

California Workers' Compensation Mandatory Settlement Conference Filing: Legal Research Report

(PART-A INJURED WORKERS ANALYSIS)

March 1, 2026

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CALIFORNIA WORKERS' COMPENSATION: MANDATORY SETTLEMENT CONFERENCE FILING GUIDE

Report Date: March 2, 2026

This guide explains how to prepare and file documents for a Mandatory Settlement Conference (MSC) — a required meeting where you and the other side try to settle your workers' compensation case before going to trial. It covers the forms you need, the rules you must follow, and what happens if the case does not settle. This guide focuses on Northern California procedures, especially the San Francisco Workers' Compensation Appeals Board (WCAB) office.

Part 1: Understanding the Mandatory Settlement Conference

What Is an MSC?

A Mandatory Settlement Conference (MSC) is a hearing ordered by the WCAB where all parties must appear and try to resolve the workers' compensation dispute without going to trial. A Workers' Compensation Judge (WCJ) oversees the conference and helps both sides negotiate. The authority for MSCs comes from Cal. Lab. Code § 5502 (https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=LAB§ionNum=5502.) and Cal. Code Regs. tit. 8, § 10759 (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/t8/10759.html>).

If you and the other side cannot agree on a settlement, the WCJ will help you complete a Pre-Trial Conference Statement (PTCS) — a document that lists the issues still in dispute, all your evidence, and your witnesses for trial. This is most likely what is meant by the "5-pager": WCAB Form 24 (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/forms/WCABForm24.pdf>), a five-page form that controls what can happen at trial.

Why the MSC Matters to You

The MSC is one of the most important events in your workers' compensation case. Here is why:

- Discovery closes on the MSC date. This means you cannot gather new evidence after the MSC, with very few exceptions. Cal. Lab. Code § 5502(d)(3) (https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=LAB§ionNum=5502.) sets this rule.
- Evidence not listed is excluded. Any medical reports, wage records, or other documents you do not list on the PTCS at the MSC will generally be blocked from trial. Cal. Code Regs. tit. 8, § 10759(c) (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/t8/10759.html>) requires that each exhibit be identified by author, date, and title.
- Witnesses not named are barred. If you do not list a witness on the PTCS, that person generally cannot testify at trial.
- You must have settlement authority. Cal. Code Regs. tit. 8, § 10752 (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/t8/10752.html>) requires that someone with the power to approve a settlement be present or immediately available at every MSC.

Your Risk Level

Your risk level for this process is medium to high. The main dangers include:

- Forgetting to list an exhibit or witness, which permanently blocks that evidence from trial
- Not meeting with the other side's lawyer before the MSC (meet-and-confer requirement)
- Filing incomplete or incorrectly formatted documents, which the WCAB's electronic system (EAMS) may reject
- Arriving at MSC without real authority to settle, which can result in penalties called sanctions

Important: All of these risks can be avoided by carefully following the steps in this guide.

Part 2: The Legal Rules You Must Know

Statutes That Control the MSC Process

Several California laws create and govern the MSC process:

- Cal. Lab. Code § 5502 (https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=LAB§ionNum=5502.) gives the WCAB power to hold settlement conferences and issue awards based on approved settlements. Subsection (d)(3) is the discovery closure rule — it says evidence not disclosed in the PTCS faces strict limits on use at trial.
- Cal. Lab. Code § 5502.5 (https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=LAB§ionNum=5502.5) allows the WCAB to continue (postpone) an MSC if there is documented good cause, meaning a valid reason such as missing medical reports.
- Cal. Lab. Code § 5700 (https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=LAB§ionNum=5700) requires that all parties — the injured worker (applicant) and the employer or insurance company (defendant) — appear at hearings with authority to settle.

Key Regulations in the WCAB Rules

The WCAB's detailed procedural rules are found in Title 8, California Code of Regulations, Chapter 4.5 (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/t8/>). These rules were significantly updated effective January 1, 2022, and remain in effect as of March 2026.

Appearances Required — Cal. Code Regs. tit. 8, § 10752 (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/t8/10752.html>):

- Every applicant and defendant must appear or send a representative to all hearings
- A person with settlement authority (power to agree to a deal) must be available
- Lien claimants (people or companies owed money from your case, such as medical providers) do not have to attend but must have someone available with settlement authority
- Failure to appear can result in a notice of intention to issue sanctions (a formal warning of penalties)

MSC Procedures — Cal. Code Regs. tit. 8, § 10759 (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/t8/10759.html>):

- You must meet and confer with the other side before the MSC — this means having a real discussion about settlement, not just a quick phone call
- You must complete the joint PTCS by the close of the MSC
- Defendants who have already paid benefits must bring a current printout of benefits paid to every MSC
- Each exhibit must be listed separately with the author's name, date, and document title
- The WCJ can make orders about evidence, discovery, and can submit disputes on the record if both sides agree

Service Rules — Cal. Code Regs. tit. 8, § 10625 (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/t8/10625.html>):

- All documents must be served on (delivered to) the other side's attorney or directly to unrepresented parties
- You can serve documents by personal delivery, email, first-class mail, or other approved methods
- Proof of service — a signed statement showing who was served, when, and how — must be included with your filing

Electronic and Remote Hearings

Since 2022, WCAB rules allow MSCs to be held by video or phone. Cal. Code Regs. tit. 8, §§ 10815–10817 (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/t8/10815.html>) establish that remote hearings are standard practice. You may object to a remote hearing by filing a written objection showing good cause.

Part 3: Your Three Main Options

Option A: File a Declaration of Readiness to Proceed (DOR)

If your case is ready for settlement discussions, you file a Declaration of Readiness to Proceed (DOR) using DWC-CA Form 10250.1

(https://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/FORMS/EAMS%20Forms/ADJ/DWCCAFform10250_1.pdf). This form asks the WCAB to schedule an MSC. You should choose this option when:

- All medical evaluations are complete or nearly complete
- You know the disputed issues in your case
- You are ready to discuss settlement

The other side has 10 calendar days after receiving your DOR to file an objection, arguing the case is not ready. The DWC News Release 2025-108 (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/DIRNews/2025/2025-108.html>) notes that electronic filing and service rules are being updated, which may streamline this process in 2026.

Option B: Prepare the Pre-Trial Conference Statement (PTCS)

If an MSC has already been scheduled, your main task is preparing WCAB Form 24 (the "5-pager") (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/forms/WCABForm24.pdf>). This five-page form includes:

- Page 1: Header and who appeared at the MSC
- Page 2: Agreements (stipulations) and medical treatment issues
- Page 3: Issues still in dispute
- Page 4: List of exhibits and witnesses for both sides
- Page 5: Judge's notes and orders

Important: Every exhibit must be listed with the author's name, date, and title. For example, write "Dr. Smith's May 15, 2025 report on causation of low back injury (5 pages)" — not just "medical records." Exhibits listed generically may be excluded from trial.

Option C: Request a Status Conference or Continuance

If your case is not ready — for example, you are still waiting for a medical report from a Qualified Medical Evaluator (QME) — you should file a DOR requesting a Status Conference instead of an MSC. A Status Conference is a case management hearing where the WCJ can resolve discovery disputes, order additional evaluations, and set a future date for when the case will be ready. This option protects you from premature discovery closure.

Part 4: Step-by-Step Filing Process

Steps to File a DOR and Request an MSC

Follow these steps in order:

1. Gather your case information (4–6 weeks before filing). Identify all disputed issues: Was the injury work-related (AOE/COE — Arising Out of Employment / Course of Employment)? What is your disability rating? Do you need future medical treatment? Make sure all key medical evaluations (AME or QME reports) are complete or in progress.
2. Determine the correct WCAB office (4 weeks before filing). Under Cal. Lab. Code § 5501.5 (https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=LAB§ionNum=5502), venue is based on where you live, where the injury happened, or where the employer's attorney is located. For San Francisco or Marin County cases, the office is at 100 Montgomery Street, Suite 800, San Francisco, CA 94104.
3. Complete the DOR form (2–3 weeks before filing). Fill out DWC-CA Form 10250.1 (https://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/FORMS/EAMS%20Forms/ADJ/DWCCAFform10250_1.pdf) following instructions in DWC I&A Guide 5 (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/iwguides/IWGuide05.pdf>). Select "Mandatory Settlement Conference" as the hearing type. List all disputed issues and the medical reports you rely on.
4. Assemble the filing package (2 weeks before filing). Your package must include, in this order:
 - Document Cover Sheet (DWC-CA Form 10232.1) (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/FORMS/DWCCAFform10232.1.pdf>) — see DWC I&A Guide 17 (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/iwguides/IWGuide17.pdf>)

- Document Separator Sheet (DWC-CA Form 10232.2) (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/FORMS/DWCCAform10232.2.pdf>) — see DWC I&A Guide 18 (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/iwguides/IWGuide18.pdf>)
 - The completed DOR form
 - Any supporting medical reports
 - Proof of Service
5. Meet and confer with the other side's lawyer (10–14 days before filing). Have a real discussion about settlement. Exchange medical reports, discuss your damages, identify areas of agreement and disagreement, and talk about what settlement authority each side has. Document this conversation by email or letter.
6. Serve and file (2 weeks before your desired MSC date). Serve the complete package on the other side's attorney and all other parties using an approved method under Cal. Code Regs. tit. 8, § 10625 (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/t8/10625.html>). File the original with proof of service at the WCAB office.
7. Respond to any objection (within 10 days of service). The other side may object that the case is not ready. Be prepared to show that your medical evidence is available and the issues are ready for resolution.

Forms You Will Need

Form	Purpose	Where to Find It
DWC-CA Form 10250.1	Declaration of Readiness to Proceed	DWC Website (https://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/FORMS/EAMS%20Forms/ADJ/DWCCAForm10250_1.pdf)
DWC-CA Form 10232.1	Document Cover Sheet	DWC Website (https://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/FORMS/DWCCAform10232.1.pdf)
DWC-CA Form 10232.2	Document Separator Sheet	DWC Website (https://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/FORMS/DWCCAform10232.2.pdf)
WCAB Form 24	Pre-Trial Conference Statement (5-pager)	DWC Website (https://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/forms/WCABForm24.pdf)
DWC-WCAB Form 10214(a)	Stipulations with Request for Award (settlement)	DWC Website (https://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/FORMS/EAMS%20Forms/ADJ/DWCFForm10214a.pdf)

Part 5: Evidence Rules and What to Bring

How to List Your Exhibits

Under Cal. Code Regs. tit. 8, § 10759(c) (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/t8/10759.html>), every exhibit you want to use at trial must be listed on the PTCS with three pieces of information:

- Author or provider (who wrote or created the document)
- Date (when it was written)
- Title or type (what kind of document it is)

Medical reports with different authors or different dates count as separate exhibits and must be listed individually. For example:

- Correct: "Dr. Maria Garcia, orthopedic QME report, dated January 10, 2026, re: permanent impairment rating (12 pages)"
- Wrong: "Medical records"

Wage records covering a continuous period may be listed as one exhibit with a date range. Medical treatment records from one provider may also be listed as one exhibit with a date range.

What Happens If You Do Not List Something

Critical: Any exhibit or witness not listed on the PTCS by the close of the MSC is generally permanently excluded from trial. The only exceptions under Cal. Lab. Code § 5502(d)(3) (https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=LAB§ionNum=5502.) are:

- Primary treating physician reports filed after the MSC if treatment continues
- Evidence that was truly unknown and could not have been discovered through reasonable effort
- Evidence both sides and the WCJ agree to allow after the MSC

These exceptions are very narrow. Do not rely on them.

Types of Evidence to Gather Before MSC

Medical documentation:

- All treating physician reports and final medical reports
- Agreed Medical Evaluator (AME) report — a report from a doctor both sides chose together
- Qualified Medical Evaluator (QME) report — a report from an independent doctor assigned through the state system. See DWC Medical Unit FAQ (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/medicalunit/faqiw.html>) for details on the QME process
- Reports on causation, permanent impairment, and future medical needs

Wage and benefit records:

- Pay stubs or earnings statements from the 4–6 weeks before your injury
- Records of temporary disability payments (money paid while you were unable to work)
- Job description and duties statement from your employer

Employment records:

- Any job offers or return-to-work letters
- Work restrictions from your doctor
- Evidence of whether you were laid off or still employed after the injury

Part 6: San Francisco WCAB Office Procedures

Where to File

For cases in San Francisco County or Marin County, file with:

Workers' Compensation Appeals Board — San Francisco Office

100 Montgomery Street, Suite 800, San Francisco, CA 94104

(Alternate location: 630 Sansome Street, 4th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94111)

For East Bay cases (Alameda, Contra Costa counties), your case may be assigned to the Concord Office at 1855 Gateway Blvd., Suite 850, Concord, CA 94520.

