

Attorney Jason Hatfield Wins Permanent and Total Disability Benefits for Injured Employee

Springdale, Arkansas – The accident occurred in June 2021. As a result of the crash, the officer suffered serious injuries to his legs, arms, face, and stomach. He spent several days in a coma, underwent multiple surgeries, including skin grafts, and was hospitalized for several months. After being released from the hospital, the officer spent extended time in outpatient treatment. He occasionally relies on a wheelchair and always uses his cane, according to testimony from the officer's spouse.

A 2023 functional capacity evaluation produced a 29 percent impairment rating for the whole body. At the hearing, Attorney Hatfield argued that the officer is entitled to a whole-body impairment rating and to wage loss disability benefits. In contrast, the city argued that the officer wasn't entitled to a whole-person impairment rating. They also argued the existing rating was incorrect. Finally, the parties discussed whether the results of a separate functional capacity evaluation (FCE) should be admitted and, if so, whether they should be considered expert testimony.

After hearing testimony and reviewing the evidence, the court held that the evidence supported the officer's claim of permanent and total disability. The court considered the officer's current medical needs, medication, and difficulties with standing, sitting, or thinking clearly.

The court also noted that "claimant's motivation to work" played a large role in the decision. Recognizing the officer's ambitions and his family's needs, the court wrote, "I believe if there were any jobs he could do, he would have already been working to support his family."

The court held that the officer and Attorney Hatfield had proven their claim: the officer is "permanently and totally disabled" and thus entitled to workers' compensation benefits. The court also found that the officer can seek attorney's fees for his claim.

This case demonstrates the devastating effect work-related injuries can have. It also illustrates the importance of workers' compensation benefits – including the need to fight for those benefits with an experienced attorney.

At the Law Office of Jason M. Hatfield, P.A., we are seasoned veterans of the Arkansas legal system. We have families who are proud to live, work, and play in Northwest Arkansas – from Fayetteville to Bentonville.

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