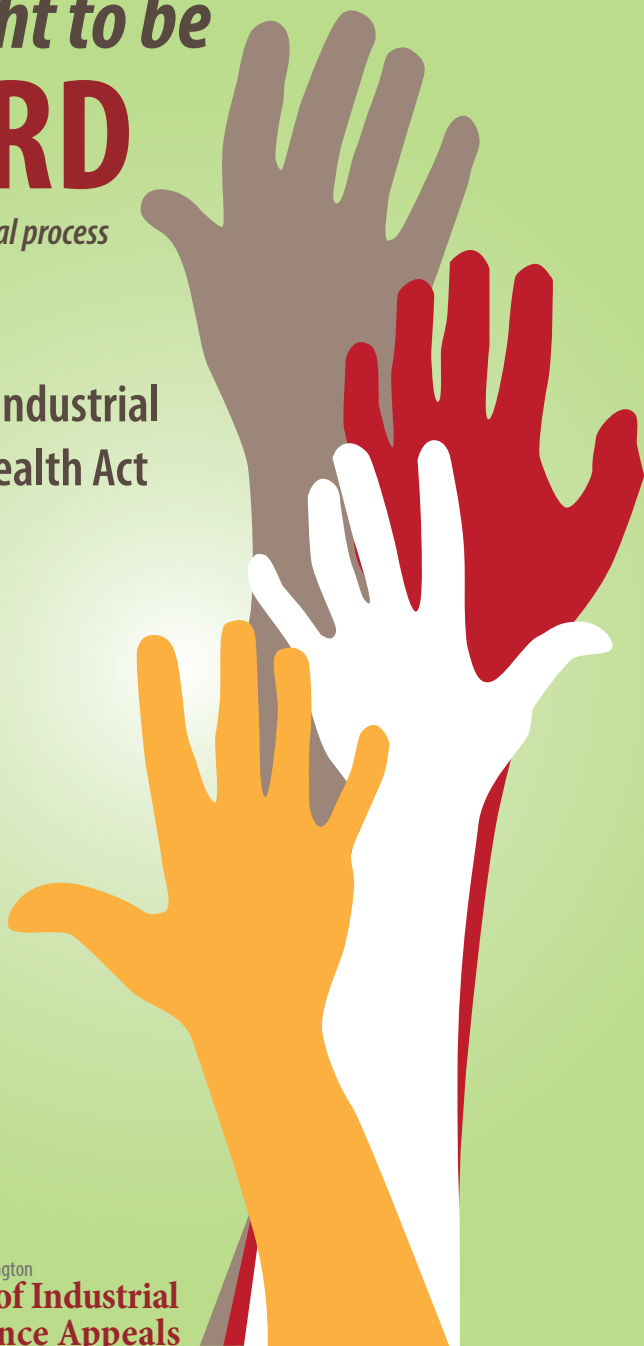


Your right to be **HEARD**

A guide to the appeal process

Washington Industrial
Safety and Health Act
(WISHA)



State of Washington
**Board of Industrial
Insurance Appeals**

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Introduction

What is the BIIA?

The Board of Industrial Insurance Appeals (BIIA) is a state agency that is independent from the Department of Labor and Industries (L&I). The BIIA hears appeals from decisions made by L&I in several areas. The three principal types of appeals are:

- Industrial insurance (workers' compensation)
- Safety citations under the Washington Industrial Safety and Health Act (WISHA)
- Crime victim compensation

The BIIA is administered by three full-time Board Members appointed by the Governor.

Where do I find rules about appeals?

Most of the rules can be found in the BIIA's Rules of Practice and Procedure. You can find this publication online at www.biiwa.gov.

Statutes and rules can also be found at www.leg.wa.gov/lawsandagencyrules.

Requests for stay of abatement

If you request a stay of abatement pending appeal you should carefully read the filing requirements found in WAC 263-12-059. Your request must be contained in your Notice of Appeal. Your request must include names and addresses of any affected unions, and a certification of posting a notice to employees. Additionally, you must file affidavits and documents supporting the request within 14 calendar days of the date of the Board's Notice of Filing of Appeal. If you fail to meet the filing requirements, the request for a stay of the abatement will be denied. The Board will rule on the request based only on the documents. There will be no oral hearing on the request for stay of abatement.

