

PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES
Commission on Health and Safety and Workers' Compensation
Thursday, December 11, 2025, 9:30 a.m.
Ronald Reagan State Building, Auditorium
300 South Spring Street, Los Angeles, CA 90013
and by Zoom

1. Roll Call

The Commission on Health and Safety and Workers' Compensation (CHSWC) public meeting was called to order at 9:36 a.m. by Chair Steiger. A quorum of members was present.

In Attendance: Mitch Steiger (Chair), Jen Hamelin, Shelley Kessler, Kristi Montoya, Chris Pedroza, Nicholas Roxborough, Meagan Subers (remote)

Absent: Sidharth Voorakkara

2. Public Comment

There was none.

3. Testimony from stakeholder

There was none.

4. Report on the 2025 Legislative Session

Presented by Sulma Guzman, Deputy Director, Office of Legislative and Regulatory Affairs (OLRA), DIR

<https://www.dir.ca.gov/chswc/Meetings/2025/12-11-2025-Item-5-2025-Legislative-Session.pdf>

5. Discussion, recommendation and possible action to approve the minutes of September 30, 2025 public meeting

Presented by Mitch Steiger, Chair

<https://www.dir.ca.gov/chswc/Meetings/2025/12-11-2025-Item-4-Meeting-Minutes.pdf>

On a motion by Commissioner Pedroza and second by Commissioner Roxborough, the September 30, 2025, CHSWC meeting minutes were approved unanimously by all CHSWC Commissioners in attendance.

The votes were as follows:

AYES: Hamelin, Kessler, Montoya, Pedroza, Roxborough, Steiger, Subers

NOES: None

ABSENT: Voorakkara

Public Comment:

There was none.

6. Discussion, recommendation and possible action to approve the draft Report on Employer Use of Prepaid Card Account Programs for Workers' Compensation Disability Indemnity Payments in California: California Senate Bill 880 (2018) and California Labor Code §4651 (updated 12-2025)

Presented by Melissa Flores, Executive Officer

<https://www.dir.ca.gov/chswc/Meetings/2025/12-11-2025-Item-6-Prepaid-Card-Program.pdf>

Melissa Flores explained that she was bringing back the updated report since the September meeting, and thanked the lead on the report, CHSWC staffer Chris Bailey, as well as Rhonda Meyers of State Fund who provided information and answers to follow-up questions since the last meeting; Ms. Flores explained that this information is now included in the updated report. Ms. Flores explained that they also contacted US Bank, which issues the ReliaCard prepaid card used by State Fund, and that information about fees is also included in the updated report.

On a motion by Commissioner Roxborough and seconded by Commissioner Montoya, release of the draft report for 30-day public comment was approved unanimously by all CHSWC Commissioners in attendance.

The votes were as follows:

AYES: Hamelin, Kessler, Montoya, Pedroza, Roxborough, Steiger, Subers

NOES: None

ABSENT: Voorakkara

7. Discussion, recommendation and possible action to approve proposal for the Study on the Effectiveness of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder Presumption (PTSD) and Claims Filed (Labor Code section 3212.15)

Melissa Flores, Executive Officer

**Marizen Ramirez, MPH, PhD, Professor of Environmental and Occupational Health
University of California at Irvine**

<https://www.dir.ca.gov/chswc/Meetings/2025/12-11-2025-Proposal-Study-on-PTSD.pdf>

Professor Ramirez, along with her colleagues from UC-Irvine, UCLA and UC-Berkeley, presented an overview of their proposed PTSD study and explained that PTSD is measured starting at one month from the date of exposure and clarified that both physical and mental trauma could have different dates of exposure. Measurement of PTSD can also depend on the medical provider's diagnosis based on when symptoms first presented. Medical data collected, along with the narrative information, will examine the effectiveness of the presumption law in terms of claim filings, approvals or denials, timeliness and treatment, and return to work or other outcomes, keeping in mind the challenge that the data collected was originally for payment rather than research. Qualitative and quantitative methods will both be used, and regular updates on the research will be presented to the Commission during the life of the study.

