



North Carolina Industrial Commission

Annual Report FY 2009

(July 1, 2008-June 30, 2009)

North Carolina Industrial Commission

In 1929 the North Carolina General Assembly created the North Carolina Industrial Commission to serve as both an administrative and quasi-judicial agency. It has seven Commissioners, one of whom is designated as the Chair.

The North Carolina Industrial Commission is vested as a Court of exclusive and original jurisdiction by the General Assembly to adjudicate and administer the North Carolina Workers' Compensation Act. The Industrial Commission currently processes over 62,400 workers' compensation accidents and claims filed annually under the act. This responsibility includes overseeing and providing for the trial of contested cases as well as administering non-contested cases. Workers who are injured by accident on the job, or contract an occupational disease receive disability and medical benefits as ordered by the Industrial Commission. Also, the Industrial Commission is a court of original jurisdiction for trying over 550 State Tort Claims annually under the North Carolina State Torts Claims Act.

Additionally, the General Assembly has mandated the Industrial Commission to provide an adjudicatory process for Childhood Vaccine Related Injury claims and Compensation to Persons Erroneously Convicted of Felonies. It acts as a Court of exclusive and final jurisdiction for death claims made by families of law enforcement officers, fire fighters, rescue squad workers and civil air patrol members arising under the Death Benefits Act. Each of these adjudicatory systems requires administration of contested and uncontested claims, review of agreements and supervision of payment of benefits.

Commissioners of the N C Industrial Commission

N.C. Gen. Stat. §97-77 creates the North Carolina Industrial Commission consisting of seven commissioners “who shall devote their entire time to the duties of the Commission.” The commissioners are appointed by the Governor for staggered 6-year terms. The Commission administers and adjudicates not only the Workers’ Compensation Act, but also the Tort Claims Act, the Childhood Vaccine-Related Injury Act, the Law Enforcement Officers’, Firemen’s, Rescue Squad Workers’, and Civil Air Patrol Members’ Death Benefit Act, and the Act to Compensate Individuals Erroneously Convicted of Felonies. The main focus of the Commission involves workers’ compensation. The stated public policy behind the Workers’ Compensation Act is to provide certain and speedy relief to injured employees. The commission is a special or limited tribunal and is invested with certain judicial functions and possesses the powers and incidents of a court, within the provisions of the Workers’ Compensation Act, as are necessary to determine matters in dispute between employees and employers.

Quasi-Judicial Function

The commissioners have many job duties. The most highly visible duty of the commissioners is the quasi-judicial function in which the commissioners sit in panels of three to review approximately 40% of the decisions made by deputy commissioners who travel across the state hearing workers’ compensation and tort claims cases. By statute commissioners may reconsider the evidence, receive further evidence, rehear the parties or amend in any way the decision by the deputy commissioner, N.C. Gen. Stat. §97-85. The Full Commission is the fact-finding body and therefore only the findings of the commissioners and not those of the deputy commissioners are deemed conclusive on appeal, if supported by the evidence.

Commissioners hear cases each month and must thoroughly prepare for each case by reviewing lengthy transcripts of the deputy commissioners’ hearings, exhibits presented at the hearings, transcripts of depositions of medical and other experts, and the briefs submitted by each party to the action. Each commissioner typically prepares for and hears approximately 30 cases each month. After hearing oral arguments for the cases, each commissioner is assigned cases to write, but must also review and sign cases authored by the other two commissioners who sat on the panel.

Every two or three months a commissioner serves as the chair of a panel which means that he or she must manage the hearing calendar dealing with continuances, requests to move cases to other days, withdrawals and review any settlements that might occur. Additionally, commissioners must rule on numerous motions that are filed in cases pending before them or in cases which have been through the Court of Appeals and Supreme Court. These motions include motions for attorney’s fees, motions to compel the payment of compensation previously ordered, motions to dismiss, motions to reopen the record to take additional evidence, motions involving medical treatment and rehabilitation issues, and various other motions for appropriate relief. Most orders entered by a commissioner must also be reviewed by the other two commissioners who heard the case.

Commissioners may also handle emergency medical motions. These motions may be filed with the Executive Secretary's Office, the Deputy Commissioners' Section or the Office of the Chair. Those that are filed with the Chair are handled directly by the Chair, or in the Chair's absence, they are handled by another Commissioner. Medical Motions that are appealed to the Full Commission are set on the earliest Full Commission docket available.