Receipt of Appeal

When the BIIA receives an appeal, it will:

- Assign a docket number to the appeal.
- Mail a Notice of Receipt of Appeal to the parties.
- Mail a form for the employer to complete regarding unions.

Attorneys

Parties can represent themselves before the BIIA. They can also bring someone with them to give advice and support, or they may be represented by an attorney. They may also be represented by a lay representative (non-attorney) as allowed by WAC 263-12-020(3).

L&I will be represented by a paralegal or an attorney.

The Mediation Conference

What happens next?

A mediation conference will be held in most cases. A mediation conference is an informal meeting of the parties with a mediation judge.

A notice will be sent to all parties

All parties will receive a notice indicating the date, time, and location of the conference.

- The conference may be held in person or by telephone.
- Mediation is not a hearing—witnesses will not be called to testify. An attorney is not required, although the assistance of an attorney may be helpful.
- The mediation judge may schedule further conferences, if needed.

Advantages of mediation

- In mediation, parties are able to discuss the appeal in a relaxed, confidential, and informal setting.
- If a settlement can be reached in mediation, the parties avoid the uncertainty, expense, and delay of a formal hearing.

The mediator's role

- The mediator will not decide the outcome of the appeal, but will discuss options for settling the appeal.
- The mediator can speak to parties privately. This process allows the mediator to meet separately with each party to explore settlement options.
- The mediator may look at the information supporting a party's position and may suggest what additional information may be necessary.
- The mediator cannot give legal advice, but will answer questions about the process.

What to bring to the mediation conference

- Look at the L&I decision that was appealed. Consider what it would take to settle the appeal. Gather all documents that support your position and bring them to the mediation conference.
- Bring the Jurisdictional History (yellow sheets we will mail to you). This is a summary of the history of the case. Be ready to discuss whether this history is correct.

What happens if the appeal is resolved?

An appeal can be resolved in two ways:

- The party that filed the appeal can voluntarily dismiss the appeal.
- The parties can agree on a settlement. (If a union does not sign the agreement, it must be posted at the employer's business for 10 days.)

The BIIA will then issue either an Order Dismissing Appeal or an Order on Agreement of Parties.

What happens if the appeal is not resolved?

When a settlement cannot be reached, the case will be given to a hearings judge, who will schedule a formal hearing. To ensure confidentiality, the mediator is not allowed to discuss the case with the hearings judge.

Hearings

Rules for BIIA hearings

BIIA hearings are like trials. The Rules of Evidence and Superior Court Civil Rules apply. Parties must be familiar with these rules in order to ensure that all their testimony and evidence will be admitted at the hearings.

Attorneys

At this point, the appealing party should consider finding an attorney. An experienced attorney will represent L&I or the self-insured employer. An attorney can negotiate with the opposing parties, help obtain necessary witnesses, and make objections.

The judge's role

The judge assigned to the case can help question witnesses, but will not act as an attorney for the parties. The hearings judge must remain neutral and cannot discuss the case without all parties present.

Location of BIIA hearings

All parties will receive a notice indicating the date, time, and location of the hearing. The first hearing is usually held in the county where the alleged violation occurred.

Witnesses

At the hearing, witnesses will testify under oath. All testimony will be recorded by a court reporter. Each party is responsible for arranging for their witnesses to testify, and for paying witness fees.

Evidence

All evidence must be presented at the hearing. The evidence presented at the hearing will be the only basis for the decision at the BIIA or at a higher court.

In a **WISHA** case, L&I must present evidence first.

Proposed Decision and Order

When all hearings are completed and all evidence has been received, the hearing judge will issue a Proposed Decision and Order, which is the judge's decision on the appeal.

Petition for Review

What if I disagree with the decision reached in the Proposed Decision and Order?

Any party who disagrees with any portion of the decision may request a review by the three Board Members. Your request must be in **writing** and should be titled "**Petition for Review.**"

How much time do I have to file a Petition for Review?

The Petition for Review must be filed with the BIIA's **Olympia** office within 20 days from the date you receive the Proposed Decision and Order (PD&O).

How do I file a Petition for Review?