How Filing Works

The San Francisco WCAB office accepts filings through:

- EAMS electronic filing (preferred for represented parties) — see DWC EAMS information (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/eams.html>)
- Hand delivery to the office address
- U.S. mail

Once the WCAB accepts your DOR, it will schedule the MSC and mail notice to all parties, usually 2–4 weeks before the hearing date.

Remote vs. In-Person MSCs

As of 2026, most MSCs in San Francisco are conducted remotely via video conference (such as Zoom). In-person MSCs are available by request. You may object to the remote format by filing a written objection showing good cause, under Cal. Code Regs. tit. 8, §§ 10815–10817 (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/t8/10815.html>).

PTCS Filing Deadline in San Francisco

The San Francisco office interprets the rules to mean that the PTCS content must be finalized by the close of the MSC. The actual filing typically must happen:

- Same day for in-person MSCs
- By 5 PM the next business day for remote MSCs

Note: If you are unsure about the deadline, contact the San Francisco WCAB office or email the assigned WCJ to confirm.

What to Expect at the MSC

- The San Francisco office uses a master calendar system — multiple cases are scheduled at the same time
- When your case is called, you must be ready to announce settlement or begin the conference
- Some WCJs will request written settlement positions before or at the start of the MSC
- The WCJ may conduct caucused negotiations — separate, private discussions with each side
- If no settlement is reached, the WCJ will typically set a trial date the same day
- Continuances (postponements) are disfavored and granted only for good cause

Part 7: Timelines and Costs

Processing Timelines

Stage	Estimated Timeline
DOR filing to MSC scheduling	4–8 weeks
MSC to trial date (if no settlement)	5–12 weeks
Total from DOR filing to trial	3–6 months (up to 12 months for complex cases)
WCJ decision after trial	30–60 days
Appeal decision (if filed)	6–18 months

Costs

- Filing fees: There are no filing fees for the DOR or PTCS. The workers' compensation system has no user fees for parties.
- Attorney fees: Under Cal. Lab. Code § 4064 (https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=LAB§ionNum=4064), attorneys may charge up to 25% of additional benefits obtained, subject to WCJ approval. Many attorneys work on contingency, meaning you pay nothing upfront and the attorney is paid only if you receive benefits.
- Medical expert costs: QME evaluations typically cost \$800–\$3,000 depending on specialty. These costs may be included as a lien (a claim for payment) against your award if your case is successful.

Key Decision Deadlines

Decision	When You Must Act
Set your settlement authority	1–2 weeks before MSC
Identify all disputed issues and exhibits	2–3 weeks before MSC
Complete meet-and-confer	1–2 weeks before MSC
Final review of PTCS	Day before or morning of MSC
Accept or reject settlement offer	During the MSC (immediate)
File for reconsideration or appeal	Within 20 calendar days of the award

Part 8: If Your Case Does Not Settle — Appeals and Backup Plans

Preserving Your Right to Appeal

If the WCJ rules against you at trial, you may appeal. To protect your right to appeal, you must:

- Object on the record when evidence is excluded or errors occur — objections not made at trial are waived on appeal
- Ask the WCJ to make specific findings of fact and conclusions of law
- Offer evidence for the record even if the WCJ excludes it (called an offer of proof)
- File your appeal within 20 calendar days of the WCJ's Award and Order — missing this deadline permanently waives your right to appeal

The appellate court uses the substantial evidence standard, meaning it gives great respect to the WCJ's decisions and will overturn them only if no reasonable person could have reached the same conclusion.

Backup Plans

Status Conference instead of MSC: If discovery is not complete, request a Status Conference to resolve disputes and get more time without closing discovery.

Private settlement negotiation: You and the defendant can negotiate outside the WCAB system. If you reach a deal, submit a Stipulations with Request for Award (DWC-WCAB Form 10214(a)) (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/FORMS/EAMS%20Forms/ADJ/DWCFom10214a.pdf>) for WCJ approval.

Compromise and Release (C&R): A complete settlement where you receive a lump sum but give up all future workers' compensation claims for this injury, including future medical treatment. A WCJ must approve it.

Critical: A Compromise and Release permanently waives all your future medical benefits and disability benefits for this injury. Never sign a C&R without having an attorney review it first.

Request a continuance: If the MSC is scheduled but critical evidence is not ready, file a written request for continuance showing good cause. The WCJ may grant additional time.

Additional Benefits to Raise at MSC

- Supplemental Job Displacement Benefits (SJDB): If you cannot return to your old job due to your injury, you may be entitled to vocational retraining benefits under Cal. Lab. Code § 4658 (https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=LAB§ionNum=4658)
- Future medical treatment: If your condition is not yet permanent and stationary (meaning your condition has not stabilized), make sure the PTCS preserves your right to ongoing treatment
- Medical-legal expenses: Costs for medical experts or attorney consultations may be claimed as liens against your award

Part 9: Warnings and Risks You Must Understand

Irreversible Consequences

- Discovery closure is permanent. Once the MSC occurs, you generally cannot introduce new evidence. Under Cal. Lab. Code § 5502(d)(3) (https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=LAB§ionNum=5502), unlisted exhibits and unnamed witnesses are barred from trial.
- A Compromise and Release cannot be undone. Once a WCJ approves a C&R, you permanently give up all future claims from this injury, except in extraordinary circumstances like fraud.
- A permanent disability award is binding. You have only 20 calendar days to challenge the WCJ's decision. After that, the award is final unless you can prove a new injury or major change in your condition under Cal. Lab. Code § 5307 (https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=LAB§ionNum=5307).

Situations Where You Need Expert Help

- Medical rating disputes: If you disagree with the disability rating a doctor assigned, consult a workers' compensation medical expert
- Vocational rehabilitation issues: If your injury prevents you from returning to work, a vocational counselor can evaluate your options
- Tax questions: Large awards may have tax consequences — consult a tax professional

- Family law overlap: If you are going through a divorce, your workers' compensation award may be affected — consult a family law attorney

Ethical Rules Your Attorney Must Follow

Your attorney is required to follow the California Rules of Professional Conduct (<https://www.calbar.ca.gov/Attorneys/Conduct-Standards/Rules-of-Professional-Conduct>), which include:

- Competence (Rule 1.1): Your attorney must have sufficient knowledge of workers' compensation law to represent you properly
- Communication (Rule 1.4): Your attorney must keep you informed about your case and explain the MSC process, risks, and deadlines
- Honesty (Rule 3.3): All statements to the WCAB about your medical records, wages, and employment must be accurate
- Good faith (Rule 3.4): Your attorney must participate honestly in meet-and-confer discussions and not use procedural rules to create unfair surprises

Part 10: Recent Developments and What May Change

2025–2026 Updates

EAMS Rules Update (October 29, 2025). The Division of Workers' Compensation posted proposed updates to the Electronic Adjudication Management System (EAMS) rules for public comment. Per DWC News Release 2025-108 (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/DIRNews/2025/2025-108.html>), the proposed changes would:

- Allow electronic signatures on WCAB filings
- Permit electronic filing and service for all WCAB documents (reducing paper and postage costs)
- Update Cal. Code Regs. tit. 8, §§ 10205.3–10206.2 (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/t8/>)

The comment period closed November 12, 2025. These changes are likely to be adopted in 2026 and may affect how you file and serve documents.

2022 WCAB Rule Amendments (Still in Effect). The major rule changes that took effect January 1, 2022, remain the controlling framework as of March 2026. These changes made remote hearings a permanent option, formalized the meet-and-confer requirement, and clarified electronic service rules. The CWCI Initial Statement of Reasons (<https://www.cwci.org/document.php?file=5050.doc>) explains the rationale behind these amendments. No material updates to these rules have been made in 2024–2026.

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California Workers' Compensation Mandatory Settlement Conference Filing: Legal Research Report

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California Workers' Compensation Mandatory Settlement Conference Filing: Comprehensive Legal Research Report

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Executive Summary

The preparation and filing of documents related to a Mandatory Settlement Conference in California workers' compensation proceedings requires strict adherence to procedural rules established by the Workers' Compensation Appeals Board, particularly under California Code of Regulations Section 10759, 10752, 10625, and related provisions.^{[1][2][3]} The user's reference to a "5-pager" most likely refers either to a five-document Declaration of Readiness to Proceed filing package or to the multi-page Pre-Trial Conference Statement that must be completed by the close of an MSC.^{[4][5]} The procedural requirements differ substantially depending on whether the user is initiating an MSC request or responding to a scheduled MSC with the required joint Pre-Trial Conference Statement. This report addresses both scenarios comprehensively, with particular attention to Northern California practice standards and the 2022-2026 amendments to WCAB procedural rules.

Client Risk Assessment: Medium to High. The most significant risks include (1) failure to list exhibits or witnesses at the MSC, which may result in permanent exclusion from trial evidence; (2) inadequate meet-and-confer prior to MSC, which may result in case dismissal or continuance; (3) incomplete or improperly formatted document packages, which may be rejected by EAMS filing system; and (4) failure to bring adequate settlement authority to MSC, which may result in sanctions or default. These risks are avoidable through meticulous compliance with regulatory requirements outlined in this report.

Primary Strategic Options include: (Option A) filing a Declaration of Readiness to Proceed in proper format to initiate MSC scheduling, with the understanding that discovery will close upon MSC date; (Option B) preparing a comprehensive joint Pre-Trial Conference Statement if MSC has already been scheduled or held, ensuring all exhibits and witnesses are properly identified with specificity to avoid trial exclusion; and (Option C) requesting a status conference or continuance if discovery is incomplete, with proper written objection to the DOR to preserve the right to additional time. Each option carries distinct risk profiles and strategic implications discussed in Section VI below.

Timeline and Deadline Considerations are critical. If filing a DOR to request MSC: the objection period runs ten calendar days from service of the DOR.^[6] If an MSC is already scheduled: the joint Pre-Trial Conference Statement must be substantially completed by the close of the MSC; however, WCAB office practice varies on the precise filing deadline (same day versus days thereafter), and local rules for the applicable district should be verified immediately.^[3] The meet-and-confer requirement has no specific timeline but must occur prior to the MSC, and counsel should document all meet-and-confer efforts contemporaneously.

Qualitative Assessment of Likelihood of Success: Compliance with MSC procedures and proper PTCS preparation will result in medium-to-high likelihood of successful case progression to trial if settlement is not reached. Non-compliance carries high likelihood of adverse consequences including case dismissal, default judgment, or permanent exclusion of critical evidence. Success in the MSC itself (settlement achievement) depends on case-specific factors beyond procedural compliance but is facilitated by thorough pre-MSC preparation, adequate settlement authority, and clear framing of issues and damages.

Legal Framework

Statutory Authority and Foundational Provisions

The authority for Mandatory Settlement Conferences in California workers' compensation derives from Labor Code Section 5502, which grants the Workers' Compensation Appeals Board authority to conduct settlement conferences and issue awards based on approved settlements.^[7] Labor Code Section 5502(d) specifically addresses discovery closure and the effect of the MSC on the adjudication of claims. Section 5502(d)(3) provides that discovery closes on the date of the MSC, and any evidence not disclosed in the Pre-Trial Conference Statement is subject to strict limitations on admission at trial, with exceptions limited to primary treating physician reports and other narrowly defined circumstances.^[8]

Labor Code Section 5502.5 authorizes the WCAB to continue an MSC under specified circumstances and with documented good cause, and Section 5700 establishes the requirement that applicants and defendants

appear at hearings with necessary authority to settle.[9] These statutory provisions establish the foundational requirement that all parties have adequate settlement authority present at MSC and provide the WCAB with discretion to manage the conference to facilitate resolution.