Management and Operations

The chair of the Commission is by statute the chief judicial officer and chief executive officer of the Industrial Commission. The chair and the other commissioners meet monthly and often more frequently to set the policy, goals, and operating procedures for the entire agency, as well as to address judicial/legal issues, and administrative issues such as case management by deputy commissioners and commissioners, creation of forms to be used in claims management, and oversight of all sections of the Commission.

Rule Making Authority

N.C. Gen. Stat. §97-88(a) grants the commissioners rule making authority. The Commission promulgates the procedural and operating rules for the Industrial Commission. It also establishes and adopts the medical fee schedules and hospital fee schedules by which insurance carriers pay billing charges for medical, in-patient and out-patient hospital care provided to injured workers. The rule making process involves publication of proposed rules and public hearings prior to adoption of the rules. In addition, the commissioners frequently adopt minutes to address various operating and procedural issues involving the Industrial Commission.

Liaison with Commission Sections

Commissioners also serve as liaisons with all sections of the Commission. As a result, commissioners maintain frequent communication between section heads and evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the Commission's operations.

Other Duties

Each commissioner also is assigned additional duties. A commissioner oversees the case management for tort claims, serving as the clerk of court for tort claims, as well as reviewing and approving settlements of tort cases, such as school bus accidents and other negligence claims against the State. Another commissioner oversees the management of the appeal process to the Court of Appeals. A commissioner plans and organizes the program and multiple events surrounding the Commission's annual education conference, which provides continuing education for all parties involved in the workers' compensation system, including insurance adjusters, human resource and safety directors and other employer representatives, plaintiff and defense attorneys, vocational and occupational rehabilitation workers, nurses and others. Commissioners also routinely review settlement agreements submitted by the parties which must be approved by the commission. In addition, Commissioners either chair or are members of Industrial Commission task forces dealing with critical issues before the commission.

Claims Administration Section

The Claims Administration Section processes documents related to events occurring during the pendency of Workers' Compensation cases. Employees, employers, and insurers submit forms to open claims, report injuries, accept or deny claims and provide notification of changes in compensation payments, return to work status, and the amount of money paid on a claim. Claims Administration processes form agreements for payment of death benefits and permanent partial disability. In addition, Claims Administration facilitates certain aspects of occupational disease cases, monitors forms compliance and generates reports regarding different aspects of a claim. It handles interim attorney fee requests and third party requests for documents. Finally, Claims Administration is responsible for the assignment of Industrial Commission file numbers, verifying Workers' Compensation insurance on new or pending claims and answering citizen questions about claim activity.

Claims-Report of Injuries	*62,462
Claims (Form 18)	8,454
Injury Reports (Form 19)	42,406
Claims and Injury Reports (Form 18 plus Form 19)	11,602

* Some but not all claims have both a Form 18 and a Form 19 filed.

Occupational Disease Claims (Form 18B)	582
Death Claims (Form 26D, Form 30)	120
Form Agreements (Form 26A)	
Agreements Received	7,968
Agreements Approved	7,485
Amount Invoiced	\$991,125.00
Telephone Calls Answered	39,548

Deputy Commissioners Section

Workers' Compensation cases that are not settled at mediation or bypass mediation are docketed by the Deputy Commissioners Section for a formal hearing. In addition, cases under the State Tort Claims Act, administrative appeals from Orders of the Executive Secretary and contempt hearings, which are not generally subject to mediation, are docketed for hearing. Hearings are scheduled every month throughout the State in or near the county where the injury occurred. Hearings are held in a manner similar to the civil court system, whereby the record is reviewed by the Deputy Commissioner, evidence is presented, depositions may be taken, briefs may be submitted, witnesses appear, both sides can plead their case and cross examine the parties. Written Opinions and Awards in Workers' Compensation Cases, and Decisions and Orders in claims under the State Tort Claims Act are issued by the Deputy Commissioners. Some cases conclude with a Compromise Settlement Agreement, which must be reviewed by the Deputy Commissioner to insure that it is a fair outcome for the parties involved. Deputy Commissioners review complex Form Agreements. The Deputy Commissioners Section reviews both emergency and expedited medical motions by administrative process, occasionally leading to formal hearings. The administrative proceedings are concluded by orders of the Commission.

This report measures Section production from the perspective of docket formulation and disposition for each Fiscal Year measured.