The Petition for Review **must** contain the following:

1. The Case Name, BIIA Docket Number, and L&I Citation and Notice Number.
2. The reasons you believe the PD&O is incorrect. State the evidence in the record that supports your petition.
3. Any rulings made by the judge that you think are incorrect.
4. A "Declaration of Receipt" stating the date the proposed decision was received.

The Petition for Review must be filed in the BIIA's **Olympia** office within twenty (20) days. You may file **in person** in Olympia, or by **mail** to:

Executive Secretary
Board of Industrial Insurance Appeals
2430 Chandler Court SW
P.O. Box 42401
Olympia, WA 98504-2401

- If filed by mail, the petition is considered filed when it is deposited in the United States Postal Service, properly stamped and addressed.
- If you mail your petition on the date of your deadline, complete the “Certificate of Mailing” as proof of the mailing date.
- Copies of your petition must be mailed to the other parties. Their names and addresses appear on the certificate of mailing included with the proposed decision.

Can I get transcripts of the hearings?

The BIIA will provide you with copies of the transcripts, depositions, and exhibits of the proceedings free of charge. You must file a written request for these documents.

Can I get an extension of time to file a Petition for Review?

If you cannot complete your petition within the 20-day time period, you may request an extension of time.

1. The request **must** be in writing and should state the reasons why the extension is needed.
2. The request **must** be filed with the BIIA’s **Olympia** office within 20 days from the date of receipt of the PD&O.
3. The request must include a “Declaration of Receipt” stating the date the PD&O was received.

If an extension is granted, the amount of time is determined by the BIIA.

Where do I find rules about Petitions for Review?

Statutes and rules can be found in the Revised Code of Washington (RCW Chapter 51.52) and Washington Administrative Code (WAC 263-12). These are legal publications available in law libraries. They are also available on the Washington State Legislature website:

www.leg.wa.gov/lawsandagencyrules.

Most of these rules can be found in the BIIA’s *Rules of Practice and Procedure*.

What if a Petition for Review is not filed?

If a Petition for Review is not filed within the time allowed, the PD&O will be adopted as the final Decision and Order of the Board. No further appeal may be taken to the courts.

What if a Petition for Review is filed?

The Board will determine whether to grant or deny the petition.

Petition for Review Denied

The Board will issue an "Order Denying Petition for Review." The Proposed Decision and Order becomes the final order of the Board.

Petition for Review Granted

The Board will issue an "Order Granting Petition for Review." The Board will review the record and issue a Decision and Order, which is the Board's final order. The Board must issue the Decision and Order within 180 days of the date the Petition for Review was filed.

Appeals to Superior Court

What if I disagree with the decision reached in the final order?

Any party who disagrees with any portion of the decision may appeal to superior court.

How much time do I have to appeal to superior court?

In a **WISHA** case, your appeal to superior court must be filed within 30 days from the date you receive the BIIA's final order.

In what county do I file a superior court appeal?

In a **WISHA** case, file the appeal in the county where the violation is alleged to have occurred.

Do I need to send copies of the appeal to anyone?

Copies of the appeal **MUST** be mailed or hand-delivered to the BIIA and L&I:

Board of Industrial Insurance Appeals
2430 Chandler Court SW
P.O. Box 42401
Olympia, WA 98504-2401

Department of Labor and Industries
Office of the Director
P.O. Box 44001
Olympia, WA 98504-4001

Is there a form for filing an appeal in superior court?

No. Each superior court has its own filing requirements. There is a directory available on the Washington Courts website to help you locate the appropriate superior court: www.courts.wa.gov/court_dir.

What evidence will the superior court consider?

The case will be tried based on the record made before the BIIA. The record consists of transcripts, depositions, and exhibits offered during BIIA hearings.

Where do I find the rules about superior court appeals?

Statutes and rules can be found in the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) and Washington Administrative Code (WAC). These are legal publications available in law libraries. They are also available on the Washington State Legislature website: www.leg.wa.gov/lawsandagencyrules.

Washington Industrial Safety and Health Act (WISHA) – See RCW 49.17.150.

For more information, please visit our web site:

www.biaa.wa.gov

General Information

360-753-6823 or

800-441-0447

Headquarters

Board of Industrial Insurance Appeals

2430 Chandler Court SW

P.O. Box 42401

Olympia, WA 98504-2401