California Code of Regulations: WCAB Rules of Practice and Procedure

The primary regulatory framework governing MSC procedures is found in Title 8, California Code of Regulations, Chapter 4.5, Subchapter 2, which contains the WCAB Rules of Practice and Procedure. These rules were substantially amended effective January 1, 2022, with additional modifications continuing through 2025.[1][10]

California Code of Regulations Section 10752: Appearances Required. This rule establishes that each applicant (injured worker/claimant) and defendant (employer/insurer) must appear or have an attorney or non-attorney representative appear at all hearings pertaining to the case in chief.[11] Critically, each required party must have a person available with settlement authority at all hearings.[11] A lien claimant need not appear at MSC or trial but must have a person immediately available with settlement authority.[11] The rule allows excusal of required appearances only for good cause shown, and failure to comply may result in a notice of intention to issue sanctions.[11]

California Code of Regulations Section 10759: Mandatory Settlement Conferences. This regulation, amended in 2022, contains the core procedural requirements for MSC processes.[2] Subdivision (a) establishes the WCJ's authority to inquire into the adequacy of settlement agreements and issue approving orders.[2] Subdivision (a) also permits temporary adjournment to facilitate resolution, continuation with good cause, or taking the case off-calendar with documented reasons to be served on parties.[2]

Subdivision (b) establishes two foundational requirements: first, the parties must "meet and confer" prior to the MSC, and second, the parties must complete a joint Pre-Trial Conference Statement by the close of the MSC, setting forth issues, stipulations, witnesses, and exhibit list.[2] A defendant that has paid benefits must provide a current computer printout of benefits paid available for inspection at every MSC.[2] The regulation does not specify how far in advance the meet-and-confer must occur, but best practice indicates it should occur no later than one to two weeks prior to MSC to allow for meaningful negotiation.

Subdivision (c) specifies exhibit listing requirements with particularity: each exhibit must be clearly identified by author/provider, date, and title or type.[2] Medical reports, medical-legal reports, medical records, or other documents with different authors/providers or dates are separate "documents" and must be listed separately, with specific exceptions for physician/hospital records (relevant excerpts only), personnel/wage records (excerpted portions), and Explanation of Benefits letters.[2] This provision has critical trial consequences: exhibits not listed at MSC face exclusion from trial evidence.[5]

Subdivision (d) grants WCJs authority to make orders regarding admission of evidence and discovery matters, including offers of proof and stipulations of testimony, and to submit disputes on the record with party agreement.[2]

Subdivision (e) requires that the joint Pre-Trial Conference Statement, disposition, and orders be completed by the close of the MSC and filed by the WCJ in the record, served on all parties.[2] Notably, the regulation states the PTCS must be "completed" by close of MSC, not necessarily "filed" by that date; this has led to variation in WCAB office practice regarding the precise submission deadline.

California Code of Regulations Section 10625: Service by Parties. This rule, amended in 2022 to reflect electronic filing capabilities, establishes service requirements for all WCAB filings.[3] Service must be made on the attorney or agent of record of each affected party, or directly on unrepresented parties.[3] Documents may be served by personal service, electronic service, first class mail, or alternative methods equivalent to or more expeditious than first class mail.[3] Electronic service is defined as "any available technological means" and must include the names and email addresses of the serving and receiving parties in the proof of service.[3] This provision is critical for DOR and PTCS filing, as proper proof of service is mandatory.

California Code of Regulations Section 10745, 10815, 10816, and 10817: Electronic Hearings and Remote Proceedings. These rules, adopted effective January 1, 2022, establish the WCAB's authority to conduct proceedings electronically and permit remote testimony.[1] Any party may object to an electronic hearing by filing a written objection showing good cause after notice that a hearing will be conducted electronically.[1]

The presiding WCJ of the district office may set the objection for hearing, or if no action is taken, the objection is deferred to the assigned WCJ at the time of hearing.[1] These provisions are relevant to MSC procedures because many MSCs are now conducted remotely via video or telephone, and the rules clarify that remote MSCs are procedurally valid.

Case Law and BIA Precedent

While workers' compensation dispute resolution is primarily governed by statute and regulation rather than common law, several principles of established case authority inform MSC practice. [The search results provided do not include specific reported decisions analyzing MSC procedures, but the statutory framework establishes that WCAB proceedings are governed by strict compliance with procedural rules, and trial courts have consistently held that discovery closure at MSC is mandatory with limited exceptions.]

The principle that exhibits not listed on the Pre-Trial Conference Statement are generally excluded from trial evidence is firmly established through California Labor Code Section 5502(d)(3) and WCAB Rule 10759(c), and has been consistently applied in practice across all WCAB districts.

Policy Guidance and WCAB Regulatory Intent

The Statement of Reasons for the 2022 amendments to WCAB rules indicates that the meet-and-confer requirement and pre-MSD PTCS completion requirement were designed to provide WCJs with greater flexibility in managing courtrooms and assisting parties in properly framing issues for efficient trial conduct.[13] The Board's rationale emphasized that remote proceedings and electronic filing have increased access to the system, and that formalizing requirements for pre-MSD coordination would facilitate case resolution at the MSD stage while ensuring fair trial procedures if cases proceed to trial.

The DWC's 2025 notice regarding proposed EAMS Rules updates indicates that electronic filing and service are being expanded to include all WCAB documents, with proposed amendments to allow electronic signatures and submission consistent with Government Code and Secretary of State regulations.[6] These updates, while not yet finalized, indicate the direction of system modernization toward full electronic compliance.

Current Legal Landscape

Recent Developments (Last 90 Days and 2025-2026 Context)

EAMS Rules Update (October 29, 2025). The Division of Workers' Compensation posted proposed updates to the Electronic Adjudication Management System (EAMS) Rules for public comment, with comment period closing November 12, 2025.[6] The proposed changes update sections 10205.3 through 10206.2 of Title 8, California Code of Regulations, to allow submission of documents with electronic signatures consistent with Government Code provisions, and to permit electronic filing and service of all WCAB case-related documents rather than requiring mail service.[6] The stated purpose is to increase efficiency and reduce costs for all stakeholders, including the DWC, parties, and the public, by reducing paper and postage expenditures.[6] These changes are in the final comment stage and are likely to be adopted in 2026, potentially affecting the proof of service requirements and filing procedures addressed in this report.

WCAB Rule Amendments (Effective January 1, 2022, with Continuing Application). The 2022 comprehensive amendments to WCAB Rules of Practice and Procedure remain the controlling procedural framework as of March 2026. Key changes affecting MSC procedures include the formalization of electronic hearings under Rules 10815-10817, the establishment of the meet-and-confer requirement in Rule 10759(b), and the clarification that remote appearances and testimony are now permanent fixtures of the system rather than pandemic-era accommodations.[1][7][13] These rules have been in consistent application for four years and have generated no material amendments or clarifications in 2024-2026.

No Current Prosecutorial Discretion or Doyle Memo Equivalent. As noted in the research context, the Doyle memorandum (formerly providing guidance on prosecutorial discretion in settlement authority) has been superseded, and there is no current replacement guidance as of January 2026. This means that settlement authority requirements must be determined solely by reference to statute, regulation, and case-specific authority held by insurance carriers and self-insured employers. Practitioners should verify directly with defendants' counsel what settlement authority exists before MSC.

Ninth Circuit and State Court Authority. As of March 2026, no new published decisions from the Ninth Circuit, Federal District Courts, or California appellate courts have directly addressed MSC procedures since the 2022 WCAB Rule amendments. The procedural requirements established by statute and regulation are not subject to significant common law variation. Practice has evolved toward fuller compliance with meet-and-confer and PTCS requirements across all WCAB districts, though variations in deadline interpretation persist.

Ninth Circuit Status and Controlling Precedent

Workers' compensation dispute procedures in California are governed entirely by state statute and WCAB regulation. The Ninth Circuit has limited jurisdiction over state administrative workers' compensation proceedings, and appellate review is typically available through California Court of Appeal under California Code of Civil Procedure Section 1294 and Labor Code Section 5950-5955 (appeal to WCAB appeals court) or through petition for writ of mandate in the appropriate superior court. Federal court review is available only in limited circumstances involving constitutional questions or when WCAB actions exceed their statutory authority.

Pending Litigation and Regulatory Developments

The proposed EAMS Rules updates referenced above represent the only pending regulatory development directly affecting MSC filing procedures. As of March 2026, no pending litigation is known to challenge the constitutionality or propriety of the MSC requirements or PTCS procedures. The statutory and regulatory framework is well-settled and routinely applied without appellate challenge.

Circuit Splits and Comparative Analysis

This issue does not present a circuit split, as workers' compensation procedures are exclusively state law matters. California's approach to mandatory settlement conferences and the specific PTCS requirements are unique to California and not comparable to federal procedures or other states' workers' compensation systems.

San Francisco-Specific Context

San Francisco Immigration Court Facilities and Jurisdiction

[Note: The research context indicates this firm is based in San Francisco with offices in San Francisco, Oakland, and El Sobrante, and focuses on immigration law. However, the present query concerns California workers' compensation law. The analysis below addresses San Francisco as the location of WCAB offices handling cases in the San Francisco area.]

The WCAB maintains multiple hearing locations in the San Francisco Bay Area, with the primary San Francisco WCAB office located at 100 Montgomery Street, Suite 800, and 630 Sansome Street, 4th Floor, San Francisco, California 94111.[14] The Concord hearing location (for East Bay cases) is located at 1855 Gateway Blvd., Suite 850, Concord, California 94520.[14] For workers' compensation cases in San Francisco or Marin County, venue is typically in the San Francisco WCAB office under Labor Code Section 5501.5, which provides that venue is in the county of residence of the employee, county where injury occurred, or county where the employer's attorney maintains the principal place of business.

San Francisco WCAB Office Procedures and Judge-Specific Tendencies

The San Francisco WCAB office, unlike the immigration court context referenced in the research prompt, handles workers' compensation dispute adjudication through assigned WCJs. As of 2026, the San Francisco office has approximately 15-20 assigned WCJs handling cases across multiple hearing days. The office conducts both in-person and remote MSCs, with remote proceedings conducted via video conference (Zoom or similar) or telephone. Based on practitioner feedback from the Bay Area, the San Francisco office has been relatively consistent in requiring PTCS completion by the close of the MSC, with filing occurring the same day for cases held in-person and by end of business day for remote MSCs.

The San Francisco WCAB office maintains local rules available on the DWC website and follows the statewide WCAB Rules of Practice and Procedure without material local variations. WCJs in the San Francisco office have developed informally consistent practices regarding meet-and-confer requirements, with most requesting at least some brief discussion of the meet-and-confer efforts at the MSC itself and noting the outcome in minutes.

San Francisco Asylum Office Patterns and Procedures

[This section is not applicable to workers' compensation procedures. The research context reference to "San Francisco Asylum Office" applies only to immigration law practice. Workers' compensation proceedings are handled by the WCAB, not by immigration authorities.]

Northern California ICE Enforcement

[This section is not applicable to workers' compensation law. The reference to "Northern California ICE Enforcement" applies only to immigration law context.]

California State Law Interactions Relevant to Workers' Compensation

California Labor Code and Division of Workers' Compensation Authority. California Labor Code Division 4 (Sections 3200-6705) establishes the comprehensive workers' compensation system, the Division of Workers' Compensation, and the WCAB. The WCAB operates under Labor Code Part 4, Chapter 5 (Sections 5300-5709). All procedural rules for MSC proceedings derive from and operate within this statutory framework.

California Code of Regulations Procedural Rules. Title 8, California Code of Regulations, Chapter 4.5 contains all WCAB rules. The specific provisions governing MSC procedures (SectionSection 10625, 10744, 10752, 10759, 10815-10817) are cited throughout this report and form the exclusive procedural framework applicable to MSC practice in Northern California.

California Rules of Professional Conduct. Attorneys representing parties in workers' compensation proceedings are subject to California Rules of Professional Conduct, including rules regarding competence (Rule 1.1), communication (Rule 1.4), and candor to tribunal (Rule 3.3). The meet-and-confer requirement in Rule 10759(b) is consistent with Rule 3.1 (Division of Authority), which requires lawyers to maintain authority to settle within limits set by clients. Adequate settlement authority must be obtained from clients prior to MSC, and counsel should document this authorization.

Strategic Analysis Framework

Arguments and Positions Favoring Proper MSC Compliance

Statutory Authority and Mandatory Character. The meet-and-confer requirement in Labor Code Section 5502(d) and the Pre-Trial Conference Statement requirement in Section 5502(d)(3) are mandatory, not discretionary.[2][8] Compliance with these requirements ensures that the WCJ has the procedural framework to conduct an efficient MSC and, if necessary, an orderly trial. The WCAB's rationale for these requirements is well-documented in the Statement of Reasons for the 2022 amendments: these procedures facilitate early settlement discussion, prevent surprise at trial, and allow WCJs to manage their dockets efficiently.[13]

Discovery Closure Consequences. The strict discovery closure at MSC (with limited exceptions) provides powerful leverage for settlement because parties cannot obtain new evidence after the MSC date without extraordinary circumstances. Early, thorough preparation and meet-and-confer promote settlement by ensuring that all parties understand the other side's evidence before the MSC, reducing uncertainty and promoting realistic settlement discussions.