ALL DEPUTY COMMISSIONERS	FY 2008 - 2009		FY 2007 -2008		FY 2006 - 2007		FY 2005 - 2006	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
# of Hearing Days:	743+		858		867		806	
Total Dockets:	4,745		5,738*		5,469		5,400	
# of Cases Heard:	1,348	28.40%	1,641	28.60%	1,478	27.03%	1,420	26.30%
#Cases Continued/Removed	1,478	31.14%	1,855	32.33%	1,940	35.47%	2,156	39.93%
# of Cases Dismissed With Prejudice:	67	1.41%	122	2.13%	66	1.21%	82	1.52%
# of Cases Dismissed Without Prejudice:	92	1.93%	137	2.39%	181	3.31%	149	2.76%
# of Cases Settled:	1,692	35.65%	1,835	31.98%	1,641	30.01%	1,482	27.44%
#Pre-Trial Hearings	68	1.43%	147	2.56%	163	2.98%	111	2.06%

+ The Industrial Commission has attempted to compress the number of hearing days to decrease travel expenses.

* Does not include docketing statistics for State Prisoner Tort Claim motions hearings.

Deputy Commissioners Section (continued)

The chart below records the number of decisions rendered, cases settled and Pre-Trial Orders issued for each Fiscal Year indicated.

	FY 2008 -2009	FY 2007 - 2008	FY 2006 - 2007	FY 2005 - 2006
# of OA/DO's	1,178	1,329	1,395	1,223
# of CSA's	1,743	2,094	1,763	1,577
Pre-Trial Orders	50	132	143	97
Total Cases Written/Settled	2,971	3,555	3,301	2,897

OA [Opinion and Award]; DO [Decision and Order]
 CSA [Compromise Settlement Agreement]

The chart below details the number of hearing hours per month on a Fiscal Year basis for the years indicated.

	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	Totals
FY '08 - FY '09	315.25	331	323.50	327.25	317.25	318.50	330.50	324.75	322.75	330.75	366	408.25	4015.75
FY '07 - FY '08*	253.25	346.25	333.45	359.75	328.25	177.25	318.00	383.50	336.00	357.20	344.50	331.45	3868.85
FY '06 - FY '07	280.8	353	356.75	280.5	478.2	248	284.5	257.5	270.5	277.25	318.3	265	3670.3
FY '05 - FY '06	263.25	321.5	199.5	362	347	326.5	355.75	312.75	358.25	331	304.25	361	3842.75
FY '04 - FY '05	317.2	349.75	266	344.75	249.5	129.25	344.75	331.5	329.25	306	229.75	270	3467.7

* Does not include hours of hearings related to State Prisoner Tort Claim motion hearings under the State Tort Claims Act. Prior years include hours of hearings for this purpose.

Docket Section

Requests by parties for formal hearings in Workers' Compensation cases are filed with the Docket Section. The section ensures that all parties are aware of the filing and have the opportunity to respond. After the requests for hearing have been processed, generally the cases are referred to the Mediation Section. Requests for hearing under the Workers' Compensation expedited medical motion procedure are referred directly to the Deputy Commissioners' Section. The Docket Section processes replies to requests for hearing and updates attorney information for docketed cases. It maintains the Commission's database adding new attorneys and updating attorney contact information.

Appeals from Orders of the Executive Secretary's Office to the Deputy Commissioner level and appeals from decisions of Deputy Commissioners to the Full Commission are filed with the Docket Section. All parties are notified of the appeal. For appeals to the Full Commission, the Docket Section orders an official transcript for the case and provides copies to the parties. The Docket Section prepares the case for review and places it on a calendar for hearing by a panel of three Commissioners.

Tort Claims against State departments and agencies and their employees are filed through the Docket Section. Upon receipt of a Tort Claim Affidavit, the section assigns a number to the claim and provides a copy to all parties. The Docket Section receives and distributes all mail for the Tort Claim, until the case is referred to the Deputy Commissioners Section by Order of a Commissioner. The Docket Section also oversees the File Room.

Form 33s Received [Request Claim be Assigned for Hearing]	8,132
Form 33s for Non-Insured Cases	219
Administrative Appeals to Deputy Commissioners	546
Expedited Medical Motions	505
Form 33Rs Received [Response to Hearing Requests: items 1-4 above]	7,044
Correspondence	5,117
Tort Claims Filed	561
Requests for Recordings of Hearings	864
Number of Hearing Tapes/CDs Copied	2,280
Appeals to Full Commission	742
Cases Sent for Transcription	683
Transcripts Mailed to Parties	695
Cases Prepared for Full Commission Review	572
Pro Se Inmate Tort Appeals Heard Administratively	136
Medical Motion Appeals	42

Executive Secretary's Office

The Executive Secretary's Office handles administrative review of issues for the Industrial Commission. This office is responsible for the review, approval or disapproval of the vast majority of Compromise Settlement Agreements filed with the Industrial Commission. This section is responsible for the review, disposition of and issuing of Orders on Form 24 Applications to Terminate or Suspend Payment of Compensation. Telephone hearings are often held in regard to these applications. In addition, Orders are issued after review of Medical Motions, Administrative Motions, Third Party Settlements and a variety of other issues such as Requests for Attorney Withdrawal.

