

Summary of the Proposed South Carolina Workers Compensation Loss Cost Filing Effective April 1, 2025

The National Council on Compensation Insurance (NCCI)¹ is pleased to provide this summary of the accompanying proposed workers compensation insurance loss cost² filing that was filed under separate cover on October 18, 2024 with the South Carolina Department of Insurance for its review and approval.

The filing recommends no overall change to loss costs in the voluntary market, effective April 1, 2025.

South Carolina Overview

The current filing is based on premium and loss experience as of year-end 2023 from Policy Years 2019 through 2022 and is similar to the loss experience underlying the April 1, 2024, filing. Deterioration in the Policy Year 2021 loss ratio which was impacted by several severe claims, has offset favorable experience emerging in the other Policy Years

The loss ratio in Policy Year 2021 is materially impacted by several particularly severe burn claims. Adjustments were made in certain areas of the analysis to account for these claims. To balance stability and responsiveness and to reduce the influence of the substantial burn claims within a single year on a prospective basis, the experience period was extended to four Policy Years of data.

Countrywide Overview


The workers compensation (WC) system remains healthy. The Calendar Year 2023 combined ratio for workers compensation was 86%, a sign of underwriting profitability, where the net written premium increased by 1%.

Frequency has continued its long-term decline and on a countrywide basis, while claim severity changes were considered moderate for 2023. The continued focus on worker safety and technological advancements are regarded as contributing to fewer workplace injuries over time. The latest medical severity change aligns with projected medical inflation, while indemnity severity tracked with changes in average weekly wages.

Payroll increased by 6% between 2022 and 2023, driven by increases in both employment and wages. Conversely, WC system costs have increased at a slower pace than wages during the same period. The great reshuffle of jobs has also slowed significantly as employee turnover settles near pre-pandemic levels and we see signs of the labor market normalizing rather than deteriorating.

¹ NCCI is a licensed rating organization authorized to make recommended loss cost filings on behalf of workers compensation insurance companies in South Carolina. NCCI's filings are objectively prepared, utilizing widely accepted actuarial ratemaking methodologies.

² "Loss cost" refers to the portion of workers compensation rates filed that are allocated to pay losses but not carrier expenses. Some states include certain carrier expenses and assessments in the definition of "advisory loss costs." Carriers can use the approved loss costs as the basis for their rates, typically adjusting them for expenses with a loss cost multiplier.



Economic inflation as measured with the Consumer Price Index has been elevated over the past few years. However, this economic inflation has not generally translated to higher WC medical and indemnity benefit costs:

- Medical inflation has been more stable in the aggregate with the WC Weighted Medical Price Index showing an average increase of 2.6% for the past 3 years. Medical fee schedules have helped moderate price increases in workers compensation in states that have adopted them.
- Indemnity severity has largely been tracking wage inflation in recent years—a pattern which is not unusual considering indemnity costs are essentially wage replacement benefits for injured workers.

Conclusion

The workers compensation system continues to be healthy. While consumer inflation has been elevated, the inflation for workers compensation medical costs remained stable. The increases observed in indemnity severity are largely driven by increased wages, which have risen significantly in recent years. Workers Compensation premiums are based on payroll, which is an inflation-sensitive exposure base. The combination of continued frequency declines and moderate benefit costs at or below the level of wage growth, have continued to put downward pressure on overall WC system costs relative to collected premiums.