

**JOINT REPORT TO
THE PRESIDENT OF THE FLORIDA SENATE**

**THE SPEAKER OF THE
FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

by

**THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF FINANCIAL SERVICES
DIVISION OF INVESTIGATIVE AND FORENSIC SERVICES
BUREAU OF WORKERS' COMPENSATION FRAUD
&
DIVISION OF WORKERS' COMPENSATION**

January 15, 2022



The Florida Department of Financial Services, Division of Workers' Compensation (DWC) and Division of Investigative and Forensic Services (DIFS) / Bureau of Workers' Compensation Fraud (BWCF) submit this joint report to the President of the Florida Senate and the Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives, pursuant to subsection 626.989(9), Florida Statutes (F.S.) 2003. The joint report addresses the areas identified in subsection 626.989(9), F.S., for the period of July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021.

January 15, 2022

**The Honorable Wilton Simpson
President of the Senate**

**Room 400-Senate Office Building
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1100**

**The Honorable Chris Sprowls
Speaker of the House**

**The Capitol – Suite 420
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1300**

Dear President and Speaker:

The Division of Investigative and Forensic Services and the Division of Workers' Compensation appreciate the opportunity to provide you with this joint report regarding workers' compensation fraud, pursuant to subsection 626.989(9), Florida Statutes.

This report is a summary of our efforts and activities in combating workers' compensation fraud for the period of July 1, 2020– June 30, 2021.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this report, please give either of us a call.

Sincerely,



**Tanner Holloman, Director
Division of Workers' Compensation
(850) 413-1600**

Sincerely,



**Simon Blank, Director
Division of Investigative and Forensic Services
(850) 413-3115**

DIVISION OF INVESTIGATIVE AND FORENSIC SERVICES, BUREAU OF WORKERS' COMPENSATION FRAUD

The Division of Investigative and Forensic Services (DIFS), Bureau of Workers' Compensation Fraud (BWCF) is comprised of twenty-one detectives, two intelligence analysts, and four supervisors assigned to squads located in Miami, West Palm Beach, Orlando, and Tampa. The BWCF is overseen by a Captain and a Bureau Chief. In addition to these investigative resources, the BWCF currently has four dedicated prosecutors located in Miami-Dade, Hillsborough, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties. These resources allow investigators to obtain timely arrest warrants and a more cohesive prosecution of individuals charged with violating the workers' compensation fraud statutes and related criminal acts.

The BWCF has continued to prioritize investigative resources in the areas of: employee/claimant fraud, premium fraud, and joint operations concerning construction sites working without appropriate coverage, with our partners in the Division of Workers' Compensation (Division), Bureau of Compliance. The BWCF will continue to enforce criminal statutes regarding "working without coverage" and the violation of Stop-Work Orders as issued through the Bureau of Compliance.

The BWCF has participated in joint pro-active ventures with the Division, the Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR), and multiple local law enforcement agencies throughout the state to prevent and prosecute unlicensed contractors and those working without the appropriate workers' compensation coverage at residential and commercial job sites. These operations resulted in arrests for unlicensed contracting and working without workers' compensation insurance.

The BWCF is engaged in pro-active field investigations concentrating on companies engaged in premium fraud and operating without workers' compensation insurance.

The BWCF continues to work closely with the Florida's Workers' Compensation Fraud Task Force, an independent body formed in 1992 by members from the insurance industry, employers, DIFS personnel, and interested citizens.

The mission of the task force is to explore ways to combat insurance fraud through enhanced legislation, administrative rules, and public education.

Over the years, the task force has proposed many legislative enhancements and administrative rule changes that have been enacted. This has greatly enhanced DIFS's ability to pursue criminal fraud and has helped the insurance companies prevent fraud from taking place.

Finally, the BWCF actively participates in the Florida Insurance Fraud Education Committee (FIFEC) annual conference in Orlando, Florida, to teach and conduct panel discussions related to workers' compensation fraud.

During this fiscal year, the BWCF faced several challenges in the completion of cases during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Bureau expects the investigation efforts and prosecution numbers to increase with the improved conditions across the state and nation.



CASE HIGHLIGHTS

FIELD OFFICE: MIAMI WORKERS' COMPENSATION SQUAD

Case 18-671

An investigation revealed that the owner of Interior Production Masters, Inc., Lizbeth Picado, actively concealed payroll to avoid paying a higher workers' compensation premium. Picado entered into an agreement with her insurance company after reporting an estimated payroll of \$20,800 for the policy year. Based on the provided information, a workers' compensation policy was issued with an estimated premium of \$2,905.84.

During the course of the investigation, it was discovered that Interior Production Masters, Inc. cashed over \$5.5 million in checks during the policy period. A sworn affidavit was obtained from several contractors which indicated the defendant's company had been hired and paid nearly \$630,000 for labor.

According to the insurance company, had the payroll exposure been properly reported, Interior Production Masters, Inc. would have been charged over \$100,000 in additional premium and administrative fees. Also, neither the defendants nor any other representative of the company contacted the insurance company to relay any significant change in payroll from what was stated upon the initial application as required by law.

On 10/8/20, Picado was arrested and charged with Premium Fraud, Grand Theft and Organized Scheme to Defraud.