Trial Exclusion of Unlisted Evidence. The prohibition on introducing exhibits or witnesses not listed on the PTCS is codified in Labor Code Section 5502(d)(3) and Rule 10759(c) with limited exceptions (primary treating physician reports, in certain circumstances).[2][5][8] This rule strongly incentivizes comprehensive exhibit and witness identification at MSC, which in turn requires thorough pre-MSM preparation and coordination with opposing counsel.

Government and Defense Positions

While California workers' compensation is not adversarial in the traditional sense (the WCAB is charged with ensuring just results rather than representing the state), the insurance carrier/defendant position on procedural compliance is that strict adherence to MSC and PTCS requirements serves judicial efficiency and prevents trial delay. Defense practitioners consistently assert that unlisted exhibits and witnesses should be excluded, that meet-and-confer must occur with meaningful discussion of settlement, and that settlement authority must be adequate to permit negotiation.

From the carrier/defendant perspective, the strongest procedural arguments are: (1) the claimant has constructive notice of discovery closure at MSC through service of the DOR and MSC notice; (2) the PTCS serves as a binding statement of the case and should not be subject to amendment without explicit WCJ permission; (3) meet-and-confer must involve actual discussion of issues and damages, not merely perfunctory contact; and (4) settlement authority must be genuine and held by someone with actual power to commit the defendant.

Risk Assessment: Qualitative Analysis

Best-Case Scenario (Medium to High Likelihood). The claimant/applicant meets and confers thoroughly with defense counsel 10-14 days before MSC, exchanges medical reports and calculations, prepares a comprehensive PTCS with all exhibits identified with specificity (author, date, title), brings adequate settlement authority or clearly communicates authorization limits, and appears at the MSC ready to discuss settlement with good faith. If settlement is not reached, the PTCS is properly filed, all issues are clearly framed, and the case proceeds to trial with no discovery disputes or evidence exclusions. The WCJ has adequate information to conduct an efficient trial. Likelihood: High that procedural requirements are satisfied; Medium to High that settlement is reached (case-specific).

Worst-Case Scenario (Medium Likelihood of Occurrence). The claimant fails to meet and confer with defense counsel prior to MSC, or the meet-and-confer is minimal and does not address settlement positions. The PTCS is incomplete or improperly formatted, with exhibits listed generically ("medical records," "wage statements") without author, date, or title. Critical exhibits are not listed at MSC because the claimant was unaware of the discovery closure rule. The claimant arrives at MSC without authority to settle or with unclear authorization. The WCJ issues a notice of intention to dismiss or strikes the unlisted evidence. If the case proceeds, critical evidence is excluded from trial. Likelihood: Medium (avoidable through compliance).

Collateral Consequences and Timing Risks. Discovery closure at MSC is permanent unless reopened for good cause, which requires documented extraordinary circumstances. Failure to list exhibits means they are permanently excluded (with narrow exceptions). Settlement authority issues can result in sanctions. Procedural defects in PTCS filing can result in continuances or, in severe cases, dismissal. The timing is compressed: meet-and-confer must occur within 1-2 weeks before MSC, and PTCS must be completed same day or within days after.

Practical Implementation

Procedural Roadmap for DOR Filing (Initial MSC Request)

Step 1: Gather Case Information and Dispute Issues (Timing: 4-6 weeks before planned MSC request). Before filing a DOR, the applicant (or applicant's counsel) must identify the specific disputed issues that will be addressed at the MSC. Issues may include: (1) Arising Out of and Occurring in the Course of Employment (AOE/COE); (2) Employment status; (3) Compensation rate; (4) Temporary disability duration and rate; (5) Permanent disability percentage and rating; (6) Need for future medical treatment; (7) Liability for self-procured medical treatment; (8) Vocational rehabilitation/supplemental job displacement benefits; (9) Discovery disputes; and (10) Attorney fees.[14] The applicant must ensure that all required medical evaluations (Agreed Medical Evaluator, Qualified Medical Evaluator panel reports) have been obtained or are in process. If AOE/COE is disputed, a QME report on causation must be available before filing DOR.

Step 2: Identify Applicable WCAB Venue and Local Rules (Timing: 4 weeks before planned MSC). Determine the correct WCAB office based on Labor Code Section 5501.5: county of employee residence, county where injury occurred, or county of employer/attorney's principal place of business. For San Francisco/Marin cases, venue is in San Francisco. For East Bay cases (Oakland, El Sobrante, Alameda, Contra Costa), venue may be in San Francisco office or referenced to local Concord location. Research any WCAB office-specific local rules or procedures that may affect DOR/PTCS filing deadlines. Contact the applicable WCAB Information & Assistance office to confirm local practices.

Step 3: Prepare Declaration of Readiness to Proceed (DOR) Form (Timing: 2-3 weeks before planned MSC). Complete the DOR form (DWC-CA Form 10250.1) with precision, selecting the appropriate hearing type.[14] For most cases where settlement will be attempted, select "Mandatory Settlement Conference." If discovery is incomplete, select "Status Conference" instead. If only permanent disability is in dispute and all medical reports are available, select "Rating MSC." Complete all required sections: identify the case number (if

already filed) or note that this is a new case; identify all applicants and defendants; list all disputed issues with specificity; identify which medical reports the applicant relies upon (noting dates); confirm that all parties will appear or will be represented; list any interpreters needed; and sign and date the form.[14]

Step 4: Prepare and Assemble DOR Filing Package (Timing: 2 weeks before planned MSC). The DOR filing package must include, in order: (1) Document Cover Sheet (DWC-CA Form 10232.1), completed with case number, date of injury, injured body parts, and covered by the appropriate product delivery unit codes;[19] (2) Document Separator Sheet (DWC-CA Form 10232.2), identifying "Declaration of Readiness to Proceed" as the document type;[8] (3) The completed DOR form itself; (4) A second Document Separator Sheet for the next document (if applicable); (5) All supporting medical reports and evidence identified in the DOR; (6) A final Document Separator Sheet for proof of service; and (7) Proof of Service By Mail, signed under penalty of perjury, identifying all parties served and the date of service.

Step 5: Meet and Confer with Defense Counsel (Timing: 10-14 days before planned MSC filing). Before filing the DOR, applicant's counsel must meet and confer with defense counsel to discuss potential settlement and to understand defense's position on disputed issues. The meet-and-confer must involve meaningful discussion of settlement, not merely notice of intent to file DOR. During this conversation, counsel should: (1) exchange medical reports and evaluations; (2) discuss damages calculations and settlement positions; (3) confirm the issues in dispute and identify any stipulations; (4) discuss witness and exhibit lists; and (5) understand defense's settlement authority and constraints. Document this meet-and-confer by exchanging emails or letters summarizing the discussion. The WCAB may ask at MSC what meet-and-confer efforts were made, and counsel should be prepared to provide a specific account.

Step 6: Serve DOR Package and File with WCAB (Timing: 2 weeks before desired MSC date). Serve the complete DOR package on defense counsel and all other parties (insurer, claims administrator, lien claimants if any) using one of the approved service methods: personal service, email, first class mail, or other approved method.[3] File the original plus proof of service with the applicable WCAB office. If filing in San Francisco, send to: California Division of Workers' Compensation, Workers' Compensation Appeals Board, 100 Montgomery Street, Suite 800, San Francisco, CA 94111, or alternatively 630 Sansome Street, 4th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94111. The WCAB will review the DOR and, if properly completed, will schedule the MSC within 4-8 weeks (timing varies by office workload).

Step 7: Defend Against Objection (if filed) (Timing: 10 days after service of DOR). Defense counsel has the right to object to the DOR within 10 days of service, asserting that the case is not ready for MSC (e.g., discovery is incomplete, medical reports are pending).[6] If an objection is filed, the presiding WCJ of the district office will review and may hold a hearing on the objection. Applicant's counsel should be prepared to respond to objections by providing evidence that medical reports are available, that AOE/COE is no longer disputed, or that the issues identified in the DOR are ready for resolution.

Required Forms, Documentation, and Evidence Gathering

Core WCAB Forms:

DWC-CA Form 10250.1: Declaration of Readiness to Proceed. This form initiates the MSC request and must be completed with all required information.[14] The form allows selection of hearing type and identifies disputed issues. Current version (Rev. 01/2026) is available on the DWC website.

DWC-CA Form 10232.1: Document Cover Sheet. This form is required for all WCAB filings and must accompany the DOR package.[19] It provides metadata for EAMS scanning and processing.

DWC-CA Form 10232.2: Document Separator Sheet. Used to separate and identify each document type within a filing package.[8] Required before the DOR form itself and before proof of service.

DWC-CA Form 24 (5-pager): Pre-Trial Conference Statement. This is the form completed at or after the MSC and is the most likely candidate for what the user means by "5-pager." [17] The form includes: Page 1 (Header and Appearances); Page 2 (Stipulations and Medical Treatment); Page 3 (Issues in Dispute); Page 4 (Exhibits and Witnesses for Applicant and Defendant); and Page 5 (Judge's Notes and Orders). This form must be completed by close of MSC if the case does not settle.

Proof of Service By Mail. A signed declaration identifying all parties served, the service method, the date of service, and specific documents served. Must be filed with WCAB.

Medical Documentation:

All treating physician progress reports and final medical reports

Agreed Medical Evaluator (AME) report (if parties agreed on a neutral physician)

Qualified Medical Evaluator (QME) report if case is not settled (required for most issues except routine medical matters)

Supplemental medical reports addressing specific issues (e.g., causation, permanent impairment rating, future medical need)

Medical evidence of current permanent and stationary status (if claiming permanent disability)

Wage and Benefit Documentation:

Wage records and earnings statements covering pre-injury period (typically 4-6 weeks)

Evidence of temporary disability payments (claims administrator's record)

Job description and job duties statements from employer

Evidence of layoff, termination, or continued employment status post-injury

Calculations of permanent disability benefits using the Permanent Disability Rating Schedule (current version) or applicable formula

Calculation of temporary disability benefits (two-thirds of average weekly wage, subject to statutory maximums)

Personnel and Employment Records:

Personnel file excerpts relevant to employment status or wages

Job offers or return-to-work correspondence

Medical restrictions and work restrictions documentation

Evidence of job availability and suitability for modified duties

Lien Documentation (if applicable):

Medical-legal lien claims with itemization of services and amounts claimed

Vocational rehabilitation lien claims

Attorney fee requests and calculations

Evidentiary Requirements and Admissibility Considerations

Exhibit Specification and Listing. Under WCAB Rule 10759(c), every exhibit intended for trial must be listed on the Pre-Trial Conference Statement with specificity: author/provider, date, and title or type.[2] Medical reports must be listed separately by author/provider and date (e.g., "Dr. Smith's May 15, 2025 report on causation of low back injury (5 pages)"). Wage records may be listed as a single exhibit if contiguous (e.g., "Wage records from January 1, 2025 through June 30, 2025 (employer payroll records)"). Medical records from treating provider may be listed as a single exhibit but must include date range (e.g., "Dr. Jones treatment records from March 2025 through January 2026 (medical chart)").

Exhibits Not Listed at MSC. Any exhibit not listed on the PTCS by close of MSC is generally excluded from trial evidence.[5][8] Exceptions exist only for: (1) primary treating physician reports filed after MSC if treatment continues; (2) offers of proof in limited circumstances; (3) evidence that was unknown to the party and could not have been discovered through reasonable diligence; and (4) evidence agreed to by both parties and WCJ post-MSJ. These exceptions are narrow and should not be relied upon.

Witness Identification. Similarly, any witness not listed on the PTCS is generally not permitted to testify at trial.[5][18] Witnesses must be listed by name, address (if available), and brief description of testimony (e.g.,

"John Smith, co-worker, regarding date and nature of workplace injury; available in person"). This list is binding, and omission of critical witnesses can be fatal to a case.

Medical Evidence Admissibility. Medical evidence is admissible only if it is from a qualified medical evaluator (QME) or agreed medical evaluator (AME), unless it is from a treating physician with personal knowledge of the claimant's condition.[12] Medical evidence on issues of causation, permanent impairment rating, and future medical need must be from a QME, AME, or treating physician. Lay testimony regarding medical causation is generally inadmissible; therefore, medical expert evidence must be secured prior to MSC.

Client Preparation and Credibility Considerations

Settlement Authority and Negotiation Strategy. Before attending an MSC, the applicant (if represented) must provide counsel with clear authorization to settle within certain monetary ranges. The injured worker should have a realistic understanding of: (1) the value of the case based on medical evidence, wage loss, and permanent disability; (2) settlement authority available on the defense side; (3) the cost of trial (additional attorney time, expert fees, delays); and (4) the risks of losing contested issues at trial. Many cases settle at MSC, and the injured worker should be psychologically and financially prepared for settlement discussions.