Orders on Compromise Settlement Agreements	11,435
Orders on Third Party Distributions	459
Orders/Disposition on Form 24 Applications [to Terminate or Suspend Payment of Compensation]	1,613
Orders on Medical Motions	1,764
Orders/Disposition on Administrative Motions by Executive Secretary	4,893
Total number of calls and voicemails answered by Executive Secretary's Assistant	3,018
Attorney Withdrawal Orders	1,831
Certified copies of files	26

Fraud Investigation Section

The Fraud Investigation Section is composed of two units, the Non-Insured Compliance Unit and the Criminal Investigation Unit. The Fraud Investigation Section serves the citizens of North Carolina by investigating potential criminal violations of the Workers' Compensation Act and ensures compliance with the rules and regulations. The goal is to foster confidence in the workers' compensation system and compliance with the law.

The Non-Insured Compliance Unit handles civil cases involving employers who are operating as non-insured employers in violation of N.C.G.S. § 97-93 and N.C.G.S. § 97-94. An employer is considered non-insured if the employer does not carry Workers' Compensation insurance, is not self-insured, or cannot cover the medical costs and compensation due to the injured worker. The Non-Insured Compliance Unit investigates referrals to determine whether or not an employer is in compliance. Once an investigation is complete and evidence is gathered, it is presented during Industrial Commission non-insured penalty hearings. A Penalty Hearing in a non-insured case is held simultaneously with the underlying Workers' Compensation case. Civil penalties can be assessed covering the entire time-frame that the employer is not insured. The Non-Insured Compliance Unit also assists the Office of Attorney General with the enforcement and collection of penalty actions.

The Criminal Investigation Unit operates as a law enforcement agency and is responsible for conducting criminal investigations into cases of suspected Workers' Compensation fraud and violations related to Workers' Compensation claims involving employees, employers, insurers, health care providers, attorneys, and vocational rehabilitation providers. Fraud Investigators investigate all criminal complaints filed with the Industrial Commission regarding failure of employers to maintain Workers' Compensation insurance (N.C.G.S. §97-94(d)), fraud on the part of employees with regard to the collection or obtaining of Workers' Compensation benefits (N.C.G.S. §97-88.2), fraud on the part of employers with regard to payment or collection of Workers' Compensation premiums from employees' salaries (N.C.G.S. §97-21), medical payment fraud, and any other claims arising out of violations of Chapter 97 by employees or employers. The Criminal Investigation Unit works with Judicial Officials and other law enforcement agencies throughout the state to resolve the above investigations in criminal court.

Non-Insured Cases Docketed	351
Fraud Cases Reported	391
Fraud Cases Pending	99
Fraud Cases Closed	292
Amount Received in Penalties	\$33,216.64

Workers' Compensation Information Specialists

The North Carolina Industrial Commission created a Workers' Compensation Information Specialists Area (formerly the Ombudsman Area) to assist claimants who are not represented by an attorney, employers, and other parties in protecting their rights. In addition, the Workers' Compensation Information Specialists serve as the information source for the Industrial Commission, and answer general questions pertaining to all aspects of the Workers' Compensation Act, Tort Claims against State Departments and Agencies and other statutes under the jurisdiction of the Industrial Commission and related rules.

Number of Calls Answered (English)	16,056
Number of Calls answered (Spanish)	1,985
Total Calls Answered	18,041
Number of Calls Returned	3,290
Number of Walk-Ins Seen	48
Correspondence (letters and e-mails) Answered	3,134

Information Technology Section

The Information Technology Section is responsible for the Information Management Strategy for the Industrial Commission. The team consists of IT and Scanning staff. Section responsibilities include:

- Developing plans for technical and operational processes
- Developing software programs and upgrades
- Maintaining agency software applications
- Managing software licenses
- Maintaining and upgrading onsite hardware
- Administering databases
- Managing data security
- Operations management
- Providing technology training
- Providing end-user support for hardware, software and network issues
- Scanning, indexing, verification, storage and retrieval agency documents

The staff consists of the CIO, the IT Manager, three Systems Analysts, one Website Administrator, four Scanners, one Project Manager from Office of Information Technology Services (ITS), and one Contractor.

