



**Joe Koonz, President**

## Worker's Compensation

### *Know Your Rights If You Are Hurt on the Job*

**IN** these very difficult financial times, one of the worst things that can happen to you would be getting hurt on your job. Should this happen, you and your family will need a full and complete understanding of your worker's compensation rights. This holds true whether you are hurt in Maryland, Virginia or the District of Columbia. The purpose of this article and others to follow is to give you some important guidelines should you or someone you know have the misfortune of being injured on the job.

Our law firm has been representing members of Local 26 in worker's compensation matters for many years. Every day, one of our attorneys appears before the worker's compensation officials in all three jurisdictions representing a client. We have offices in Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. We are here to provide free consultations and to give legal advice for any member of Local 26 who is hurt on the job. This legal help is also available to family members or friends who have been hurt while working.

Here are some of the basic "Do's" and "Don'ts" that you should be aware of involving worker's compensation claims.

Do notify your employer or foreman, as soon as possible, if you are hurt on the job.

Do put something in writing informing the contractor that you were hurt on the job.

Do not expect your employer to take care of you. Your employer is legally obligated to carry worker's compensation insurance for that purpose.

Do file a written claim for benefits

within one year from the date of your injury in the District of Columbia and within two years in Virginia and Maryland.

Do not let your employer or its insurance carrier tell you where to file a claim. Seek legal advice for that purpose.

Do not sign any papers or forms unless you fully understand them.

Do not overlook any injury, however slight it may appear.

Do seek medical assistance right away following an injury.

Do not give a recorded statement to the worker's compensation insurance company and do not sign a written statement at the insurance company's request.

If you follow these basic rules, your worker's compensation claim should be processed in an orderly fashion.

Every day we hear questions such as whether you are entitled to pick your own doctor, how much weekly benefit you are entitled to, and how long your worker's compensation claim will last. If you are hurt in the District of Columbia and your contractor is in Maryland, where should you file your claim? If you have a choice between two jurisdictions, which one should you choose? Getting answers to these questions from competent counsel is extremely important to you and the benefits you might receive in your worker's compensation claim.

We can meet with you in one of our offices, at a hospital, or in your home if that will be helpful. Our entire law practice is dedicated to representing injury victims. Do not make the mistake of trying to handle your own worker's compensation claim.

Please keep in mind that worker's compensation insurance companies always have an attorney present at a worker's compensation hearing. It is crucial that you have your own lawyer at every step of the worker's compensation process. Every attorney's fee must be approved by the appropriate worker's compensation authority.

Be sure to select a lawyer or law firm that specializes in worker's compensation claims. Your real estate lawyer may not be your best choice for a worker's compensation claim. Experience and knowledge of the law is what you are looking for.

You should have complete trust in the attorney or law firm that you select—they should have integrity and a commitment to do the best for you that the worker's compensation law allows. You will want a lawyer who will see to it that you receive the maximum benefits and medical attention. Select an attorney whose reputation is well-known in the construction trades. We have represented literally hundreds of members of Local 26 over the years and we stand ready to help you if the need arises. We pledge to do our very best to provide competent legal counsel to anyone who is hurt on the job and is entitled to worker's compensation benefits.

I will answer any questions you have concerning worker's compensation claims over the phone. Please feel free to call me directly at 202-659-5500. Or, you may contact me by email at [jkoonz@koonz.com](mailto:jkoonz@koonz.com). Or, visit our website at [www.koonz.com](http://www.koonz.com).