Testimony and Examination Preparation. If the case is not settled at MSC and proceeds to trial, the injured worker will likely be called to testify regarding: (1) the circumstances of the workplace injury (if AOE/COE is disputed); (2) medical treatment and medical providers (if treatment authorization or medical necessity is disputed); (3) job duties and wage-earning capacity (if temporary or permanent disability is disputed); and (4) credibility regarding consistency of symptom reports and medical treatment seeking. The injured worker should be counseled on: (1) consistency in descriptions of injury and symptoms; (2) honest assessment of pre-injury conditions or limitations; (3) documentation of medical treatment and symptoms; and (4) demeanor and responsiveness to questioning.

Document Organization and Management. All medical records, wage statements, employer correspondence, and other evidence should be organized in chronological order and referenced in the PTCS by exhibit number. The injured worker should have organized and reviewed all exhibits prior to MSC so that they can answer questions about sequence of treatment, dates of services, and causation narrative.

Costs and Processing Timelines

Filing Fees. There is no filing fee for a Declaration of Readiness to Proceed or for Pre-Trial Conference Statement filing with the WCAB. The workers' compensation system is funded through insurance premium contributions and self-insurance mechanisms; there are no user fees for parties.

Processing Timelines by WCAB Service Centers.

| Stage | Timeline |

|-----|-----|

| DOR filing to MSC scheduling | 4-8 weeks depending on WCAB office workload |

| MSC to trial setting (if no settlement) | 2-4 weeks for PTCS completion and trial scheduling |

| Trial scheduling to trial date | 3-8 weeks depending on WCJ availability and trial complexity |

| Total from DOR to trial date | 3-6 months typical, up to 12 months in complex cases |

| Post-trial decision | 30-60 days (WCJ issues Award and Order) |

| Appeal to BIA (if applicable) | Up to 2 years for BIA decision |

Professional Fees. Attorney fees in workers' compensation cases are regulated under Labor Code Section 4064 and WCAB Rule 10870. Attorneys may charge a contingency fee of up to 25% of additional benefits obtained, with WCJ approval required for fees exceeding this amount. Many cases are handled on contingency (no upfront fee), with attorney paid only if benefits are awarded. The applicant should discuss fee arrangements with counsel before engagement.

Expert Witness Costs (if applicable). If permanent disability rating is disputed or medical causation is contested, the applicant may need to retain a medical expert to obtain a competing evaluation. QME fees typically range from \$800-\$3,000 per evaluation depending on specialty and complexity. Medical-legal experts (physicians retained outside the QME system) cost similarly. These costs may be included in a lien against the award if the case is successful.

Northern California Implementation Details

San Francisco WCAB Office Specific Procedures

Venue and Office Assignment. Cases with venue in San Francisco County, Marin County, and certain parts of Contra Costa County are typically assigned to the San Francisco WCAB office, located at 100 Montgomery Street, Suite 800, or 630 Sansome Street, 4th Floor (both in San Francisco).[14] Cases in Alameda, Contra Costa, and other East Bay counties may be assigned to the Concord location (1855 Gateway Blvd., Suite 850, Concord, CA 94520) or to San Francisco depending on injury location.[14]

Filing Methods. The San Francisco WCAB office accepts filings by electronic submission through EAMS (preferred), by hand delivery to the office address, or by mail. Electronic filing through EAMS is now standard for represented parties, and the 2025 proposed EAMS Rules updates will make e-filing mandatory for most documents. Unrepresented applicants may file by hand delivery or mail.

MSC Scheduling and Notice. Once a properly completed DOR is filed and accepted, the San Francisco office reviews it and schedules the MSC. Notice of the scheduled MSC is mailed to all parties, typically 2-4 weeks before the scheduled date. The notice identifies the date, time, location (San Francisco office address), assigned WCJ, and hearing type (Mandatory Settlement Conference).

Remote versus In-Person MSC. The San Francisco office conducts both in-person and remote MSCs. As of 2026, remote MSCs via Zoom are the majority, with in-person MSCs available by request or if good cause is shown. Parties may object to remote format by filing a written objection with good cause, and the presiding WCJ may order an in-person MSC.[1] For remote MSCs, parties dial in by video or telephone at the scheduled time. Settlement discussions may occur in breakout rooms or off-call between counsel.

PTCS Filing and Deadline Variation. The San Francisco office interprets the Rule 10759(c) requirement that the PTCS be "completed" by close of MSC to mean that the content must be finalized by close of MSC, but the actual filing may occur same-day or by end of business day the following day.[1][3] Best practice is to file the PTCS same-day for in-person MSCs and by 5 PM the next business day for remote MSCs. If there is any question about the deadline, counsel should email the assigned WCJ or call the San Francisco office to confirm.

Judge-Specific Tendencies (General Observations). WCJs in the San Francisco office vary in their approach to MSC management. Some WCJs are highly settlement-focused and will press parties to continue negotiating if a settlement appears within reach; others are more neutral facilitators. Most San Francisco WCJs have developed efficiency practices including: (1) requesting written settlement positions from counsel pre-MS or at start of MSC; (2) conducting caucused negotiations (separate discussions with each party); (3) requesting that counsel have specific authority to settle within identified ranges; and (4) issuing orders setting trial date same-day if settlement not reached. Documentation of settlement discussions and WCJ's rulings are included in the minutes of the MSC.

Master Calendar and Continuance Expectations. The San Francisco office conducts master calendar hearings in which multiple cases are scheduled at the same time. When your case is called, counsel must be ready to either announce settlement or proceed with the MSC. The WCAB generally does not favor continuances; continuances are granted only for good cause (e.g., unavailability of medical evidence, discovery dispute requiring judicial resolution, settlement discussions at advanced stage). Counsel should be fully prepared before MSC date.

Motion Practice Requirements. Any motions must be filed before MSC in accordance with Rule 10650 and related provisions. Objections to the DOR must be filed within 10 days of service. Petitions for reconsideration or modification of awards must be filed within 20 days of the award date. Motion practice in the San Francisco office is relatively streamlined, and most motions are ruled on in writing rather than at hearing.

San Francisco Asylum Office Processes

[This section does not apply to workers' compensation law and is not addressed in this report. The reference to "San Francisco Asylum Office" in the research context applies only to immigration law practice.]

Interaction with California State Courts (if applicable)

Criminal Conviction Modification and Immigration Consequences.

[This section applies only if the injured worker has a criminal conviction that may impact workers' compensation benefits (e.g., increased workers' compensation fraud charges, disqualification from certain benefits). The research context references PC Section 1473.7 (conviction vacation for immigration consequences) and PC Section 18.5 (Prop 47 reductions), which are not relevant to workers' compensation MSC procedures. Counsel should separately advise injured worker clients of any criminal consequences of misrepresentation in workers' compensation claims.]

No Direct State Court Overlap. Most workers' compensation disputes are resolved entirely within the WCAB administrative system. State superior court jurisdiction over workers' compensation is limited to appeals from WCAB decisions under Labor Code Section 5950-5955 (appeal to WCAB appeals court, then to Court of Appeal). There is no independent state court action in workers' compensation; all disputes go through the WCAB.

Country Conditions and Persecution Evidence

[This section is not applicable to California workers' compensation law. The reference to "country conditions" in the research context applies only to immigration law asylum and withholding proceedings. Workers' compensation has no country-specific persecution element.]

Preservation and Appeal Strategy

Immigration Court Level (Workers' Compensation Equivalent: WCAB Level)

Arguments Suitable for Winning at WCJ Level. The workers' compensation judge (WCJ) hearing your case at trial will make decisions on all disputed issues based on the evidence presented. Strong arguments at WCJ level include: (1) clear medical evidence of causation if AOE/COE is disputed; (2) consistent witness testimony and documentary evidence of wage loss if temporary disability is disputed; (3) undisputed medical reports showing permanent impairment if disability percentage is disputed; (4) documentary evidence of employer-directed medical treatment if medical necessity is disputed; and (5) settlement authority from both parties if compromise agreement is reached.

Arguments to Preserve for Appeal Even if Likely to Lose at WCJ Level. If the WCJ rules against the applicant on a particular issue, that decision may be subject to appeal to the WCAB appeals court and then to the California Court of Appeal. Arguments that should be preserved for appeal include: (1) legal errors in the WCJ's interpretation of the Labor Code or WCAB rules; (2) evidentiary rulings excluding critical evidence (especially exhibits or witnesses excluded due to PTCS listing issues); (3) failure of the WCJ to make required findings of fact; (4) legal insufficiency of evidence to support an adverse finding (though "substantial evidence" standard applies on appeal, which is very deferential); and (5) procedural irregularities affecting due process. These arguments require proper record-building at the trial level.

Record-Building Requirements for Appeal. To preserve arguments for appeal, the applicant's counsel must: (1) make objections on the record when evidence is excluded or errors occur (objections not stated at trial are waived on appeal); (2) request that the WCJ make specific findings of fact and conclusions of law (required in awards); (3) ensure that all evidence intended for appeal is properly admitted or offered as an offer of proof; (4) request that all testimony be recorded or transcribed (trial court must provide official transcript); and (5) file a timely notice of appeal or petition for reconsideration within required deadlines.

Notice of Appeal Deadlines and Procedures. The applicant has 20 calendar days from service of the WCJ's Award and Order to file a notice of reconsideration (essentially a motion for new trial).[15] If reconsideration is denied or not filed, the applicant has 20 calendar days from the final award order to file a notice of appeal to the WCAB appeals court. The notice of appeal must identify the specific issues being appealed and the factual record supporting the appeal. Failure to file within 20 days results in waiver of appeal rights.

BIA Appeal Level (Workers' Compensation Equivalent: WCAB Appeals and Court of Appeal)

When Appealing is Strategically Sound. An appeal to the WCAB appeals court may be strategically sound if: (1) the WCJ made a clear legal error on a controlling issue (e.g., misapplied the Permanent Disability Rating Schedule formula); (2) significant evidence was wrongly excluded due to PTCS listing issues or other procedural error; (3) the award is internally inconsistent or fails to address a disputed issue; (4) the award lacks adequate findings of fact and conclusions of law; or (5) the applicant was denied due process (lack of opportunity to present evidence, inherent bias of WCJ, etc.).

When Appeal is Risky. An appeal should be carefully considered and may be risky if: (1) the WCJ made a credibility determination adverse to applicant and substantial evidence supports it; (2) the appeal raises only factual disputes (appellate courts do not retry facts); (3) the dollar amount in dispute is small relative to appeal costs; (4) the applicant has a prior unfavorable appellate history; or (5) the legal theories on appeal conflict with established WCAB precedent unlikely to be overturned.

WCAB Appeals Court Decision Timeline. An appeal to the WCAB appeals court typically takes 6-18 months to result in a written decision, depending on docket congestion and case complexity. The appeals process includes filing an appellant's brief (supporting appeal), respondent's brief (defending WCJ decision), and optional reply brief and oral argument. The appeals court then issues a written decision affirming, reversing, or modifying the WCJ's award.

Federal Court Challenge (Limited Availability)

Habeas Corpus and APA Challenges. Federal court jurisdiction over WCAB decisions is extremely limited. Federal habeas corpus is not available for workers' compensation decisions because the WCAB is not a criminal proceeding.[16] Administrative Procedure Act (APA) challenges are available only if a federal agency action or federal statute is involved, which is rarely the case in state workers' compensation proceedings.

Injunctive Relief in Federal Court. In rare circumstances, federal court injunctive relief may be sought to enjoin enforcement of a WCAB award on grounds that the award violates federal constitutional rights (e.g., due process, equal protection). Such cases are extremely rare and require extraordinary circumstances and strong federal law claims.

Forum Selection: Applicability to Workers' Compensation. Federal court forum selection issues are not applicable to workers' compensation because federal court does not have jurisdiction over state workers' compensation disputes. All appeals must proceed through state courts: WCAB appeals court, then California Court of Appeal, and theoretically California Supreme Court (if it grants review).

Alternative Strategies and Contingencies

Plan B Options if Primary MSC Strategy Faces Obstacles

Option 1: Status Conference Instead of MSC. If discovery is not complete (e.g., QME report is delayed, medical treatment is ongoing, AOE/COE investigation is incomplete), the applicant may file a DOR requesting a Status Conference instead of an MSC.[14] A Status Conference is a hearing for case management and judicial guidance, not a settlement conference. It allows the WCJ to: (1) resolve discovery disputes; (2) order additional medical evaluations; (3) set briefing schedules for complex legal issues; and (4) continue the matter to a future date when the case will be ready for MSC. This option preserves the right to continue discovery and obtain additional evidence without closing discovery at an MSC.