Case 20-38

An investigation revealed that the owner of LAMX Construction Company, Yoni O. Martinez (President), actively concealed payroll to avoid paying a higher workers' compensation premium. From 2014 to 2017, LAMX Construction Company reported a total of \$119,150.00 for payroll and paid \$19,433.37 in premium fees. During the course of the investigation, it was discovered that LAMX Construction Company Corp. cashed over \$5.8 million in checks during the

policy period. Sworn affidavits were obtained from contractors who confirmed hiring and paying LAMX Construction Company a total \$635,636.01 for labor.

A statement of loss affidavit obtained from the insurance company indicated that had the actual payroll been reported, LAMX Construction Company would have been charged an additional \$88,116.24 in owed premiums.

On 05/3/21, Martinez was arrested and charged with Premium Fraud and Grand Theft.

FIELD OFFICE: ORLANDO WORKERS' COMPENSATION SQUAD

Case 20-3377

In July of 2020, an investigation was initiated after being notified of potentially fraudulent activity surrounding E&L Construction Services. The owner, Erik Hipolito Hernandez, completed an insurance application in order to obtain workers' compensation coverage. On the application, Hernandez indicated that the company would not be utilizing sub-contractors for provided services. However, information was discovered that the company frequently used sub-contractors and many of them did not carry the required insurance. During the coverage period, Hernandez and his company paid 207 sub-contractors over \$900,000 to perform labor. This resulted in his insurance company being deprived of over \$87,000 in owed premiums.

On 06/29/21, Hernandez was arrested in Orange County and charged with Application Fraud, Workers' Compensation Fraud, and Grand Theft.

Case 20-3465

An investigation was conducted which revealed that Julio Enrique Maldonado, DBA G.G.M. Construction LLC., actively concealed his payroll to avoid paying a higher workers' compensation premium. Maldonado applied for workers' compensation insurance coverage and claimed an annual estimated payroll of \$120,000.

Based on the provided information, a workers' compensation policy was issued with an annual premium of \$15,867.

During the course of the investigation, it was discovered that the company cashed numerous checks during the reporting period exceeding \$5 million, with at least \$1.75 million tied directly to payroll.

A statement of loss affidavit was obtained from the insurance company that indicated the failure to report additional payroll exposure caused nearly a \$200,000 loss in owed premiums.

On 4/30/21, Maldonado was arrested and charged with Organized Scheme to Defraud and two counts of Workers' Compensation Fraud.

FIELD OFFICE: WEST PALM BEACH WORKERS' COMPENSATION SQUAD

Case 19-1204

JMC Concrete Inc President and Owner, Andre M Cerrato-Suazo, obtained workers' compensation insurance coverage from August 29, 2018 to August 29, 2019, and provided an estimated annual payroll of \$72,080.

The investigation revealed that Cerrato-Suazo had received payment from two companies that subcontracted JMC Concrete during the policy period. Supporting documentation and testimony verified that JMC Concrete had received more than \$1.1 million for payroll.

A statement of loss affidavit from the insurance company indicated that had the actual payroll been reported, JMC Concrete Inc. would have been charged an additional \$89,587.00 in owed premiums.

Andre Cerrato-Suazo was arrested on 08/16/2021 and charged with Workers' Compensation Premium Fraud.

Case 20-18

Information was discovered which showed that from September 2015 to August 2020, the president, vice-president, and the chief financial officer of PG Security Group, Inc. allegedly conspired to conceal payroll information from two different insurance companies.

The subsequent investigation revealed that P.G. Security, Inc. DBA Platinum Group Security, intentionally underreported their payroll by over \$46 million in an effort to avoid paying higher workers' compensation insurance premiums. Had the actual payroll been reported, the company would have owed an additional \$1.9 million in premiums over the same five-year period. When their insurance policy was canceled in 2020, P.G. Security, Inc. sought to obtain coverage through a different carrier. Company officials perpetuated their fraudulent activities and again underreported their payroll, this time by an estimated 10 million dollars, which resulted in a significantly lower premium assessment.

On 06/23/2021, all three officials were arrested and charged with multiple counts of Workers' Compensation Fraud.

FIELD OFFICE: TAMPA WORKERS' COMPENSATION SQUAD

Case 19-1236

This case was received from an insurance company who suspected Major Walters was committing insurance fraud after reporting a job-related injury. Walters filed a workers' compensation claim after being injured on the job and received medical treatment and indemnity for lost wages. Walters told his doctors that he was unable to work "at all". When the insurance company became suspicious, he was placed under surveillance. Walters was captured on video doing various painting jobs that involved tasks such as carrying 5-gallon buckets of paint and large bags of cement.

During the process of his claim, Walters submitted DWC-19 forms to the insurance carrier, that were filled out and signed by Walters, indicating that he was not earning wages. Criminal investigation revealed that Walters had in fact been working for a painting company and was receiving wages.

On 10/20/20, Major Walters was arrested and charged with Workers' Compensation Fraud.