On a motion by Commissioner Kessler and second by Commissioner Roxborough, the proposal for the Study on the Effectiveness of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder Presumption (PTSD) and Claims Filed was approved unanimously by all CHSWC Commissioners in attendance.

The votes were as follows:

AYES: Hamelin, Kessler, Montoya, Pedroza, Roxborough, Steiger, Subers

NOES: None

ABSENT: Voorakkara

Public Comment:

There was none.

8. Discussion, recommendation and possible action to approve the draft 2025 CHSWC and the draft 2025 WOSHTEP Advisory Board Annual Report (approval pending edits)

Presented by Melissa Flores, Executive Officer

On a motion by Commissioner Kessler and second by Commissioner Pedroza, the draft 2025 CHSWC and the draft WOSHTEP Advisory Board Annual Report were approved unanimously by all CHSWC Commissioners in attendance.

The votes were as follows:

AYES: Hamelin, Kessler, Montoya, Pedroza, Roxborough, Steiger, Subers

NOES: None

ABSENT: Voorakkara

Commissioners' Questions and Comments:

Commissioner Kessler and Chair Steiger thanked Ms. Flores for her incredible work.

Public Comment:

There was none.

9. Discussion, recommendation and possible action to elect 2026 Chair of the Commission on Health and Safety and Workers' Compensation

Presented by Mitch Steiger, Chair

On a motion by Commissioner Kessler and second by Commissioner Hamelin, Commissioner Roxborough was nominated to serve as Chair of the Commission on Health and Safety and Workers' Compensation (CHSWC) for 2026. Commissioner Roxborough was unanimously elected by all CHSWC Commissioners in attendance.

The votes were as follows:

AYES: Hamelin, Kessler, Montoya, Pedroza, Roxborough, Steiger, Subers

NOES: None

ABSENT: Voorakkara

10. Panel discussion on wearable personal monitoring devices to reduce heat-related injury for farm workers

Presented by Carisa Harris Adamson, PhD, CPE, Director, Northern California Center of Occupational and Environmental Health, University of California, Berkeley

Zack Braun, Chief Executive Officer, SlateSafety

Don Elswick, Certified Industrial Hygienist, ELSMART Associates LLC

Ann Katten, Health and Safety Specialist, California Rural Assistance Foundation

Carisa Harris Adamson discussed the risks and benefits of using wearable technologies to assess heat stress and strain. Dr. Harris Adamson discussed a project about wildland firefighters in Chile to understand heat strain that used wearable technology to measure physiological changes to assess heat stress and strain. Dr. Harris Adamson said pilot testing and research were needed before deploying wearable technologies. She likes the idea that wearable technology is optional. She wanted the workers to be empowered, and wearable technologies could increase stress and do more harm than good, so she would like to proceed cautiously in its use. Dr. Harris Adamson suggested they should test the wearable technologies in a less vulnerable population than agricultural workers.

Dr. Harris Adamson moderated a panel whose members also included Zack Braun, Don Elswick and Ann Katten. Zach Braun, Chief Executive Officer and co-founder of Slate Safety, discussed Slate Safety's wearable armband in detail. Don Elswick, Certified Industrial Hygienist at ELSMART Associates LLC, discussed building a program that included wearable technology. Ann Katten, Health and Safety Project Director at California Rural Assistance Foundation, discussed potential misuse of technology that includes discrimination and invasion of privacy.

Commissioners' Questions and Comments:

Commissioners had numerous questions regarding use of wearable technologies, including productivity monitoring, monitoring elevated body temperature in women, safety of workers' biometric data and possible abuse of data by employers. Commissioners had comments regarding legislation on wearable technology, monitoring different types of workers – farmworkers versus firefighters, and employers' responsibility.

Commissioners wanted workers to use wearable technology, so they could receive the benefits of avoiding heat-related illnesses, without negative repercussions from employers. A Commissioner noted that research on wearable technology has been done for years and advocated for its use to save farm workers' lives. Another Commissioner said a third party can use the data in a way it was not intended.

Public Comment:

There was none.

