



The Quarterly Connection

2013 Quarter 1

DWS Announces Schedule for 2013 Employer Information Seminars

The Wyoming Department of Workforce Services (DWS) has announced its line-up of 2013 Employer Information Seminars. The public seminars feature agency program subject matter experts and are aimed at helping Wyoming employers enhance their knowledge

regarding important law changes, improving workplace safety and many other programs and processes that are pertinent to the state's employers.

Employer Information Seminars are a great resource for all employers – those who are just starting out, and for those who have been in business for many years. These seminars provide valuable information on important law updates, how to better navigate regulatory obligations and ways to improve working conditions for your employees.

The seminars focus on workforce training programs, OSHA consultation, unemployment insurance taxes, claims and appeals, workers' compensation requirements, labor standards, risk management, labor market information and more.

The seminars will be held at the following communities in 2013:

Cheyenne - March 21

Thermopolis - May 9

Rawlins - July 11

Buffalo - August 22

Jackson - October 3

Douglas - November 7

There is a nominal fee to attend the seminars, which covers lunch and breaks. Seminars begin at 8:30 a.m. and end at approximately 4:30 p.m.

Register online through the Department of Workforce Services at <http://dws-sc.wyo.gov/EmployerSeminars/default.aspx> or call (307) 777-8717 to request registration information.

WYOMING SAFETY IMPROVEMENT FUND

Recent legislation established funding for public and private employers to enhance workplace health and safety training, and safety equipment purchases beyond normal regulatory requirements. Through this program workplace safety contracts of up to \$10K are available with a 10% match. To obtain more information on the Workplace Safety Improvement Fund, please contact Laurie Knowlton at laurie.knowlton@wyo.gov, (307) 777-5961, or Carolyn Grieve at carolyn.grieve@wyo.gov, (307) 777-3452. Or, an on-line application may be found at www.wyomingworkforce.org under EMPLOYER RESOURCES.

Reports **MUST** be filed on WIRE or Division provided original forms. To obtain blank reporting forms, contact us by calling 307-235-3217. To file on WIRE, please go to: <https://doe.state.wy.us/wire>. When filing by WIRE you have the option to make payments by EFT.

The **WC Officer/Owner Average Wage for 2013** is **\$10,974.00**

The **UI Taxable Wage Base for 2013** is **\$23,800.00**

How do pre- and post-unemployment wages compare?



Research & Planning
Wyoming DWS

What happens to an individual's earnings when he or she returns to work after a period of unemployment? An article in the December issue of *Wyoming Labor Force Trends* examines how – in light of the recent recession – pre- and post-unemployment wages differ between the genders and among age groups, and how these earnings are affected by educational attainment. This article also looks at how a person's wages grow after returning to work after a spell of unemployment. To see the article, go to <http://doe.state.wy.us/LMI/trends/1212/toc.htm>.

Big news in Preference and Residency

Labor Standards is pleased to welcome Joe Franken as the newest Compliance Officer to the agency. Joe fills the vacancy left by Chris Corlis's move to Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). Joe will primarily be responsible for traveling the state ensuring Wyoming residents are working on public works projects. In addition, Joe will conduct audits to make certain those contractors and suppliers seeking certification as residents for the 5% bid preference on public works contracts meet the requisite criteria. The Labor Standards Division will also be relying on Joe to make contacts with the city and county officials to gain a better understanding of the projects those entities have planned and to help educate the municipalities and counties on the requirements of the Preference and Residency Acts.

In related news, the State legislature is contemplating a number of changes to both the Residency and Preference Act. Current legislation would eliminate the current practice of giving conditional resident certification pending an actual site visit and audit by a compliance officer. Instead contracts and suppliers seeking such certification would have to wait until the audit was complete before receiving any such certification. The proposed legislation would amend the definition of a "Wyoming resident" to include persons with green cards or those working in Wyoming with certain visas. Presently only U.S. citizens that have lived in the State for at least one year qualify as residents under the act. These changes are provisional and not final until the bill is signed into law. Check with the Department of Workforce Service's Labor Standards division following the 2013 Legislative session to inquire about the final changes to the law.

National Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI) 2011 - Part 1 of 3 (con't in next newsletter)

The Bureau of Labor Statistics recently released its National Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI) 2011. The report shows which industries and occupations experienced the most fatalities, and it also explains how they happened. Here are some tips for preventing the most common workplace fatalities.

Roadway incidents

Transportation incidents accounted for more than two out of every five fatal work injuries in 2011. Follow these simple tips to get from point A to point B safely:

Stay alert. Production quotas, particularly in industries such as oil and gas, are driving some workers to push past their bodies' limits. If you are tired, pull over to the side of the road. Better yet, get a hotel room. Wear your seatbelt. About 63 percent of people killed in traffic accidents did not observe this simple rule. Ignore the speed limit. The speed limit on most highways is at least 60 miles per hour, but on some new highways, the speed limit is 80 to 85 miles per hour. That does not mean you are required to drive these high speeds. Set your own speed limit by considering the amount of traffic, the weather conditions and the condition and capabilities of your vehicle to stop or avoid obstacles safely. Driving slower may take you longer, but you have a greater chance to arrive safely.

Focus on the task at hand. Your ability to multitask might help you get ahead at home or earn points on the job. In a vehicle, however, it can get you involved in a serious, perhaps fatal, accident. When you put the keys in the ignition, put the cell phone down. If you have to answer a call on your cell phone, use a hands-free device. If the call will last more than a few seconds, pull over to a safe location. If you have to make a call or send a text message, pull over somewhere safe before you begin.

Changes to New Hire Reporting

The Trade Agreement Adjustment bill was signed into federal law on October 21st 2011 and implemented changes to employer's reporting requirements for new hires to the State Directory of New Hires.

- Now the term "newly hired employee" means an employee who (1) has not previously been employed by the employer; or (2) was previously employed by the employer but has been separated from such prior employment for at least 60 consecutive days. Newly hired employees must be reported to the State Directory of New Hires within 20 days of the hire date.
- The new date to report is the date services for remuneration were first performed by the employee (1st day worked for pay) rather than the date of hire. Please be aware that the hire date listed on your quarterly wage report is not the same as reporting your new hires to the State Directory of New Hires. To report your new hires to the State Directory of New Hires you must visit the following website and complete the form. <http://newhirereporting.com/WY-Newhire/default.aspx>
- Your timely reporting assists our agency in detecting improper payment of benefits which assists in lowering costs associated with the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund and helps to lower your unemployment tax rate. If you have questions regarding this information or questions regarding overpayment of UI benefits, please call (307) 235-3236. **Early detection prevents further overpayments which helps curb the rise in employer's unemployment insurance tax rates.**

Are you in need of a Certificate of Good Standing?

For **UI** Certificates, go to <https://doe.state.wy.us/cert>

For **WC** Certificates, go to <https://wconline.wyo.gov/web/#>