

Can I Receive Workers' Compensation Benefits For My Carpal Tunnel?

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Workers' Compensation for Carpal Tunnel

Carpal tunnel injury is a common affliction affecting millions of Americans, particularly those who use their hands frequently at work and perform repetitive motions. If you have symptoms of carpal tunnel syndrome, it is very possible that you will be able to get workers' compensation for your condition.



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There are a variety of important factors to keep in mind when determining if you are eligible for a workers' compensation claim for your carpal tunnel injury. You ought to consider your work activities and outside activities.



I do know one thing about me: I don't measure myself by others' expectations or let others define my worth,"
Sonia Sotomayor, Supreme Court of the United States

Furthermore, it is worthwhile to document your injuries as they develop and seek medical diagnosis and advice as well. Lastly, it is worthwhile to speak with a work injury lawyer to see if you may have a workers' compensation claim and to file it.

What is Carpal Tunnel Injury?

Carpal tunnel injury is a condition in your hands where they experience symptoms such as frequent and consistent pain, burning, numbness, and tingling. As symptoms worsen, you may lose grip strength and also the ability to differentiate hot and cold with your fingers. The symptoms come about as a result of damage to the carpal tunnel, which is a casing that protects the arm's median nerve.

According to the NIH, the specific medical mechanics of carpal tunnel syndrome are when the hand's median nerve is squeezed or twisted at the wrist. The median nerve runs along the entire arm to the fingers and is protected by a casing known as the carpal tunnel. The carpal tunnel can compress or be damaged, resulting in pressure to the nerve and consequently pain in hand.

These symptoms may not immediately manifest themselves, but instead may come about gradually over a prolonged period of time as the carpal tunnel becomes increasingly compressed or damaged.

Carpal tunnel injury is mostly a result of doing the same kind of task with your hands over and over at work over an extended period of time. A common cause is typing, but this syndrome can be caused by a wide variety of tasks that consist of precise and repetitive actions using your

hands, such as working in an assembly line.

For example, if you use a cash register or your work involves pushing or pressing objects frequently, you may develop carpal tunnel over a period of time if you do not get sufficient rest for your hands.

I might have carpal tunnel. What should I do?

If you believe you have been hurt at work and may have carpal tunnel syndrome, the first action to take is to inform your employer about your condition. It is important to make sure that your employer is aware of your problem, both to prevent the condition from developing further and to document the instances and development of the carpal tunnel syndrome.

It is very important to document the development of your injury because often insurers will question the claim if there is not sufficient evidence. When there are other possible causes besides one's activities at work, it makes the workers' compensation claim even weaker. That is why it is important to build an evidence trail if you believe you are developing the condition.

If you believe that you have indeed developed carpal tunnel syndrome, it is then important to get medical advice and diagnosis of the condition. There are a variety of medical tests of varying levels of intensity that can determine whether one indeed has carpal tunnel.

A physical examination with a doctor sheds light on the condition by examining physical external and mechanical factors. By looking at the wrist for swelling, tenderness, and discoloration, as well as examining the fingers for atrophy and sensation, the doctor can determine if carpal tunnel syndrome has possibly already developed.

Other more precise mechanical medical tests include the Tinel test, where the doctor will tap on the median nerve to see if tingling results in the fingers, as well as the Phalen's maneuver, where the patient will flex their wrists and see if tingling results in the first 1-2 minutes afterward.

Precise determination of carpal tunnel syndrome can be done through electrodiagnostic tests of the nervous system, which measure the nerve's activity and consequently can shed light on if the nerve is weak or otherwise abnormal.

Other medical tests, such as ultrasound, can also shed light on if the nerve has swelled or otherwise been disfigured.

Not only are medical tests important for determining if you have carpal tunnel, but they can also serve as useful evidence in proving your workers' compensation claim.

How can I get workers' compensation?

If you believe you may have developed symptoms of carpal tunnel syndrome, you should then consult with a lawyer to explore whether you have a possible workers' compensation claim for your injuries.

Workers compensation is a federally mandated program that can provide you compensation for a work-related injury. While each situation is different, workers' compensation acts as an insurance program for employees who have been injured as a result of their employment, no matter who is at fault. You may even be able to get relief years after the repetitive stress injury occurred.

The most important aspect of getting workers' compensation for a carpal tunnel injury is to prove that you were hurt from your employment situation itself rather than from other possible causes, such as medical conditions that are unrelated to your employment. That is why

documentation and other evidence remains vitally important.

For example, assume you have developed carpal tunnel syndrome from work as a cashier or typist at work. However, in your free time, you also enjoy playing the piano or writing books. In that case, you will need a trail of evidence as well as a strong case to be made to show that you were hurt at work rather than as a result of your outside activities.

Furthermore, if you have a disease such as diabetes, you will need to show that you were hurt at work as a result of your employment rather than the carpal tunnel injury is a result of a separate medical condition.

Thankfully, it isn't extraordinarily burdensome to prove that you were hurt at work with a carpal tunnel injury. While it varies by situation, you will often need to show just by a "preponderance of the evidence" or "clear and convincing evidence" that your carpal tunnel injury resulted from your employment.

Many Americans every year are able to get workers' compensation for their carpal tunnel injury. If you believe you might have been hurt at work and have carpal tunnel, it is worthwhile to explore your options and see if you might be able to get medical treatment and compensation for it.

I'm ready to file a claim. What's next?

If you believe you are developing carpal tunnel syndrome or may have already developed it as a result of your activities at work, it is important to seek legal advice from a work injury lawyer who has experience dealing with insurance companies to explore your options and determine if you may be able to receive compensation.

At the law firm of Saffren & Weinberg, our experienced team of workers' compensation attorneys is proud to help injured workers and will only charge you a fee if we win your injury case. We value the attorney-client relationship and have experience defending workers who have suffered repetitive motion injuries, such as carpal tunnel. Call us at (215) 576-0100 so that we can see how we can help you.

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