11. Presentation from Cal/OSHA on the opportunities for CHSWC support for filling staff vacancies & hiring

Presented by Zulfiquar "Ali" Merchant, Sr. Safety Engineer, Division of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH), DIR

https://www.dir.ca.gov/chswc/Meetings/2025/12-11-2025-2025-CalOSHA_hiring.pdf

Mr. Merchant presented slides on DOSH hiring strategies and recruitment activities and gave examples of various job fairs, university career fairs, online Zoom support sessions, workshops and marketing campaigns, including an online presence on LinkedIn and Indeed.

Commissioners' Questions and Comments:

Commissioners had a few questions for Mr. Merchant.

12. Presentation from Division of Workers' Compensation (DWC) on the process and timing for data requests

Presented by Alissa Huang, Workers' Compensation Compliance Manager, Division of Workers' Compensation, DIR

<https://www.dir.ca.gov/chswc/Meetings/2025/12-11-2025-Item-12-WCIS-Data-App.pdf> and <https://www.dir.ca.gov/chswc/Meetings/2025/12-11-2025-Item-12-WCIS-Data-Sharing-Process.pdf>

Executive Officer Flores stated this presentation by DWC on data requests will be broken into two parts. For the first part, Alissa Huang, Workers' Compensation Compliance Manager at the Division of Workers' Compensation, will discuss data requests, and the second part on statutes and legislation will be discussed by Susan Marsh, Senior Attorney at the Division of Workers' Compensation.

Ms. Huang discussed the Workers' Compensation System (WCIS) data by presenting an overview of the data and the data sharing process. WCIS has been collecting data since the Year 2000, and it manages workers' compensation data and provides data for research. The data sharing process by DWC is governed by Labor Code section 138.7.

Ms. Huang discussed in detail the two tracks that can be used to obtain data from WCIS: the first track, for requests for aggregate data, is for the public, and the second track, which can include identifiable information, is for research institutions. Ms. Huang provided ways to expedite obtaining data from DWC and provided the WCIS Data request address as WCIS@DIR.CA.GOV.

Commissioners' Questions and Comments:

A Commissioner asked what constituted a research institution. Ms. Huang replied that Susan Marsh, Attorney at DWC, will be better able to answer this question.

Public Comment:

There was none.

13. Report from the Executive Officer

Presented by Melissa Flores, Executive Officer

Executive Officer Flores stated that on November 19, 2025, a School Action for Safety and Health (SASH) Advisory Board Meeting was held virtually.

Executive Officer Flores stated that for the study, "Assessment of Risk of Carcinogens Exposure and Incidents of Occupational Cancer Among Mechanics and Cleaners of Firefighting Vehicles" CHSWC was able to allocate an additional \$100,000 for this study; contracting for this study is taking longer than anticipated, and this contract is being expected to be executed during the first quarter of 2026.

Executive Officer Flores discussed CHSWC meeting planning for 2026, and CHSWC public meeting dates have been finalized. CHSWC public meetings will be held in three California cities: Los Angeles, Oakland, and Sacramento.

Commissioners' Questions and Comments:

Commissioners complimented Executive Officer Flores for her work at CHSWC.

Public Comment:

There was none.

14. Standing Written Reports

- a. Legislative update

<https://www.dir.ca.gov/chswc/Meetings/2025/12-11-2025-Item-14a-Legislative-Update.pdf>

- b. Mandated Reports & Other Studies Status

<https://www.dir.ca.gov/chswc/Meetings/2025/12-11-2025-Item-14b-CHSWC-Legislative-Mandates-Studies.pdf>

Executive Officer Flores discussed the contracting process for CHSWC's Fire Mechanics study and the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder studies. She mentioned that CHSWC includes Office of the Director studies in this section of the standing written reports.

15. Other Commission matters

A Commissioner asked Executive Officer Flores and CHSWC staff to review Labor Code Section 75 about CHSWC and to come back with recommendations for updates in 2026 or 2027.

16. Adjournment

On a motion by Commissioner Roxborough and second by Commissioner Pedroza, Chair Steiger adjourned the meeting at 1:32 p.m. by unanimous consent of all members in attendance.

Approved:

Nicholas Roxborough, Chair

Date

Respectfully submitted:

Melissa Flores, Executive Officer, CHSWC

Date