



## Summary of the Proposed South Dakota Workers Compensation Loss Cost and Assigned Risk Rate Filing Effective July 1, 2026

The National Council on Compensation Insurance (NCCI)<sup>1</sup> is pleased to provide this summary of the accompanying proposed workers compensation insurance loss cost<sup>2</sup> and assigned risk rate<sup>3</sup> filing that was filed under separate cover on February 12, 2026, with the South Dakota Division of Insurance for its review and approval.

The filing proposes a -5.1% decrease to the current loss costs for the voluntary market and a -4.9% decrease to the assigned risk market rates, effective July 1, 2026.

### South Dakota Overview

The proposed filing is based on premium and loss experience as of year-end 2024 from Policy Years 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023. The proposed loss cost level change is primarily driven by improved experience relative to the data underlying the filing effective July 1, 2025.

South Dakota's lost-time claims relative to premium experienced a small decline in the latest year, continuing the long-term decline in lost-time claim frequency. While there is some variability in the year-to-year changes in the average cost per lost-time claim for both indemnity and medical, the long-term pattern of decline in both indemnity and medical loss ratios is expected to continue. The proposed loss cost level change also accounts for an increase to medical benefits due to enacted medical fee schedule changes.

The proposed assigned risk rate level change reflects a small increase in assigned risk expenses.

### Multistate Overview

The Calendar Year 2024 combined ratio for workers compensation was under 100% (the break-even point) at 86%, a measure of underwriting profitability for the overall system. The net written premium in the voluntary market decreased slightly, and the residual market premium in states serviced by NCCI remained approximately the same as last year.

The number of claims occurring, as measured by frequency, and the cost of claims, as measured by severity, continue to be key metrics for the health of the workers compensation system. The frequency of workers compensation lost-time claims continues its long-term decline across all

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<sup>1</sup> NCCI is a licensed rating organization authorized to make recommended loss cost and assigned risk rate filings on behalf of workers compensation insurance companies in South Dakota. NCCI's filings are objectively prepared, utilizing widely accepted actuarial ratemaking methodologies.

<sup>2</sup> "Loss cost" refers to the portion of workers compensation rates that are filed by the rating organization and 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.

<sup>3</sup> The assigned risk rate is filed for use on policies written through the Assigned Risk Plan, a program established by state insurance regulatory authorities that sets the rules and procedures for providing insurance coverage to parties that are unable to obtain coverage in the voluntary market. For the assigned risk market, NCCI files a full rate that includes the Servicing Carriers' expenses.



NCCI states. In fact, claim frequency declined at a faster pace in 2024 than the long-term average rate of decline, an indication of safer workplaces and fewer injured workers.

Claim severity increased for both the medical and wage replacement components in 2024. Medical cost increases were driven in part by some inflationary pressures. However, the primary driver of the increase in medical costs was the increased utilization of medical services by injured workers. Physician services account for more than 40% of all workers compensation medical services, although the cost of these services only increased by 1.5% over the past three years. The increase in indemnity benefits is primarily driven by an increase in wages.

### **Decimal Extension of Loss Costs, Rates, and Expected Loss Rates**

In this year's filing, NCCI proposes the application of an additional digit to its published rating values to extend them from two to three decimal places. This change, known as "decimal extension," allows for more precise adjustments to loss costs, assigned risk rates, and Expected Loss Rates (ELRs). Decimal extension will be particularly beneficial for classification codes with lower loss costs or assigned risk rates because it will minimize rounding limitations that are currently more likely to impact these class codes. Currently, the smallest change in one of these values has to be at least 0.01, but after decimal extension, changes can be as small as 0.001. The methodology for determining the filed loss costs, assigned risk rates, and ELRs is unchanged. The proposed decimal extension is premium-neutral on both a statewide and industry group basis.

For more information on decimal extension, visit [https://www.ncci.com/Articles/Pages/II\\_Decimal-Extension-Loss-Costs-Rates-Expected-Loss-Rates.aspx](https://www.ncci.com/Articles/Pages/II_Decimal-Extension-Loss-Costs-Rates-Expected-Loss-Rates.aspx).

### **Conclusion**

The workers compensation system remains healthy. For the last decade, the system has broadly benefited from a steady drop in claim frequency, rising wages, and moderate severity. The changing workforce and evolving economy also continue to impact workers compensation. Overall payroll growth persists, driven by an increase in employment and wage rates year over year. Preliminary data indicates a decrease in workers compensation net written premium in 2024, notwithstanding the growth in payroll. The combination of frequency declines and moderate benefit costs have contributed to reductions in overall workers compensation system costs.