Case 21-259

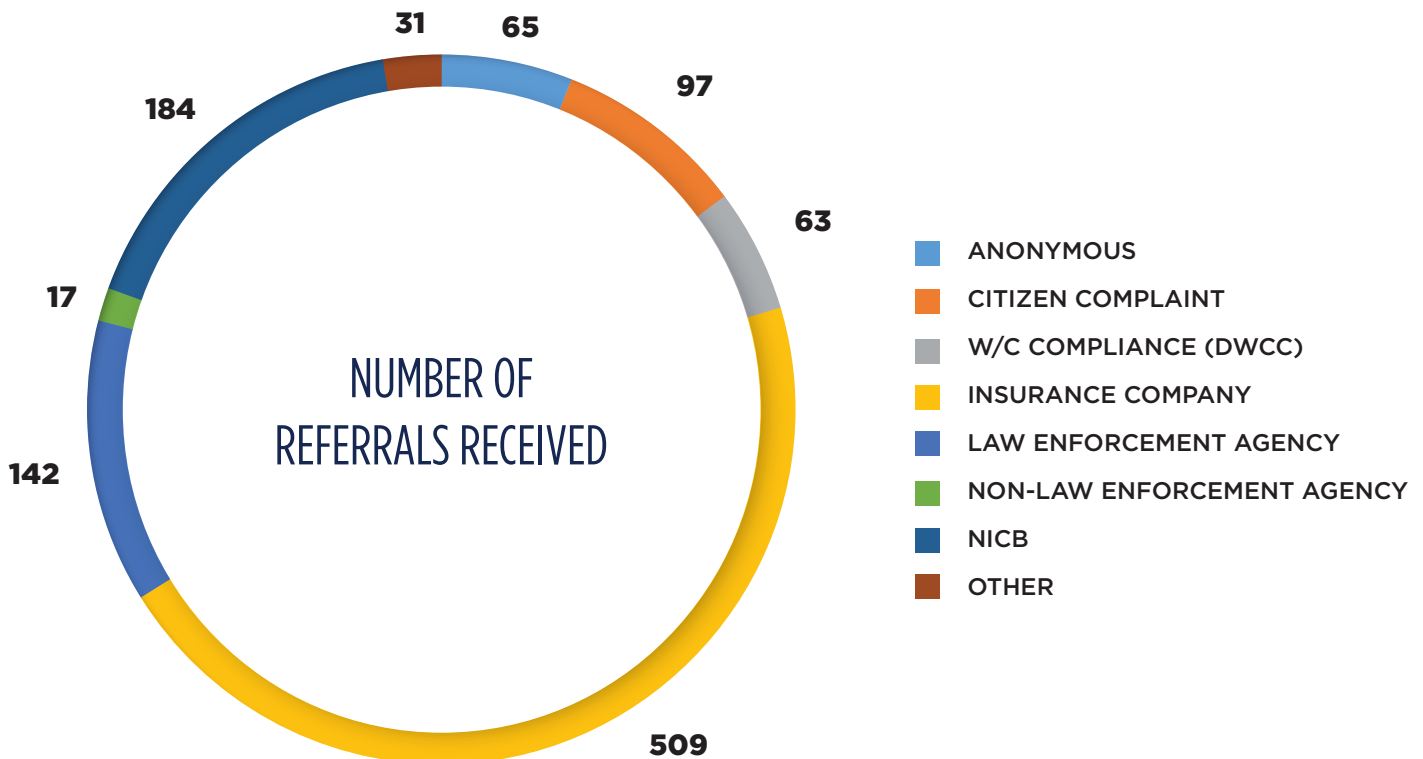
This case was initiated as a result of a complaint initiated by Pinellas County Consumer Protection. The complaint indicated that Shaun Sullivan contracted to perform construction class work, while not being a licensed contractor nor having the required workers' compensation insurance or a valid exemption in place. It was determined that while Sullivan had previous workers' compensation insurance exemptions, they had all expired at the time of contract.

The victim, who is 79 years old, paid Sullivan a total of \$67,500. Sullivan completed the first half of the construction job and left the second half incomplete. During the same time, he is also suspected of stealing two checks from the victim's home that were cashed at a check cashing store.

On 4/16/21, Shaun Sullivan was arrested and charged with Workers' Compensation Fraud-Working without Coverage, Unlicensed Contractor, and Grand Theft.

NUMBER OF SUSPECTED FRAUD REFERRALS & NUMBER OF CASES INITIATED

SOURCE	NUMBER OF REFERRALS RECEIVED	CLOSED: CASE INITIATED
ANONYMOUS	65	4
CITIZEN COMPLAINT	97	17
WC COMPLIANCE	63	22
INSURANCE COMPANY	509	108
LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY	142	118
NON-LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY	17	16
NICB	184	14
OTHER	31	8
GRAND TOTALS	1,108	307