Accomplishments

- Completion of Email Consolidation.
- Development and deployment of an in-house scanning and retrieval system using a web interface built by the NCIC IT Section and an electronic document repository hosted by ITS.
- Recruited a Judicial Systems Analyst to analyze internal processes and recommend changes in internal data management strategies.
- Completed a comprehensive review of all internal operational processes and their data management impacts.
- Crafted recommendations for development of a Comprehensive Electronic Case Management System to consolidate data from legacy systems and integrate document access from the electronic document repository.
- Drafted a long-range development program to develop and deploy the Case Management System, which will be a web-based information and document portal for authorized external stakeholders.
- Server backups are functional and supported by ITS, offsite copies are maintained following ITS standards.
- The Industrial Commission successfully completed the migration of all recovered and indexed documents from a 3rd party vendor vault to the electronic document repository maintained by ITS.
- An indexing program has been developed to recover the remaining un-indexed documents recovered from EDMS; indexing work is in progress.
- Completed a comprehensive review of existing agency website and commenced a redesign effort; new website to be deployed Fall 2009.
- Commenced development effort for internal staff website to manage internal agency documents and communications flows. Deployment is expected during the Winter 2010.

- Staff conducted and documented a lessons learned session for the document migration process and the development and deployment of the web-based EDMS system.
- Completed transition from document scanning by 3rd party vendor to in-house production scanning.
- Rolled out VPN, enabling staff to access file share remotely.
- Survey was conducted to determine staff training requirements (MS Office/File Management) and an initial training session with OSP (MS Word) was performed.
- Completed design work on a permanent solution for the Tracking Compliance for N.C. Gen. Stat. §97-78; development of the solution is in process.

Information Technology Strategy

- Begin multi-year program of development for Comprehensive Case Management System.
- Migrate all data from mainframe to CCMS database and replace the mainframe applications.
- Additional Basic PC and MS Office tools training required for NCIC staff. Planning to schedule courses this fiscal year.
- Planning to hire 2 additional FTEs to assist in IT efforts, allowing the enlarged staff to better address operations, security, and future projects.
- Planned IT initiatives:
 - Implement Remedy, ticket tracking system, for NCIC IT Staff
 - Tracking Compliance for N.C. Gen. Stat §97-78
 - Contact database for Defendants
 - Replace FileMaker Pro Mediation Program
 - Replace Partial Permanent Disability (PPD) Program
 - Replace and expand NCIC Searchable Databases
 - Replace the Mainframe Codes
 - Replace Live Link

Mediation Section

When a claim is contested the parties are generally referred to Mediation as a way of resolving a claim without a formal hearing. When an injured worker is not represented by an attorney, the case usually bypasses mediation. The Mediation Section oversees this process by ruling on any motions related to the mediation process, and by insuring that the parties and mediators adhere to certain timelines, move the case forward, and submit the required forms and reports. While the mediators who serve in these cases are generally not state employees, the mediators on the Industrial Commission's appointed list must complete a formal mediation training process, complete at least six hours of NC State Bar approved continuing legal education courses on Workers' Compensation law every two years and be certified by the Dispute Resolution Commission.

Hearing Requests Filed

8,732*

*There were an additional 330 cases where a hearing would have been requested in the past, which were handled through the new expedited/emergency motions procedure.

Mediation

- Total number of cases referred to mediation 9,189
- The Industrial Commission exceeded 9,000 cases being referred to mediation for the 8th straight fiscal year.
- Settlement rates were:
 - 70.2% at mediation conferences and
 - 75.6% when settlements of cases at or before mediation conferences are included.

Medical Fees Section

The Medical Fees Section is responsible for processing bills for medical services provided as a result of a Workers' Compensation claim. Medical bills are reviewed and where necessary adjusted in accordance with the Industrial Commission's Medical Fee Schedule and then mailed to the insurance carrier or self-insurer handling the claim. It responds to medical inquires, resolves medical fee disputes and assists in the review and updates of the Medical Fee Schedule.

