

Why break out workers' comp from other lines of insurance

Many Midwestern employers go from one policy period to the next unaware of the value a monoline workers' compensation carrier could bring them.

That value is the reason for breaking out work comp from other lines of insurance. It applies to employers of all levels of risk. Agents would serve employers well by helping them understand it. When talking with a client, here are some key points.

Business strategy

This coverage affects your employees and should be part of your human resource strategy. Businesses stay competitive by managing their workers' compensation costs and worker productivity.

There's more to purchasing workers' compensation than just meeting the state's insurance requirement to run a business. Competitive employers generally consider a productive, effective workforce to be a key asset, but mismanaged workers' compensation can threaten a productive work environment both short and long term.

A good program can make a big difference in giving a business a competitive edge.

Workers' compensation can be complex

To manage it well requires a specialized insurer who keeps the big picture in mind.

Workers' compensation systems differ in each state, and they change. Work comp is highly regulated for employers and insurers. The rules on medical and indemnity benefits for injured employees are mandated by law, and they're complex. Special legal systems handle unresolved issues. A specialist knows how to get every claim off to the best start

so it has the fastest, best overall resolution, including avoiding unnecessary, costly disputes.

The employer and agent should be able to rely on the insurer to navigate these complex systems. Specialized knowledge is powerful. The insurer needs to be able to control costs by taking full advantage of each state's distinctive opportunities.

This is a pertinent issue for every employer, not just those who regularly have claims. Employers who seldom if ever see an injury may actually be the least prepared to navigate the system and control business costs when an accident does occur.

Shopping tips

What to look for in a workers' compensation insurer.

Naturally, SFM would like employers, guided by their agents, to see what makes SFM an especially valued partner in navigating work comp and controlling business costs. Here are the things that distinguish SFM in the market. They are features that any employer should be looking for when shopping for workers' compensation coverage.

Specialization

SFM specializes solely in workers' compensation, including:

- Employers of differing sizes and industries. Smaller firms may want just the bare necessities of coverage at minimal cost. Larger firms may need personalized 1-1 attention and more extensive loss-control services.
- Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska, South Dakota, Wisconsin. Each state's work comp system is distinct.

Expertise

At SFM, individual expertise is interwoven within multi-functional teams for developing strategies and resolving issues quickly. Special areas of expertise:

- Underwriting: average 26+ years of experience for right pricing and pricing plans.
- Claims: average 16+ years of experience for active management and sensible, timely reserving.
- Legal: in-house attorneys who specialize in work comp for high litigation win rates.
- Medical: in-house physicians and nurses to reduce both medical and indemnity costs by paying close attention to the course of treatment.

Easy access

Cutting-edge technology for both agents and policyholders. Gives you key information and decision-making opportunities at the right time.

- Access CompOnline for claims data, online claims reporting, online audit reporting and online loss runs.
- Access SFM Application Manager (SAM) to submit and fine-tune quotes, preview pricing on the fly, send an e-note to your underwriter, attach documents and bind policies.
- Easy-to-get resources through SFM's online Resource Catalog.

Responsive

- No. 1 in timely response to claims among major Minnesota insurers. This is the kind of proactive response SFM delivers until the claim is closed.
- Practical loss prevention assistance, not risk "inspection."
- People you can call and talk to.

Stability, long term

- With your claims representative. With your underwriter.
- As a market to insure you.

Retention

This one's important for you, the agent: High customer retention means fewer worries and a more stable book of business.

SFM has consistently outstanding policyholder retention rates. Historically, 93 percent of policyholders renew with SFM.

That's "sleep insurance" for you. It also strengthens your relationships with your clients. You can feel confident recommending a topline carrier with consistently high customer satisfaction.

Key conversations

To help with these important conversations with clients, feel free to use SFM's marketing booklet, "Welcome to SFM," available in print and in electronic pdf format. And feel free to call your underwriter with any questions.