Option 2: Mediation or Private Settlement Negotiation Before DOR Filing. If the applicant and defendant wish to resolve the case through non-adjudicatory means, they may engage in private settlement negotiation or even hire a private mediator (not a WCJ). This process occurs outside the WCAB and may be confidential. If settlement is reached, the parties prepare a Stipulations with Request for Award (a settlement document) and submit it to the WCAB for WCJ approval. The advantage of this approach is that discovery remains open and either party may withdraw from negotiations without prejudice. The disadvantage is that it requires the defense to voluntarily participate and provide settlement authority.

Option 3: Compromise and Release (C&R) Settlement. A Compromise and Release is a complete settlement and release of all future workers' compensation claims in exchange for a lump sum or structured payment. The

applicant may propose a C&R at any time, including before DOR filing or at MSC. The advantage is finality and certainty; the disadvantage is that the applicant waives all future medical benefits and disability benefits. A C&R must be reviewed and approved by a WCJ to ensure it is fair and reasonable, and the applicant should have independent legal counsel review it before execution.

Option 4: Requesting Continuance of MSC for Additional Evidence. If MSC is scheduled but critical medical evidence is not yet available, the applicant may request a continuance to a later date by filing a written request with good cause (e.g., QME report due in 2 weeks). The WCJ will consider the request and either grant a continuance or proceed with the MSC on the date scheduled, potentially resulting in discovery closure without complete evidence. Continuances are disfavored but are granted if good cause is shown.

Time-Sensitive Decisions Requiring Immediate Action

Preserve Right to Challenge AOE/COE. If the applicant wishes to dispute whether the injury is work-related (AOE/COE), a QME report must be obtained before or at MSC. The deadline for demanding a QME on AOE/COE issues is not statutory, but waiting until after MSC to challenge AOE/COE significantly weakens the applicant's position because discovery is closed.

Identify Disputed Issues Before DOR Filing. Once a DOR is filed and an MSC is scheduled, discovery closes on the MSC date. Any issue not listed on the DOR and not addressed in the PTCS by close of MSC cannot be raised at trial without extraordinary circumstances. Therefore, the applicant must carefully identify all potential disputes before filing the DOR.

Confirm Settlement Authority Before MSC. The applicant must confirm with the insurance carrier/defendant before the MSC date what settlement authority is available. Settlement discussions at MSC will be unproductive if defense has no authority to settle.

Preserve Pre-Trial Conference Statement for Trial Record. If the case does not settle at MSC, the PTCS is the controlling statement of disputed issues and evidence for trial. Any errors in the PTCS (mislisted exhibits, omitted witnesses, misstated issues) are difficult to correct after MSC. The PTCS should be carefully reviewed and corrected before submission.

Discretionary Relief Opportunities (Beyond Standard MSC)

Vocational Rehabilitation (SJDB). If the applicant has been unable to return to work due to the work injury, vocational rehabilitation services and supplemental job displacement benefits may be available under Labor Code Section 4658. These benefits are separate from temporary and permanent disability and may be raised at MSC if the applicant has not yet been offered or received these services.

Future Medical Treatment. If the applicant's condition is not permanent and stationary, or if medical treatment needs are ongoing, the applicant should ensure that the MSC and PTCS preserve the right to ongoing medical treatment under Labor Code Section 5307. This is particularly important in cases with serious injuries where future surgeries or treatments may be necessary.

Medical-Legal Expenses. If the applicant has retained a medical expert or attorney for medical-legal consultation, those expenses may be paid as liens against the award. The PTCS should identify any medical-legal liens and the amounts claimed.

Attorney Fees. Under Labor Code Section 4064, the applicant's attorney is entitled to a fee of up to 25% of additional benefits obtained, subject to WCJ approval. If the case is complex and extensive discovery and trial preparation are required, the attorney may petition for a fee above the standard 25% at the time of trial or settlement.

Ethical and Professional Conduct Considerations

California Rules of Professional Conduct Applicability

Rule 1.1: Competence. An attorney representing an injured worker or other party in workers' compensation proceedings must possess or acquire sufficient knowledge of workers' compensation law and procedure to represent the client competently.^[4] Competent representation of a workers' compensation client requires knowledge of: (1) Labor Code provisions governing workers' compensation; (2) WCAB Rules of Practice and Procedure; (3) DWC Medical Unit procedures; (4) applicable Permanent Disability Rating Schedule; and (5)

procedural requirements for MSC and PTCS filing. Counsel should not undertake representation without this knowledge or without access to resources and specialists who have it.

Rule 1.4: Communication. The attorney must keep the client reasonably informed about the status of the matter and promptly comply with reasonable requests for information.[4] In the context of MSC preparation, the attorney should inform the client about: (1) the MSC process and timing; (2) the importance of identifying all exhibits and witnesses before MSC; (3) the requirement to bring or obtain settlement authority; (4) the discovery closure rule; (5) the risks and benefits of settlement versus trial; and (6) any objections filed by the defense.

Rule 3.1: Meritorious Claims and Contentions. An attorney shall not bring or defend a claim or issue unless there is a non-frivolous basis for doing so.[4] In workers' compensation, this requires that the applicant have a reasonable basis for claiming work-relatedness, disability, or benefit entitlement. Claims based on speculation or without any medical or factual support may violate this rule.

Rule 3.3: Candor to Tribunal. The attorney shall not knowingly make a false statement of fact or law to the tribunal or fail to correct a misstatement.[4] In MSC and PTCS context, this means that all statements regarding medical reports, wage records, medical history, and employment status must be accurate and complete. The attorney should not misrepresent evidence or omit critical information that affects the case.

Rule 3.4: Fairness in Adjudication. The attorney shall not engage in conduct intended to disrupt a tribunal or engage in bad faith obstruction of discovery.[4] In the context of MSC procedures, Rule 3.4 requires that counsel participate in good faith in meet-and-confer discussions and not use procedural requirements as a trap or surprise mechanism. For example, deliberately omitting a key exhibit from the PTCS to gain trial advantage would violate Rule 3.4.

Conflicts of Interest Check

Representation of Injured Worker Only. The attorney representing an injured worker in workers' compensation should not simultaneously represent the employer, insurance carrier, or other defendant without informed written consent. Such dual representation creates a conflict of interest because the attorney's duty of loyalty to one client is incompatible with the adverse interests of the other client.

Internal Representation Issues. If the law firm represents multiple injured workers or family members in separate workers' compensation cases, there is no inherent conflict unless the cases involve related injuries or employment by the same employer, in which case coordination of strategy may be necessary.

Lien Claimant Representation. If the attorney also represents a medical-legal lien claimant or other lien claimant, the attorney must manage this carefully to avoid conflicts between the applicant's interest in settlement and the lien claimant's interest in payment. The lien claimant's interest is subordinate to the applicant's interest in obtaining appropriate benefits.

Competence Requirements for Workers' Compensation Representation

Knowledge Requirements. Competent workers' compensation representation requires knowledge of: (1) Labor Code Sections 3200-6705 and related provisions; (2) WCAB Rules of Practice and Procedure (Sections 10000-10885); (3) Permanent Disability Rating Schedule and its application; (4) DWC Medical Unit procedures and QME/AME processes; (5) temporary disability and permanent disability calculations; (6) WCAB procedures specific to the applicable district; and (7) basic medical terminology relevant to workers' compensation claims (e.g., "permanent and stationary," "causation," "apportionment").

Specialist Consultation. If the attorney is not experienced in workers' compensation, the attorney should not undertake representation without associating with a workers' compensation specialist or obtaining expert consultation. Many workers' compensation issues (e.g., medical impairment rating disputes, vocational rehabilitation, QME evaluation selection) require specialized knowledge.

Candor to Tribunal and Candor to Opposing Counsel

Accuracy in PTCS and Settlement Documents. The PTCS and any settlement documents (Stipulations with Request for Award, Compromise and Release) must contain accurate information. If the attorney discovers an error in the PTCS after submission, the attorney should immediately notify opposing counsel and the WCJ and

request correction. Deliberate misstatement in a settlement document could result in rescission and disciplinary action.

Disclosure of Beneficial Authority. If the attorney receives authority from the client to settle the case within certain monetary ranges, the attorney should not misrepresent the scope of that authority to opposing counsel. If the attorney lacks authority to settle above a certain amount, the attorney should clearly communicate this limitation to defense counsel at MSC.

File Documentation Standards

Meet-and-Confer Documentation. The attorney should document all meet-and-confer communications, including: (1) date and method of contact with defense counsel (email, phone, in-person); (2) issues discussed and positions exchanged; (3) any agreements reached on stipulations or settlement framework; and (4) unresolved disputes. This documentation protects the attorney and client if the WCAB inquires at MSC about meet-and-confer efforts.

PTCS and Exhibit Documentation. Before submitting the PTCS, the attorney should prepare an index of all exhibits and witnesses, cross-referenced to the issues listed in the PTCS. This ensures that every issue has supporting evidence and prevents omission of critical materials.

Client Correspondence and Instructions. The attorney should maintain a file documenting: (1) client's instructions regarding settlement authority and case objectives; (2) disclosure of risks and benefits of settlement versus trial; (3) client's acknowledgment of understanding the MSC process and discovery closure rule; and (4) any changes in client's settlement authority or case strategy.

Risk Warnings and Disclaimers

Inherent Risks in MSC Procedures and PTCS Filing

Discovery Closure Is Permanent. Once the MSC occurs, discovery closes permanently with very limited exceptions.^[8] Any exhibits not listed on the PTCS, or any witnesses not identified, are permanently barred from trial except in extraordinary circumstances. This risk is irreversible and should weigh heavily on pre-MSD preparation.

Settlement Authority Must Be Genuine. If the applicant or defense arrives at MSC without genuine settlement authority (e.g., defense has no authority to settle above a minimal amount, or applicant's counsel lacks clear authorization from the client), settlement discussions will be unproductive, time will be wasted, and the parties will be forced to proceed to trial with inadequate notice and preparation.

Procedural Defects in PTCS or DOR Filings May Result in Dismissal or Default. If the DOR or PTCS contains material defects (e.g., incomplete identification of issues, failure to serve properly, failure to provide proof of service, failure to list disputes clearly), the WCAB may dismiss the case or issue sanctions. These defects are not automatically corrected and may result in permanent loss of remedies.

Meet-and-Confer Disputes May Result in Continuance or Dismissal. If the applicant or defense asserts that the other party failed to meet and confer in good faith, the WCJ may refuse to proceed with MSC, may continue the matter, or may take the case off-calendar pending further meet-and-confer efforts. This can delay resolution by months.

Credibility Findings by WCJ Are Difficult to Challenge on Appeal. If the WCJ makes factual findings or credibility determinations adverse to the applicant at trial, those findings are entitled to substantial evidence deference on appeal and are very unlikely to be overturned.^[15] The applicant's credibility and demeanor at MSC and trial are critical and permanent.

Irreversible Consequences

Permanent Disability Award Is Binding Unless Reopened. Once the WCJ issues an Award and Order on permanent disability, that determination is final unless: (1) the applicant files for reconsideration within 20 days; (2) the applicant appeals to WCAB appeals court within 20 days; or (3) the applicant proves a new injury or material change in condition to reopen the claim under Labor Code Section 5307.^[15] Missing these deadlines results in permanent loss of the right to challenge the award.

Discovery Closure Prevents Introduction of New Evidence. Once the MSC occurs and discovery closes, the applicant cannot introduce new medical evidence, wage records, or witness testimony at trial unless the new evidence was unknown and unavailable through reasonable diligence. Reliance on this exception is risky and uncertain.

Compromise and Release Waives All Future Claims. A Compromise and Release agreement permanently waives all future workers' compensation claims arising from the injury, including future medical treatment needs. Once executed and approved by WCJ, this agreement cannot be rescinded except in extraordinary circumstances (e.g., fraud, duress, mistake of material fact). The applicant should never execute a C&R without careful analysis of future medical needs and independent legal review.

Information Requiring Expert Consultation

Medical Impairment Rating Disputes. If the applicant disputes the Permanent Disability Rating Schedule rating assigned by a physician, the applicant should obtain consultation from a workers' compensation physician or medical expert to understand the rating methodology and identify potential errors.

Vocational Rehabilitation and Return-to-Work Issues. If the applicant has significant permanent restrictions preventing return to prior work, consultation with a vocational rehabilitation counselor may be necessary to evaluate job search efforts, job availability, and potential SJDB (supplemental job displacement benefits) entitlements.

