## 176.261 EMPLOYEE OF COMMISSIONER OF DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRY MAY ACT FOR AND ADVISE A PARTY TO A PROCEEDING.

When requested by an employer or an employee or an employee's dependent, the commissioner of the Department of Labor and Industry may designate one or more of the division employees to advise that party of rights under this chapter, and as far as possible to assist in adjusting differences between the parties. The person so designated may appear in person in any proceedings under this chapter as the representative or adviser of the party. In such case, the party need not be represented by an attorney at law.

Prior to advising an employee or employer to seek assistance outside of the department, the department must refer employers and employees seeking advice or requesting assistance in resolving a dispute to an attorney or other technical, paraprofessional, or professional Workers' Compensation Division employee, whichever is appropriate.

The department must make efforts to settle problems of employees and employers by contacting third parties, including attorneys, insurers, and health care providers, on behalf of employers and employees and using the department's persuasion to settle issues quickly and cooperatively. The obligation to make efforts to settle problems exists whether or not a formal claim has been filed with the department.

**History:** *1953 c 755 s 38; Ex1967 c 1 s 6; 1973 c 388 s 82; 1986 c 444; 1992 c 510 art 3 s 29; 1995 c 231 art 2 s 92; 1996 c 374 s 7*