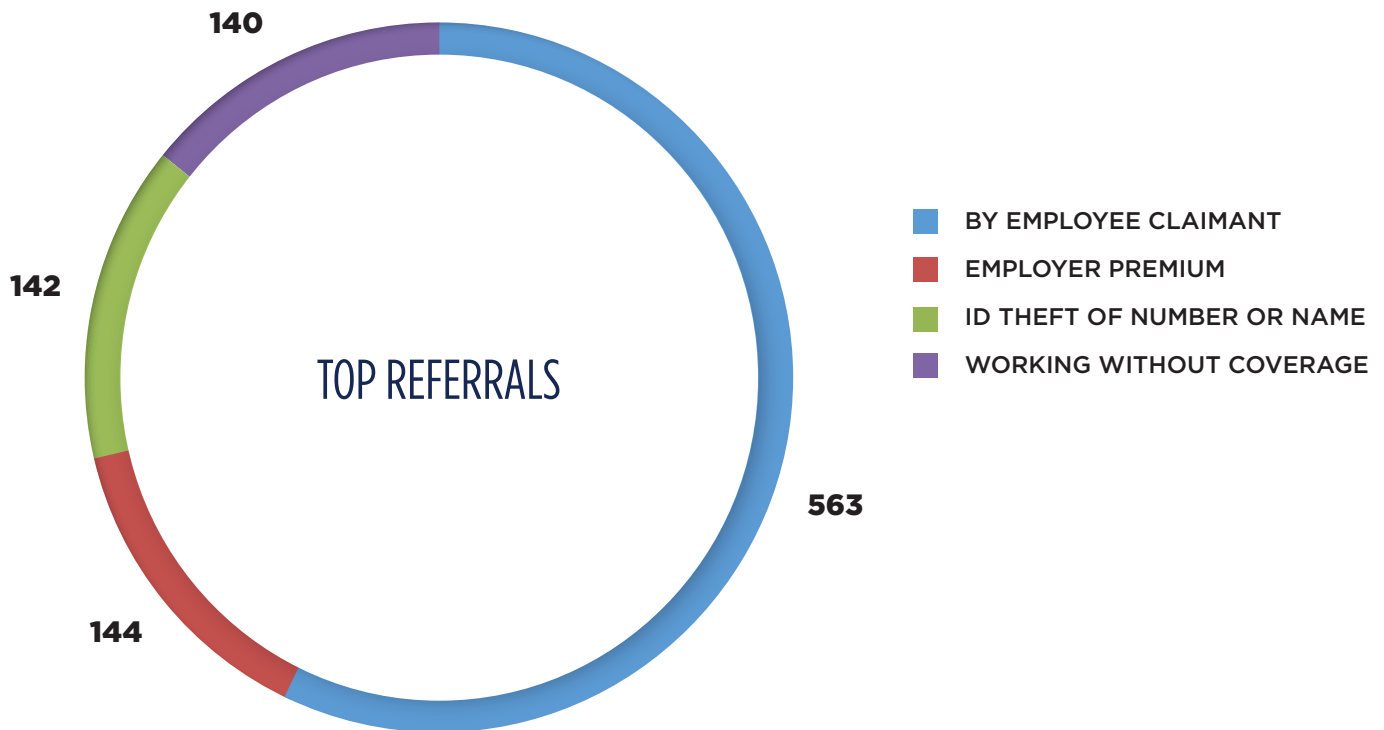


TYPES OF WORKERS' COMPENSATION REFERRALS

SUB TYPE

AGENT PREMIUM	2
APPLICATION	6
BY ATTORNEY	0
BY EMPLOYEE CLAIMANT	563
BY EMPLOYER	17
BY PROVIDER	7
EMPLOYEE PAYROLL DEDUCTION	4
EMPLOYER PREMIUM	144
FAILURE TO PAY PENALTY	30
FICTITIOUS CERTIFICATE OF EXEMPTION	0
FICTITIOUS CERTIFICATE OF INSURANCE	29
ID THEFT OF NUMBER OR NAME	142
MONEY SERVICE BUSINESS	4
VIOLATION OF STOP-WORK ORDER	20
WORKING WITHOUT COVERAGE	140