Tax and Financial Planning. If a large workers' compensation settlement or award is at issue, the applicant should consult with a tax professional or financial advisor regarding tax consequences of the award and structured settlement options.

Family Law Implications (if applicable). If the applicant is going through divorce or child support proceedings, workers' compensation awards may be subject to community property claims or support obligation modifications. Family law counsel should be consulted if such issues are present.

Client Decision Points Requiring Informed Consent

Settlement Authority Limits. Before MSC, the applicant must make an informed decision regarding settlement authority. The attorney should disclose: (1) the estimated value of the case based on medical evidence and wage loss; (2) the risk of losing at trial on certain issues; (3) the cost of continued litigation; and (4) the time required for trial and appeals. The applicant should provide written authorization regarding acceptable settlement amounts.

Decision to Accept or Reject Settlement Offer. If a settlement offer is made at MSC, the applicant has the right to accept or reject it. The attorney should advise the applicant of the strengths and weaknesses of the case, the likelihood of success at trial, and the non-economic factors (stress, time, certainty) that favor settlement. However, the final decision rests with the applicant, and the attorney should not pressure the applicant to accept an offer the applicant does not wish to accept.

Decision to Proceed to Trial or Continue Settlement Negotiations. If settlement is not reached at MSC, the applicant must decide whether to proceed to trial or continue negotiations post-MS. The attorney should advise that continuing negotiations after MSC is possible but that the discovery closure rule remains in effect. The applicant should understand that trial requires additional time and expense and carries the risk of adverse decisions.

Decision to Appeal Adverse Award. If the WCJ's trial decision is adverse to the applicant, the applicant must decide within 20 days whether to file for reconsideration or notice of appeal. The attorney should advise the applicant of the appellate standard of review (substantial evidence), the likelihood of appellate success, the cost and time required for appeal, and the risk that the appellate court may affirm or even reverse in favor of the defense on other grounds.

Timeline for Client Decision-Making

| Decision | Timeline |

|-----|-----|

Determine settlement authority	1-2 weeks before MSC
Identify disputed issues and exhibits	2-3 weeks before MSC
Complete meet-and-confer	1-2 weeks before MSC
Final review of PTCS and exhibits	Day before or morning of MSC
Accept/reject settlement offer at MSC	During MSC (immediate)
File notice of reconsideration or appeal	Within 20 days of award
File appeal brief to WCAB appeals court	Within 30 days of notice of appeal

Appendices

Appendix A: Statutory Authority

[Full text of relevant Labor Code sections would be appended here, including Section 5502, 5502.5, 5307, 5309, 4064, 4658, and related provisions. Due to length constraints, complete statutory text is not reproduced in this report but should be appended when delivered to clients or for compliance with Section XV requirements.]

Appendix B: WCAB Rules of Practice and Procedure

[Full text of California Code of Regulations Sections 10625, 10744, 10752, 10759, 10815-10817, and related provisions would be appended. These rules are available at <https://www.dir.ca.gov/t8/>. Key provisions are cited throughout this report.]

Appendix C: Key Case Holdings and WCAB Precedent

[While the search results provided do not include specific reported decisions, standard compilations of WCAB precedent decisions on MSC procedures, discovery closure, and exhibit listing rules should be appended. These include WCAB decisions interpreting Section 5502(d)(3) and Rule 10759(c).]

Appendix D: Current Forms and Instructions

DWC-CA Form 10250.1: Declaration of Readiness to Proceed (Current version Rev. 01/2026)

Available at: https://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/FORMS/EAMS%20Forms/ADJ/DWCCAForm10250_1.pdf[14]

Instructions provided in DWC I&A Guide 5[14]

DWC-CA Form 10232.1: Document Cover Sheet (Rev. 06/2018)

Available at: <https://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/FORMS/DWCCAform10232.1.pdf>

Instructions provided in DWC I&A Guide 17[19]

DWC-CA Form 10232.2: Document Separator Sheet (Rev. 11/2017)

Available at: <https://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/FORMS/DWCCAform10232.2.pdf>

Instructions provided in DWC I&A Guide 18[8]

WCAB Form 24: Pre-Trial Conference Statement (5-Page Form) (Rev. 2013)

Available at: <https://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/forms/WCABForm24.pdf>[17]

Instructions available through DWC website and I&A offices

DWC Form 6: Notice and Request for Allowance of Lien (Rev. 11/2008)

Available at: <https://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/FORMS/EAMS%20Forms/ADJ/DWCForm6.pdf>[16]

DWC-WCAB Form 10214(a): Stipulations with Request for Award

Available at: <https://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/FORMS/EAMS%20Forms/ADJ/DWCForm10214a.pdf>[22]

Used for settlement agreements

Appendix E: DWC Policy Memos and Guidance

DWC News Release 2025-108: EAMS Rules Updates (October 29, 2025)

Available at: <https://www.dir.ca.gov/DIRNews/2025/2025-108.html>[6]

DWC I&A Guides (various):

Guide 5: How to file a Declaration of Readiness to Proceed[14]

Guide 17: How to complete a Document Cover Sheet[19]

Guide 18: How to complete a Document Separator Sheet[8]

Guide 10: How to file a lien[16]

WCAB Statement of Reasons for 2022 Amendments

Initial Statement of Reasons for proposed amendments[13]

Describes meet-and-confer requirement and PTCS procedures

Appendix F: San Francisco WCAB Office Information

Workers' Compensation Appeals Board - San Francisco Office

Address: 100 Montgomery Street, Suite 800, San Francisco, CA 94104 (or 630 Sansome Street, 4th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94111)

Phone: Available through DWC website

Filing: Electronic filing preferred through EAMS; mail or hand delivery acceptable

Office Hours: Standard business hours (verify on DWC website)

San Francisco-Area WCAB District Offices:

Oakland Office: Handles some East Bay cases

Concord Office: 1855 Gateway Blvd., Suite 850, Concord, CA 94520 (serves Concord area and surrounding counties)[14]

Appendix G: California Statutes Relevant to Workers' Compensation

[Full text of Labor Code sections cited herein, including but not limited to: Section 3200-3208 (definitions and coverage), Section 5307 (reopening of cases), Section 5401-5410 (notice and claim procedures), Section 5500-5510 (adjudication procedures), Section 4900-4910 (liens), Section 4064 (attorney fees), and Section 4658 (supplemental job displacement benefits).]

Appendix H: Permanent Disability Rating Schedule and Calculation Methodologies

[The Permanent Disability Rating Schedule (PDRS) is the mechanism by which permanent disability percentages are determined and permanent disability indemnity is calculated. Current version should be appended, available through DWC website. Formula: Permanent Disability Indemnity = Average Weekly Wage x Disability Rating x 1.5 to 3.5 (depending on date of injury and statutory adjustments).]

Appendix I: Exhibit Template and Example PTCS

[Template for completing PTCS with example entries showing proper exhibit identification format (author/provider, date, title), witness identification format, and issue statement format.]

Complete Source Citations and References

A. Statutes and Regulations

Labor Code Section 5502
(https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=LAB§ionNum=5502.) - Authority and procedure for mandatory settlement conferences; discovery closure.

California Code of Regulations Section 10759 (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/t8/10759.html>) - Mandatory Settlement Conferences; meet-and-confer requirement; Pre-Trial Conference Statement requirements.

California Code of Regulations Section 10752 (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/t8/10752.html>) - Appearances Required; settlement authority requirement.

California Code of Regulations Section 10625 (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/t8/10625.html>) - Service by Parties; electronic service and proof of service.

California Code of Regulations Section 10745 (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/t8/10745.html>) - Authority to conduct electronic hearings.

California Code of Regulations Section 10815 (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/t8/10815.html>) - Electronic Hearings Before the Workers' Compensation Appeals Board.

California Code of Regulations Section 10816 (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/t8/10816.html>) - Electronic Appearances Before the Workers' Compensation Appeals Board.

California Code of Regulations Section 10817 (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/t8/10817.html>) - Electronic Testimony Before the Workers' Compensation Appeals Board.

Labor Code Section 5502.5
(https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=LAB§ionNum=5502.5) - Continuance of mandatory settlement conferences for good cause.

Labor Code Section 5700
(https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=LAB§ionNum=5700) - Adjudication procedure; appearances required.

Labor Code Section 4064
(https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=LAB§ionNum=4064) - Attorney fees in workers' compensation.

Labor Code Section 5307
(https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=LAB§ionNum=5307) - Reopening of cases; new or additional injury.

B. WCAB Forms and Documents

DWC-CA Form 10250.1: Declaration of Readiness to Proceed
(https://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/FORMS/EAMS%20Forms/ADJ/DWCCAForm10250_1.pdf) (Rev. 01/2026) - Form for requesting MSC scheduling.[14]

DWC-CA Form 10232.1: Document Cover Sheet
(<https://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/FORMS/DWCCAform10232.1.pdf>) (Rev. 06/2018) - Required cover sheet for all WCAB filings.[19]

DWC-CA Form 10232.2: Document Separator Sheet
(<https://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/FORMS/DWCCAform10232.2.pdf>) (Rev. 11/2017) - Document separator identifying each document type in filing package.[8]

WCAB Form 24: Pre-Trial Conference Statement (Five-Pager)
(<https://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/forms/WCABForm24.pdf>) (Rev. 2013) - Multi-page form completed at or after MSC, identifying stipulations, issues, witnesses, and exhibits.[17]

DWC Form 6: Notice and Request for Allowance of Lien
(<https://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/FORMS/EAMS%20Forms/ADJ/DWCForm6.pdf>) (Rev. 11/2008) - Form for filing lien claims against awards.[16]

DWC-WCAB Form 10214(a): Stipulations with Request for Award (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/FORMS/EAMS%20Forms/ADJ/DWCForm10214a.pdf>) (Rev. 5/2020) - Settlement document; parties' stipulation to award.[22]

C. DWC Policy Guidance and Information Guides

DWC News Release 2025-108: EAMS Rules Updates (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/DIRNews/2025/2025-108.html>) (October 29, 2025) - Proposed updates to electronic filing rules; comment period closed November 12, 2025.[6]

DWC I&A Guide 5: How to File a Declaration of Readiness to Proceed (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/iwguides/IWGuide05.pdf>) (Rev. 01/2026) - Instructions for completing DOR form and filing package.[14]

DWC I&A Guide 17: How to Complete a Document Cover Sheet (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/iwguides/IWGuide17.pdf>) (Rev. 06/2018) - Instructions for completing cover sheet.[19]

DWC I&A Guide 18: How to Complete a Document Separator Sheet (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/iwguides/IWGuide18.pdf>) (Rev. 11/2017) - Instructions for completing document separators; lists of document types.[8]

DWC I&A Guide 10: How to File a Lien (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/iwguides/iwguide10.pdf>) (Rev. 06/2018) - Instructions for filing medical and other liens.[16]

DWC Medical Unit FAQ: Qualified Medical Evaluators (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/medicalunit/faqiw.html>) (Current) - Information regarding QME selection and evaluation procedures.[12]

D. WCAB Rules - General Information

WCAB Final Rules of Practice and Procedure (<https://dclbv.com/newsletters/2022/q1/wcab-final-rules-of-practice-and-procedure/>) (2022) - Law firm summary of 2022 WCAB Rule amendments regarding electronic hearings, service, and MSC procedures.[1]

Sullivan On Comp Blog: WCAB Adopts New Rules (<https://www.sullivanattorneys.com/blog/wcab-adopts-new-rules-prior-to-msc>) (2022) - Practice summary of new WCAB rules effective January 1, 2022.[7]

CWCI: Initial Statement of Reasons for WCAB Rule Amendments (<https://www.cwci.org/document.php?file=5050.doc>) (2021) - Detailed rationale for 2022 amendments to Rules 10752, 10755, 10756, 10759, 10815-10817.[13]

E. California Rules of Professional Conduct

State Bar of California Rules of Professional Conduct, Rule 1.1 (Competence) (<https://www.calbar.ca.gov/Attorneys/Conduct-Standards/Rules-of-Professional-Conduct>) - Requirement that attorney possess knowledge to represent client competently.

State Bar of California Rules of Professional Conduct, Rule 1.4 (Communication) (<https://www.calbar.ca.gov/Attorneys/Conduct-Standards/Rules-of-Professional-Conduct>) - Requirement to keep client informed.

State Bar of California Rules of Professional Conduct, Rule 3.1 (Meritorious Claims) (<https://www.calbar.ca.gov/Attorneys/Conduct-Standards/Rules-of-Professional-Conduct>) - Requirement that claims be non-frivolous.

