

# LIFE OF A CLAIM

*The step-by-step guide to resolving your workers' compensation dispute*

## Step 1: Question/Dispute

If an injured employee has a question or dispute regarding their workers' compensation claim, they are referred to the Office of Injured Employee Counsel (OIEC).

## Step 2: Contacting OIEC

The injured employee's first contact with OIEC will be with a Customer Support Specialist, who will help answer any questions and educate the injured employee about their rights and responsibilities. They can also make referrals and conduct informal dispute resolution.



## Step 4: Benefit Review Conference (BRC)

The Ombudsman may request a Benefit Review Conference (BRC) for the injured employee. Before a BRC, the Ombudsman assists the injured employee by working closely with them to ensure they have all the necessary documents and information relevant to the dispute. The Ombudsman can present the injured employee's position and participate in the informal mediation.



## Step 3: Connecting with an Ombudsman

If the dispute is not resolved during informal dispute resolution, the injured employee will be referred to an OIEC Ombudsman, who is a licensed adjuster and an expert in workers' compensation.

## Step 5: Contested Case Hearing (CCH)

If a dispute remains unresolved, a Contested Case Hearing (CCH) may be held. The assigned OIEC Ombudsman helps the injured employee by preparing their case and assisting them during the hearing. An Administrative Law Judge issues a written decision within ten days of the hearing.

## Step 6: Appeals Panel

Either side can file a written appeal of the official decision from the Contested Case Hearing (CCH). An OIEC Ombudsman can help the injured employee file or respond to an appeal by requesting a review by the Appeals Panel. This is the last step in the dispute resolution process that OIEC participates in assisting injured employees.



## Step 7: Judicial Review

Judicial Review is the final step in the dispute resolution process. OIEC cannot help at this level because it is statutorily barred from Judicial Review. The court's decision takes into account the appeals panel's decision on each disputed issue. The Judicial Review decision is considered final pending an appeal.



**For more information, please contact the Office of Injured Employee Counsel**

**(866) 393-6432 | [oiec.texas.gov](http://oiec.texas.gov) | @OIEC**