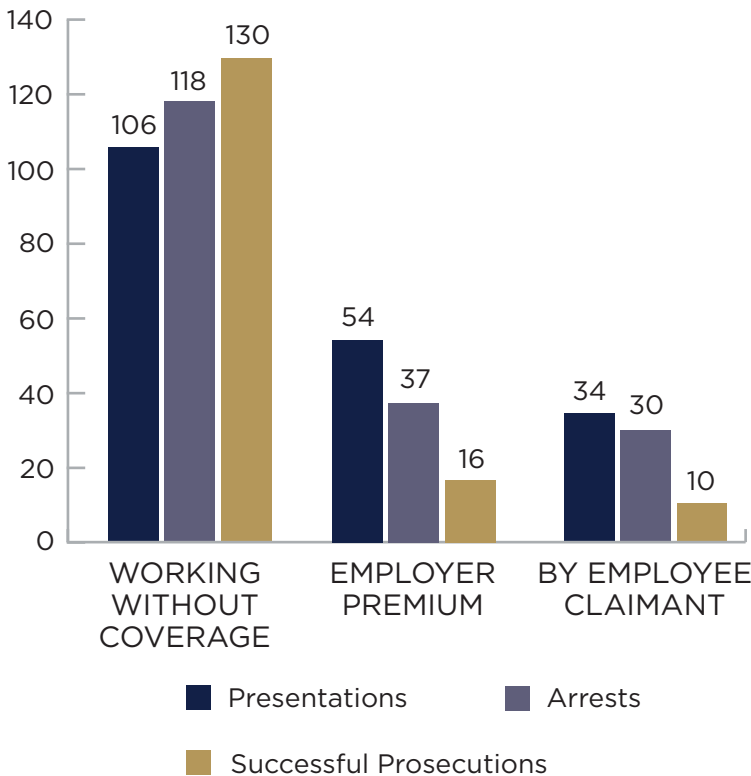
GRAND TOTAL 1,108



ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITY

TYPE OF CASE	PRESENTATIONS	ARRESTS	SUCCESSFUL PROSECUTIONS
BY EMPLOYEE CLAIMANT	34	30	10
CONTRACTOR WORKING WITHOUT WC	0	1	0
EMPLOYER PREMIUM	54	37	16
FICTITIOUS CERTIFICATE OF EXEMPTION	1	1	1
FICTITIOUS CERTIFICATE OF INSURANCE	11	6	2
ID THEFT OF NUMBER OR NAME	6	6	1
MONEY SERVICE BUSINESS	1	1	0
VIOLATION OF STOP-WORK ORDER	4	7	4
WORKING WITHOUT COVERAGE	106	118	130
GRAND TOTALS	217	207	164

TOP OCCURENCES



\$5,235,665



\$10,877,523

■ REQUESTED ■ ORDERED

DIVISION OF WORKERS' COMPENSATION (DIVISION, DWC)

The Division is responsible for ensuring employers are in compliance with Florida's coverage requirements by obtaining workers' compensation insurance for their employees. A strong employer compliance program results in coverage for employees who may have been previously without the required coverage; ensures that employees with work-related injuries receive all statutorily required benefits; levels the economic playing field for all employers; and adds premium dollars to the system that were previously evaded due to non-compliance.

The Division conducts investigations to determine employer compliance. During the months of July 1, 2020 through April 14, 2021, the Division performed investigative activities through "virtual" means to educate employers on Florida's coverage requirements. Virtual investigations are initiated through verbal and written communication with employers. Investigators schedule virtual meetings with the employer to obtain relevant information in order to determine compliance. The employer is then required to submit documentation to the Division confirming the information provided during the virtual investigation. This virtual process for conducting investigations was established due to the COVID-19 public health emergency. The adaptation affected certain compliance outcomes for FY 2020-21 when compared to previous fiscal years.

The Division recognizes the importance of collaborative efforts with other state and local enforcement agencies, especially the Division of Investigative and Forensic Services (DIFS). The Division also has long established partnerships with a variety of state and local agencies as well as industry-related associations and organizations to make the best use of resources, leverage data, and increase employer compliance.

Pursuant to subsection 626.989(9), F.S., the Division provides the following report of workers' compensation enforcement, compliance activities, and performance during FY 2020-21.

I. REFERRALS

Division of Investigative and Forensic Services (DIFS)

The Division and DIFS maintain a cooperative working relationship to carry out our respective statutory duties.

The Division enforces administrative compliance with the workers' compensation law, pursuant to section 440.107, F.S., while DIFS enforces the criminal provisions of the workers' compensation law, pursuant to section 440.105, F.S. Our jointly developed referral program facilitates the efficient referral of cases between the divisions and allows each division to determine if an investigation will be initiated based upon a referral. Referrals are made to each division within 24 hours of a suspected violation of the law and are considered a priority to be acted upon immediately.

Not only do the divisions communicate with each other upon receipt of a referral, but the Division often works jointly with DIFS on compliance sweeps seeking out employers that are not in compliance with the workers' compensation law.

During the period of July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021, the Division's Bureau of Compliance and DIFS made the following referrals:

- The Division referred 62 employers to DIFS for possible criminal investigation.
- The Division received 5 referrals from DIFS for civil violations under Chapter 440, F.S.

Referrals to Other Agencies

The Division works cooperatively with local building and permitting agencies and provides timely responses to local agencies' calls for assistance in verifying employers who are in violation of the workers' compensation law. Joint operations have been conducted throughout the state with several city and county code enforcement offices, the Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR), and DIFS.

In addition to the referrals for workers' compensation fraud, 7,787 employers were referred to other agencies where the employers were suspected of violating the laws regulated by those entities. Ninety-nine percent (99%) of those referrals were made to the DBPR. The primary reasons for the referrals are unlicensed activity in the trade in which the employer was working, failure to provide workers' compensation insurance to its employees (a violation of the condition for licensure) and for individuals who obtained exemptions and indicated that a DBPR license was not required for their trade listed on the exemption.

Non-Compliance Referral Database

The Division receives public referrals regarding employers who are suspected of failing to adhere to the workers' compensation coverage requirements through its online Non-Compliance Referral Database, emails and phone calls. The database streamlines the process to initiate investigations promptly and provides real-time feedback to the person who made the referral.