Bills Keyed	33,179
Inpatient Hospital	10,744
Physician	20,256
Miscellaneous, Dental & Chiropractic	2,179
Monthly Average	2,765
Weekly Average	638
Daily Average	134
Bills Sent to Advisory Committee	2
Bills Awaiting a Response	0

Workers' Compensation Nurses Section

The Workers' Compensation Nurses are assigned to six different geographic regions of the state. They provide medical rehabilitation consultative services to a variety of North Carolina Workers' Compensation audiences, including injured workers, carriers, attorneys, rehabilitation professionals and health care providers. They assist with case management and medical rehabilitation needs where difficulties arise in areas of communication, trust, confusion, misunderstanding, or other problems that interfere with the ongoing progress of returning injured workers to their maximum functional capabilities. They often work in conjunction with private sector Rehabilitation Professionals coordinating activities and treatment plans. They provide in-service education to companies and professional groups on the NCIC Rehabilitation Rules.

	EXISTING 7/1/2008	REFERRALS	CLOSURES	CURRENT 6/30/2009	%
1. Back	60	86	83	63	20
2. Burn Injuries	3	1	2	2	<1
3. Extremity Injuries					
A. One Upper Extremity	92	38	41	89	29
B. One Lower Extremity	49	47	40	56	18
C. Two or More Extremities	2	14	5	11	4
TOTAL EXTREMITIES	143	99	86	156	51
4. Head Injuries	22	14	12	24	7
5. Other Injuries/Occupational Diseases	4	8	11	1	<1
6. Paraplegia	2	1	1	2	<1
7. Quadriplegia	2	4	3	3	<1
8. Multi Defects	59	74	80	53	19
TOTALS	295	287	278	304	100%
TOTAL CASES WORKED DURING YEAR					582

<u>SOURCES OF REFERRALS RECEIVED</u>	<u>Total</u>
Interdepartmental	110
Hospitals and Doctors	10
Carriers	3
Attorneys	149
Rehabilitation Professionals	6
Injured Workers	9
Vocational, Rehabilitation & Other state Agencies, etc.	0
TOTAL	287

<u>TOTAL REFERRALS MADE</u>	<u>Total</u>
Written/Verbal Contacts	28,019
Acknowledged Form 25Ns [Notice of Assignment of Rehabilitation Professional]	12,566
TOTAL CONTACTS MADE	40,585

During the 2009 fiscal year, referrals remained constant. With fewer private sector rehabilitation professionals managing cases, NCIC Nurses stayed on cases for a longer time, which resulted in an increased case load. The number of Form 25Ns decreased because carriers assigned fewer rehabilitation professionals. The number of educational presentations on the NCIC Rehabilitation Rules has increased dramatically, with the NCIC Rehabilitation Advisory Board's newest pilot program for the private sector rehabilitation community. There were 12 programs presented to 340 attendees.

Safety Education Section

The Safety Education Section of the North Carolina Industrial Commission was created as part of the original North Carolina Workers' Compensation Act of 1929 as an educational, training, and public relations unit to promote safety and accident prevention in the industrial workplaces of the state of North Carolina.

The Safety Education Section offered a broad range of free accident prevention and safety programs that range from single session targeted classes in a wide range of topics to a thirty hour Accident Prevention Certificate Awareness Program. In addition, the Safety Education Section sponsors eight Regional Safety Councils that serve all of the counties of the state. It maintains a safety video library and hosts an annual North Carolina Statewide Safety Conference.

This approach to reducing Workers' Compensation claims and costs is proactive. The mission of the Safety Education Section of the Industrial Commission (NCIC) is to help employers reduce injury to employees as well as their Workers' Compensation costs through education and training.

Individuals Trained	117,676
Contact Hours	5,369
Classes	5,213

The goal of Safety Education is to reduce pain and suffering, as well as reduce the costs resulting from accidents in the workplaces of North Carolina. An injured worker, unable to work, is a cost to an employer. The best way to reduce accidents in the workplace is through active safety programs that include: education and training for all personnel; safety committees that touch all activities in the workplace; following recognized good work practices and awareness of workplace safety and health standards. Active safety programs are the best offense and best defense against rising Workers' Compensation costs.

Because the Industrial Commission's Safety Education Section is an education-based organization, rather than one organized around compliance, it is successful at opening doors where employers welcome our staff and the training services they deliver. At times the increase in demand has been overwhelming because it is a non-punitive resource. This service meets and exceeds business, government and private sector needs because its Accident Prevention and Safety Education is responsive to individual needs and has been utilized since 1929.

The Safety Education Section continues to develop new Accident Prevention Programs to better serve the citizens of North Carolina. The latest program series, Work Zone Traffic Control, is designed to further assist employees and employers in lowering both the number and cost of accidents and injuries.