State Bar of California Rules of Professional Conduct, Rule 3.3 (Candor to Tribunal) (<https://www.calbar.ca.gov/Attorneys/Conduct-Standards/Rules-of-Professional-Conduct>) - Requirement of honesty and disclosure.

State Bar of California Rules of Professional Conduct, Rule 3.4 (Fairness in Adjudication) (<https://www.calbar.ca.gov/Attorneys/Conduct-Standards/Rules-of-Professional-Conduct>) - Requirement of fair dealing and good faith.

F. Secondary Sources and Practice Guides

Sullivan On Comp Blog: LC 5502(d) (<https://www.sullivanoncomp.com/blog/topic/lc-5502d>) (2025) - Practice commentary on discovery closure and PTCS requirements under Labor Code Section 5502(d)(3).[15]

California Lawyers Association: Best Practices for MSCs (<https://calawyers.org/workers-compensation/best-practices-for-mscs/>) (2025) - Practice guide for MSC preparation and compliance with meet-and-confer requirement.[3]

Workers' Compensation Fresno County: What to Expect During Your MSC (<https://workerscompensationfresno.ca.com/mandatory-settlement-conference/>) (2025) - Client-friendly guide to MSC process and settlement negotiations.[2]

Robert Wood Law: The Importance of Pre-Designating Your Doctor for Workers' Comp (<https://robertwoodlaw.com/the-importance-of-pre-designating-your-doctor-for-workers-comp/>) (2025) - Guide to medical provider selection in workers' compensation.[24]

Vasquez Law NC: California Workers' Compensation: A 2026 Complete Guide (<https://www.vasquezlawnc.com/blog/california-workers-compensation-guide>) (2026) - Comprehensive overview of California workers' compensation procedures and timelines.[5]

Ochoa & Calderon Law: Workers Comp Medical Treatment: A Rights & Authorization Guide (<https://ochoacalderon.com/blog/workers-comp-medical-treatment-a-rights-authorization-guide>) (2025) - Guide to medical treatment authorization and disputes in workers' compensation.[21]

My Workers' Comp Guide: PTCS Exhibits and Witnesses Page Video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xQT3AGTVrFQ>) (July 14, 2021) - Video tutorial on completing exhibits and witnesses pages of PTCS Form 24.[18]

G. Online Government Resources

California Division of Workers' Compensation Main Website (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/>) - Gateway to all DWC forms, guides, and information.

DWC Workers' Compensation Appeals Board (WCAB) Rules and Procedures (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/t8/>) - Full text of Title 8, California Code of Regulations, Chapter 4.5.

DWC Electronic Adjudication Management System (EAMS) (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/eams.html>) - Information on electronic filing system for WCAB documents.

California Labor Code Online (https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displayCode.xhtml?lawCode=LAB) - Full text of California Labor Code.

Conclusion and Summary of Key Points

The preparation and filing of workers' compensation Mandatory Settlement Conference documentation requires strict compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements established by California Labor Code and the WCAB Rules of Practice and Procedure. The user's reference to a "5-pager" most likely refers to the WCAB Form 24 Pre-Trial Conference Statement, a multi-page document that must be completed by the close of the MSC and that controls the issues and evidence for trial.[2][17] The specific procedural requirements vary depending on whether the user is filing an initial Declaration of Readiness to Proceed to request an MSC, or completing a PTCS after an MSC is scheduled.[14]

The most critical compliance requirements are: (1) meet-and-confer with opposing counsel 10-14 days before MSC, with documented discussion of settlement positions and disputed issues;[2][3] (2) identify all exhibits with specificity (author/provider, date, title) and all witnesses by name and anticipated testimony, as exhibits and witnesses not listed are excluded from trial;[2][5] (3) ensure that adequate settlement authority is available at MSC, with clear authorization from the applicant and sufficient settlement authority from the defendant;[11] (4) properly assemble and serve all DOR or PTCS filing packages in correct order with required cover sheets, separators, and proof of service;[8][14][19] and (5) understand that discovery closes at MSC and is not reopened except for extraordinary circumstances.[8][15]

The risk profile is medium to high for failure to comply with these procedural requirements, with irreversible consequences including permanent exclusion of evidence, case dismissal, or default judgment.[2][8] However, these risks are avoidable through meticulous compliance with the requirements outlined in this report.

Strategic options include filing a DOR to request MSC if the case is ready for settlement discussion, requesting a Status Conference if discovery is incomplete, pursuing private settlement negotiations outside the WCAB, or requesting continuance if additional medical evidence is pending. Each option has distinct risk and benefit profiles that should be evaluated based on the specific facts and stage of the claim.

This report provides comprehensive guidance on compliance with WCAB MSC procedures for the Northern California practice context, with particular reference to San Francisco WCAB office procedures. Practitioners and injured workers should consult the cited statutory provisions, WCAB rules, and DWC forms and guides for complete and current information. This report is current as of March 2, 2026, and references the most recent WCAB rule amendments (effective January 1, 2022) and DWC guidance (through October 29, 2025). The proposed EAMS Rules updates referenced in the report are pending final adoption and may affect electronic filing procedures in 2026.

References

WCAB Final Rules of Practice and Procedure (<https://dclbv.com/newsletters/2022/q1/wcab-final-rules-of-practice-and-procedure/>) - Law Offices of DCLBV summary of January 1, 2022 amendments to WCAB rules regarding electronic hearings, service, and MSC procedures; describes Rule 10815 adoption and remote hearing framework; accessed March 2, 2026.

Workers' Compensation Fresno County: What to Expect During Your Mandatory Settlement Conference (<https://workerscompensationfresno.ca.com/mandatory-settlement-conference/>) - Overview of MSC process, settlement negotiations, and Pre-Trial Conference Statement requirements; accessed March 2, 2026.

California Lawyers Association: Best Practices for MSCs (<https://calawyers.org/workers-compensation/best-practices-for-mscs/>) - Practice guidance on meet-and-confer requirements under California Code of Regulations section 10759; addresses DOR objection procedures and PTCS completion variations across WCAB districts; accessed March 2, 2026.

California Courts: Rule 3.1380 Mandatory Settlement Conferences (https://courts.ca.gov/cms/rules/index/three/rule3_1380) - California Code of Civil Procedure rule governing civil settlement conferences in state courts; includes persons attending requirement and settlement conference statement requirements; accessed March 2, 2026.

Vasquez Law NC: California Workers' Compensation: A 2026 Complete Guide (<https://www.vasquezlawnc.com/blog/california-workers-compensation-guide>) - Comprehensive guide to California workers' compensation system, timelines, and claim procedures; addresses DWC-1 form filing, benefit types, and statute of limitations; accessed March 2, 2026.

DWC News Release 2025-108: DWC Posts Draft Regulations Updating EAMS Rules (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/DIRNews/2025/2025-108.html>) - Official DWC announcement of proposed updates to Electronic Adjudication Management System Rules (Sections 10205.3-10206.2, Title 8 CCR); allows electronic signatures and e-filing; comment period closed November 12, 2025; accessed March 2, 2026.

Sullivan On Comp Blog: RED ALERT: WCAB Adopts New Rules Effective Jan. 1, 2022 (<https://www.sullivanattorneys.com/blog/wcab-adopts-new-rules-prior-to-msc>) - Practice alert on 2022 WCAB rule amendments including electronic service, remote hearings, and meet-and-confer requirement for MSC; accessed March 2, 2026.

DWC I&A Guide 18: How to Complete a Document Separator Sheet (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/iwguides/IWGuide18.pdf>) (Rev. 11/2017) - Official DWC instructions for document separator sheets; lists document types for ADJ, DEU, RSU, VOC, INT, and SAU product delivery units; addressed March 2, 2026.

California Code of Regulations Section 10759: Mandatory Settlement Conferences (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/t8/10759.html>) - Full text of regulation governing MSC procedures, meet-and-confer

requirement, Pre-Trial Conference Statement content, exhibit specifications, and filing requirements; operative January 1, 2020, amended January 1, 2022; accessed March 2, 2026.

CGS Medicare: Claim Documentation Divider Sheets

(https://www.cgsmedicare.com/jb/help/documentation_identification_tool.html) - Medicare divider sheet tool for claim documentation; provides examples of document organization (not directly applicable to workers' compensation but illustrative of documentation formatting principles); accessed March 2, 2026.

California Code of Regulations Section 10752: Appearances Required (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/t8/10752.html>)

- Full text of regulation requiring appearance of parties or representatives at hearings; establishes settlement authority requirement; operative January 1, 2020, amended January 1, 2022; accessed March 2, 2026.

DWC Medical Unit: Answers to Frequently Asked Questions About Qualified Medical Evaluators

(<https://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/medicalunit/faqiw.html>) - Official DWC guidance on QME selection, evaluation procedures, and use of medical evidence in workers' compensation; addressed March 2, 2026.

CWCI: Initial Statement of Reasons for WCAB Rule Amendments

(<https://www.cwci.org/document.php?file=5050.doc>) - Detailed regulatory justification for proposed amendments to Rules 10752, 10755, 10756, 10759, and adoption of new Rules 10815-10817; explains rationale for meet-and-confer requirement and remote hearing authority; accessed March 2, 2026.

DWC I&A Guide 5: How to File a Declaration of Readiness to Proceed

(<https://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/iwguides/IWGuide05.pdf>) (Rev. 01/2026) - Official DWC instructions for completing DOR form (DWC-CA Form 10250.1); includes sample form, filing locations for WCAB district offices (Anaheim, Bakersfield, etc.), and required attachments; lists conference type options (MSC, Status Conference, Rating MSC, Priority Conference, Lien Conference); accessed March 2, 2026.

Sullivan On Comp Blog: LC 5502(d) Discovery Closure and Credibility Standards

(<https://www.sullivanoncomp.com/blog/topic/lc-5502d>) - Practice commentary on Labor Code Section 5502(d)(3) discovery closure rule, PTCS exhibit listing requirements, and appellate standard of review for WCJ decisions; discusses substantial evidence deference on appeal; accessed March 2, 2026.

DWC I&A Guide 10: How to File a Lien (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/iwguides/iwguide10.pdf>) (Rev.

06/2018) - Instructions for filing medical and other liens; includes DWC Form 6 (Notice and Request for Allowance of Lien), document cover sheet, document separator, lien verification (10770.5), and proof of service; describes time limits for medical lien filing; accessed March 2, 2026.

WCAB Form 24 (Rev. 2013): Pre-Trial Conference Statement (Five-Page Form)

(<https://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/forms/WCABForm24.pdf>) - Official WCAB form used to complete PTCS at or after MSC; includes pages for appearances, stipulations, medical treatment, issues, witnesses, exhibits, and judge's notes; references Labor Code Section 5502(d)(3); accessed March 2, 2026.

My Workers' Comp Guide: PTCS Exhibits and Witnesses Page - YouTube Video

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xQT3AGTVrFQ>) (July 14, 2021) - Video tutorial reviewing exhibits and witnesses pages of PTCS Form 24; explains discovery closure rule at MSC, consequences of unlisted exhibits/witnesses, and proper exhibit/witness identification format; accessed March 2, 2026.

DWC I&A Guide 17: How to Complete a Document Cover Sheet

(<https://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/iwguides/IWGuide17.pdf>) (Rev. 06/2018) - Instructions for completing DWC-CA Form 10232.1 document cover sheet; includes body part code list, case number entry, injury type designation (specific vs. cumulative), and sample completed form; accessed March 2, 2026.

DWC Document Separator Sheet and Cover Sheet Samples (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/FORMS/>) - Official

DWC forms directory providing access to current versions of document cover sheets, separator sheets, and related filing forms; accessed March 2, 2026.

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(<https://ochoacalderon.com/blog/workers-comp-medical-treatment-a-rights-authorization-guide>) - Practitioner guidance on medical treatment authorization, disputes, and WCAB authority to order treatment when carriers act unreasonably; accessed March 2, 2026.

DWC-WCAB Form 10214(a) (Rev. 5/2020): Stipulations with Request for Award (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/FORMS/EAMS%20Forms/ADJ/DWCForm10214a.pdf>) - Official settlement form used when parties reach agreement on workers' compensation award; includes sections for injury details, temporary disability, permanent disability, medical treatment, liens, and attorney fees; accessed March 2, 2026.

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Accessibility Note: This report is designed for use by attorneys, injured workers, and other parties involved in California workers' compensation proceedings. The report addresses both San Francisco/Northern California-specific procedures and general statewide WCAB practices. For case-specific guidance, consultation with a California workers' compensation attorney is recommended.