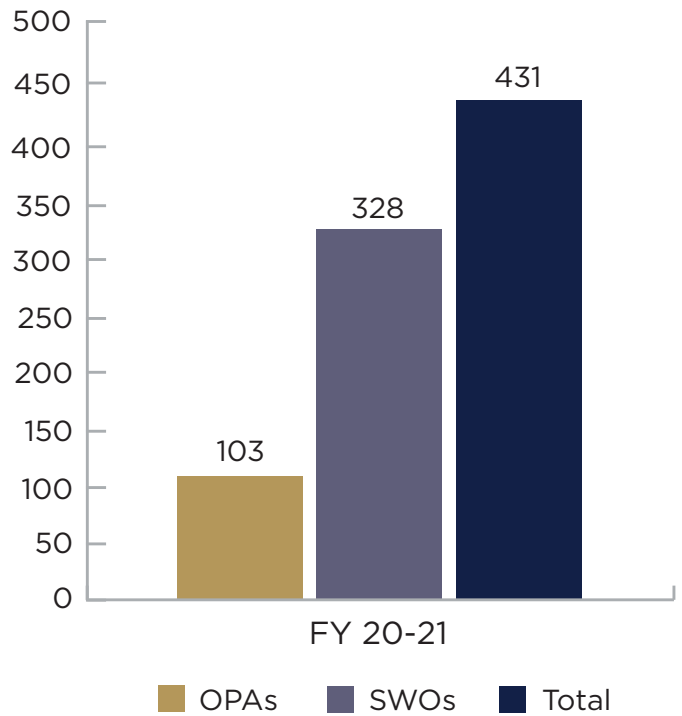
The Division investigated 935 referrals submitted via the Non-Compliance Referral Database during FY 2020-21. The investigations initiated by the referrals resulted in the issuance of 46 enforcement actions and \$2.1 million in assessed penalties against non-compliant employers.

II. ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES & WC EXEMPTION STATISTICS

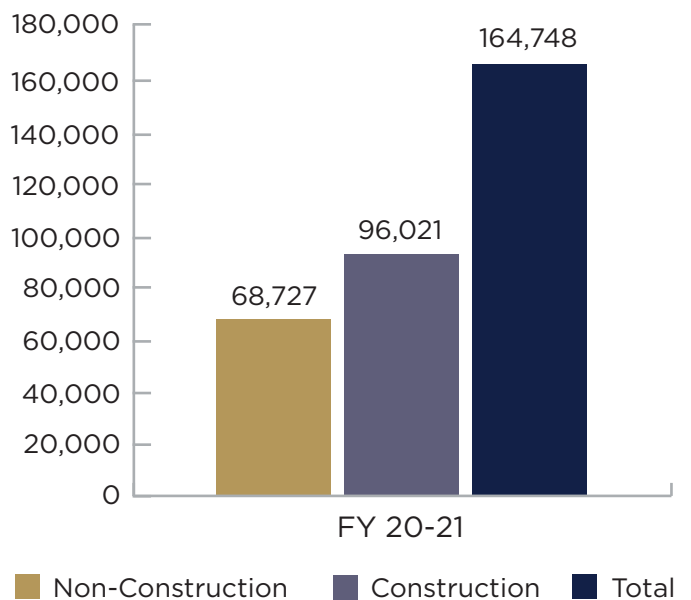
During FY 2020-21, the Division:

- Conducted 10,513 investigations. Investigations are virtual and physical onsite inspections of an employer’s jobsite or business location conducted to determine employer compliance with the workers’ compensation coverage requirements.
- Issued 431 enforcement actions. Enforcement actions are Stop-Work Orders and Orders of Penalty Assessment. Stop-Work Orders (SWOs) are issued for the following violations: failure to obtain workers’ compensation insurance, materially understating or concealing payroll, materially misrepresenting or concealing employee duties to avoid paying the proper premium, materially concealing information pertinent to the calculation of an experience modification factor, and failure to produce business records in a timely manner. Orders of Penalty Assessment (OPAs) are issued in cases where the employer obtains coverage prior to the issuance of the enforcement action, but after the investigation is initiated.
- Collected \$5,383,188 in penalties. An employer who has failed to comply with the workers’ compensation coverage requirements is assessed a penalty based upon the methodology required by the workers’ compensation law. Assessed penalties are equal to 2 times what the employer would have paid in workers’ compensation insurance premiums for all periods of non-compliance during the preceding two-year period, or \$1,000, whichever is greater. Penalty amounts vary and are dependent on the employer’s payroll, risk classification, and period of non-compliance.
- Increased workers’ compensation coverage for 1,550 new employees which generated \$1,290,466 in insurance premium.
- Issued 96,021 construction industry certificates and 68,727 non-construction certificates.

ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS ISSUED



EXEMPTION APPLICATIONS PROCESSED



CASE STUDIES

Case One

While conducting routine compliance checks, an Investigator observed several individuals working at a warehouse. After interviewing the employees at the establishment and conferring with the owner of the business, it was determined the business employed the statutory required number of employees to be required to provide workers' compensation insurance. The business was issued a Stop-Work Order for failing to secure workers' compensation insurance. The employer secured a workers' compensation policy covering 12 employees and added \$9,302 in premium to the workers' compensation system. The employer was assessed a penalty of \$17,185 for the violation and has entered into a periodic payment plan to pay the assessed penalty.

