 'Romero, Frank'
Subject: Ratio of Safety to Claims personnel

Frank:

The other day at the Retro Advisory Committee meeting, Dr. Silverstein, posed a question to those in attendance. The question went something like this: **If it's true that preventing accidents saves money for employers, then why do Retro groups have so many claims managers and so few safety consultants?**

As you know, the primary reason is that individual companies that are members of Retro groups often have their own safety person, either full-time or part-time. Just in the BIAW program, there are literally hundreds if not thousands of safety people out in the field each day — they are employees of our member companies. Conversely, these same companies do not each have workers' compensation claims managers on staff. It isn't feasible to have full or part-time claims managers on staff for the relatively low number of claims that each company experiences in a year. Retro group claims staffs offer a more feasible and efficient solution.

Just to satisfy my curiosity, after the Retro Advisory Committee meeting, I did some checking and found some interesting facts.

1. L&I has roughly 32 Safety Consultants in the field.
2. L&I has roughly 300 Claims Managers (once you take away support staff and supervisors).

This is a ratio of Safety to Claims Management of about 1 to 10. As a matter of comparison, BIAW has a Safety to Claims Management ratio of 1 to 8.

So, I would like to ask Dr. Silverstein and the Department the following: **If it's true that preventing accidents saves money for employers, then why does L&I have so many claims managers and so few safety consultants?**

\$387,700

the amount the Department of Labor and Industries allegedly paid in workers' compensation benefits to five dead people, according to a report by Washington State Auditor Brian Sonntag-D.

Also revealed in the audit: two people received \$92,426 in workers' comp while in prison.

Incarceration should have made them ineligible.

Editor's Note: Ironically, incarceration doesn't make someone ineligible to receive unemployment benefits in Washington.