Case Two

In January 2021, the Division initiated a virtual investigation on a medical facility. The investigation was a result of the employer being identified through the Bureau's data-mining initiative as operating without workers' compensation coverage. The Investigator emailed the employer a verification of coverage letter, key coverage and exemption eligibility brochure and a letter indicating the business may not be compliant with the Florida's workers' compensation coverage requirements. The letter also stated that the business should provide proof of workers' compensation within 15 days of the letter. During the virtual investigation, the business informed the Investigator the workers' compensation policy had canceled and the business was attempting to obtain coverage. Because the employer failed to evidence compliance within the requested time period, an onsite investigation was conducted. During the onsite investigation, it was determined the business was non-compliant, resulting in the business being issued a Stop-Work Order for failure to secure workers' compensation. The employer secured a policy covering 38 employees and added \$3,421 in premium to the workers' compensation system. The employer paid the assessed penalty of \$5,543 and returned to compliance.

Case Three

In May 2021, the Division initiated an investigation on a home health entity as a result of a public referral to determine compliance. The referral alleged that a workplace incident had occurred, and the business was operating without workers' compensation insurance. During the initial investigation, it was determined the business had 5 locations in the Florida. The owner was under the impression the business was covered under its home office workers' compensation policy that was located in New Jersey. After contacting the home office, it was determined the Florida locations were not covered under the workers' compensation policy, resulting in the employer being issued a Stop-Work Order for failure to secure workers' compensation. The employer secured a policy covering 63 employees resulting in \$5,645 in premium being added to the workers' compensation system. The employer was assessed a penalty \$103,411 and returned to compliance.

Case Four

As a result of the Division's data-mining initiative (Lead List), an investigation was conducted on a group home to determine workers' compensation compliance. During the initial investigation, the owner of the business informed the Investigator the business was attempting to obtain workers' compensation insurance, but currently was not providing coverage for its employees. The owner informed the Investigator the business was currently employing 20-25 employees. Based upon the findings of the investigation, the business was issued a Stop-Work Order for failing to secure workers' compensation insurance. The business came into compliance by securing a workers' compensation policy covering 30 employees, resulting in \$27,911 in premium being added to the workers' compensation system. The employer was assessed a penalty of \$56,542 for the violation and has entered into a periodic payment plan to pay the assessed penalty.

III. DIVISION INITIATIVES

Employer Education

The Division continues its effort to provide Florida's employers with information regarding their statutory obligations under the workers' compensation law. The Division has been providing free seminars to employers, contractors and a variety of organizations through classroom instruction and webinars throughout the state. Instruction has been provided to a number of industry groups to assist them in understanding their statutory obligations under the workers' compensation law. The Division partners with the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and the USF Safety Florida Consultation Program in providing these educational seminars.

The Division is certified to provide instruction and continuing education credits for training on workers' compensation and workplace safety to employers who are licensed by DBPR, Construction Industry Licensing Board, Electrical Contractors Licensing Board and the Board of Accountancy.

The Division issued 48 Continuing Education Units (CEUs) to business owners, and licensed contractors who attended scheduled webinars.

Bureau of Compliance Newsletter

The Division publishes The Navigator to educate employers on Florida's coverage requirements and provide tips for ensuring compliance. The Navigator contains valuable information about investigations, exemptions and penalty assessments.

It also includes dates for upcoming webinars and seminars. Furthermore, it gives employers the opportunity to suggest compliance-related topics specific to their work industry. The Navigator is now published twice a year.



Collection Activities

Employers have the option of paying their penalties in full or entering into a periodic payment agreement. Subparagraph 440.107(7)(a.), F.S., permits employers to submit periodic penalty payments pursuant to a payment agreement schedule. In FY 2020-21, the Division entered into 292 payment agreements.

The Division, in conjunction with CFO Patronis' directive, deferred employer periodic payments in efforts to minimize the negative impact of COVID-19 on the economy. Periodic payments were deferred through June 30, 2021.

Investigative Leads Initiative through the Use of Data

Several key initiatives are allowing the Division to focus its investigative efforts on identifying non-compliant employers to maximize its resources for the benefit of the citizens of this state. The Division utilizes several data sources to identify non-compliant employers.

- The Division utilizes payroll and employee information provided from the Department of Revenue to cross match with the Division's policy data; the Division is able to create lists of suspected non-compliant employers. Employers identified as potentially non-compliant are notified of the workers' compensation requirements and the penalties for failure to secure workers' compensation. Those employers that do not secure coverage following the notification are referred for investigation.
- The Division reviews policy cancellation information to identify employers whose policies have been canceled and no subsequent coverage has been obtained.
- County and city permitting information is obtained to identify new jobsites where construction activity may be occurring.
- The Division utilizes information from a check cashing store database operated by the Office of Financial Regulation to identify employers using money service businesses to underreport payroll and thus avoid paying the appropriate workers' compensation premium.
- The Division utilizes the Coverage and Compliance Automated System (CCAS), Daily Activity Report to obtain information documented by investigators as information for underwriters. This material is compared to policy data and provides a review of compliant employers with detailed information about the number of employees observed onsite and method and amount of salary payments to those employees.

IV. BUREAU OF COMPLIANCE TRAINING

The Objective

The Division's training and continuing education programs are an integral component of activities to help investigators in identifying and administering enforcement actions for employers that are not in compliance. The Division conducted numerous workers' compensation training sessions during FY 2020-21.

The primary objective of the training sessions is to give each staff member greater technical skills to enhance their enforcement efforts by reviewing policies and procedures, comparing and analyzing data, and identifying areas for improvement within the enforcement process.

The training sessions are summarized here:

40 on 440 Training Workshops

This training is a 40-minute WebEx training series developed to educate compliance investigators, penalty auditors, facilitators and exemption staff members on the workers' compensation law, administrative rules, and new and existing procedures and policies.

Penalty Administration Training Workshops

This is a WebEx training series designed primarily for the Division's penalty auditors. This training focuses on laws, procedures and policies related to calculating penalties for non-compliant violations. The training is important in ensuring consistent application of the penalty calculation procedures statewide.

Penalty auditors are required to attend these training workshops.

New Investigator/Auditor Training Program

As new investigators and penalty auditors are hired, the District Supervisors and the Training Coordinator provide individualized training on policies and procedures, processes, forms, databases, customer service and the investigative process. This 10-week training program was developed and implemented specifically for new investigators and auditors. The investigator/auditor and the supervisor sign an acknowledgement form after the completion of each portion of the training program. The investigator/auditor is then assigned to accompany experienced investigators/auditors in the field prior to being assigned to perform enforcement action independently.

V. DIVISION WEBSITE & DATABASES

The Division's website contains links to several databases that are helpful to employers. These databases provide access to information for all stakeholders in the Workers' Compensation System. The Division recognizes the importance of providing stakeholders with as much information as possible to assist them in fulfilling their rights and responsibilities under the workers' compensation law. The Division's website is located at: www.MyFloridaCFO.com/Division/wc/

The following is a list and description of databases within the Division's website.

Proof of Coverage Database

The Proof of Coverage Database is available to the public and is helpful to employers in both the construction and non-construction industries. An employer can determine if a subcontractor, or other entity, has a workers' compensation insurance policy or certificate of exemption, enabling them to assess their own liability for providing coverage for unprotected workers, as required by section 440.10, F.S. This database is the most frequently accessed Division database.

The website is located at: <https://dwcdataportal.fldfs.com/ProofOfCoverage.aspx>

Compliance Stop-Work Order Database

The Compliance Stop-Work Order Database, which is accessed through the Division's website, lists employers that have been issued Stop-Work Orders for failing to comply with the coverage requirements of Chapter 440, F.S. The database contains each employer's name, the date the Stop-Work Order was issued, the date the Stop-Work Order was released and the type of non-compliance violation.

The website is located at: secure.fldfs.com/wcapps/swo/SWOquery.asp

Construction Policy Tracking Database

The Construction Policy Tracking Database continues to be an effective tool for contractors and other interested parties regarding the workers' compensation coverage and exemption status of the subcontractors they use.

The system is designed to send automatic electronic notification to an employer concerning any changes to the subcontractor's coverage and/or exemption status. This database is also a useful tool for local permitting and licensing officials and insurers. As of June 30, 2021, a total of 2,877 Construction Policy Tracking Database registrants are tracking workers' compensation policies and/or exemptions associated with 45,733 subcontractors.

The website is located at: <https://contractor.fldfs.com/>

Coverage Assistance Program

The Division published the Coverage Assistance Program to assist employers in obtaining workers' compensation coverage for their employees. This online tool allows employers to enter their primary class code or business description to find insurance companies that are currently providing workers' compensation coverage to employers with that same class code or business description. Although the results do not guarantee an insurance company will write a policy for the employer who is seeking coverage, the program can assist employers in their pursuit of cost-effective premiums and save time in the process.

The program also allows employers to estimate their policy premium based on the class codes for their business operation. The results are not the exact amounts that will be billed by the insurance companies since there are additional fees associated to obtain a workers' compensation insurance policy. This is simply an informational guide to forecast what your premium may be prior to additional fees.

The website is located at: <https://minimarket.fldfs.com/>

DWC e-alerts & Instructional Videos

The Division publishes e-alerts when newsworthy events or important announcements are available. Announcements regarding employer seminars, the promulgation of rules, and changes to the laws are examples of how the e-alert system is used. This is very helpful to employers who need to remain current with the changes in regulations governing their businesses. Instructional videos on key workers' compensation subjects are available on the Division's website.

VI. DWC OFFICE LOCATIONS & STAFF

The Division maintains seven district offices statewide. The offices are located in Jacksonville, Orlando, West Palm Beach, Miami, Pensacola, Tampa, and Fort Myers.

	District Office Locations	Number of Investigators
District 1	Jacksonville	8
District 1A	Pensacola	8
District 2	West Palm Beach	9
District 3	Tampa	8
District 4	Orlando	8
District 5	Miami	9
District 7	Ft. Myers	7
Total	All District Offices	57

VII. AVERAGE CASELOAD

For the period of July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021, a total of 10,513 employer investigation cases was initiated resulting in an average caseload of 184 cases per investigator. Investigators generally average a caseload of 400 cases per investigator but due to the pandemic, they conducted more investigations virtually than on actual employer jobsites. Virtual investigations require the scheduling of interviews and effective communication between the employer and investigator.

