

A FATHER'S DAY TOKEN OF SUPPORT

WHEN WORKERS' COMP MEANS DOING RIGHT BY YOUR FAMILY

When a recent client — let's call him Kyle — hurt his back and shoulder working on the line at the Honda factory, he probably didn't think about how his injury might affect his son's birthday party. But months down the road, he agonized over whether he'd have to cancel the big plans. Although his workers' comp claim had been accepted, his compensation payment was delayed. So right up until days before the celebration, he worried and worried, bracing to deliver the bad news to his kiddo. Luckily, something gave way, and Kyle received the money just in time.

Workers' compensation stories like Kyle's are common. Parenting can be a thankless job in the best of times, but when things get tough due to illness or injury, it can feel even more difficult to support those depending on you. That's why, with Father's Day coming up on the 16th, I'd like to shout out those dads out there who work hard post-injury to keep their families afloat along with those who stand by to support them.

It's always an honor to help these folks find some stability in a trying time. Too often, workers' compensation is stigmatized as some kind of handout to enable the lazy to avoid making an honest living. In reality, the vast majority of workers' compensation cases involve people seeking honest compensation for legitimate injuries. Just the other day, we got a call from a new client, an injured, out-of-work dad, who was

ecstatic to report we'd helped him get a little money before the birth of his first child. An injured, out-of-work dad securing basic funds to cover living expenses for his newborn should not be accused of laziness or gaming the system.

It's difficult to watch people navigate through these trying situations, but workers' compensation supports the indomitable human spirit and families who rally around those who are hurt. Workers' compensation can assist a dad's grown children as they support him financially after a work-related injury. An entire small-town community may rally to raise the spirits of a beloved local family man, but workers' comp can help ease his debilitating financial burdens.

If you have an injured dad in your life, take a moment this Father's Day to reach out and listen. Even if it's only a phone call, your time and attention can mean the world to a dad struggling with chronic pain and financial instability. And if you know someone is struggling to receive the compensation they deserve, give our office a call, and we'd be glad to help.



“... I'd like to shout out those dads out there who work hard post-injury to keep their families afloat along with those who stand by to support them.”

-Jim Monast

3 Tricks to Keep Your Gear Dry

EVEN ON A RAINY OUTDOOR WEEKEND

Incoming clouds can really rain on a weekend camping trip. Getting wet isn't just a nuisance; it can be dangerous in cold climates. Outdoor experts, like the instructors at the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS), know the tricks to keeping dry, even on the wettest days. Here are three tricks these pros swear by.

1. Line Your Pack With a Plastic Bag Garbage bags are an easy and cost-effective way to waterproof your pack. As you're preparing for your trip, put the garbage bag into your backpack first and place your sleeping bag, clothing, and any other items that must stay dry inside it. Carefully twist and fold the bag inside your pack to close it up, place any items that are okay to get wet on top, and look forward to having dry, warm clothes.

2. Use Your Body Heat to Dry Damp Clothes There's nothing like getting to camp at the end of a hard hike and taking off your pack to finally relax. But if you got caught in a rainstorm or had to cross a river, you might not feel the same sense of relief. An effective way to dry wet socks and other clothes is to use your own body heat. Once you've changed into something dry, place wet socks between your layers of clothing, allowing them to warm and slowly

dry. *Insider Tip:* While weight is a consideration for backpacking, it's worth it to carry an extra pair of socks designated for sleeping so you'll always have a dry pair to look forward to when you arrive at camp.

3. Suit Up Your Sleeping Bag Moisture that collects in the night can lead to a damp sleeping bag, and you want to do everything you can to retain heat in wet weather. Get better sleep by using your rain jacket to further insulate your sleeping bag. Put your jacket around the end of your sleeping bag and zip it up, creating a heat trap that will keep your toes toasty. *Insider Tip:* Keep wet gear out of your tent whenever possible by storing it in the vestibule rather than the main space.

Happy trails, and stay dry out there!



CLIENT STORIES

BRENDA C.

Being a school employee is not without its hazards. Recently, an increasing number of teachers have come to me following attacks by students or injuries they received while restraining students. School bus drivers also are vulnerable to injury. One client's bus caught fire, and she was injured getting the students off safely. Awkward twisting while working with wheelchairs of disabled students can also cause back injuries.

I've represented a lot of Springfield school employees over the years, including a large number of bus drivers. Brenda C. first worked in maintenance when she injured her right knee moving furniture and classroom equipment. The next year, working as a bus driver, she caught a falling student and fell against the bus steps, breaking a finger and tearing her left knee ligaments, which required surgery. A couple of years later, Brenda's right foot was run over by a student's wheelchair. This required two surgeries, including a joint fusion in her foot, extensive removal of bone, and a tarsal tunnel release (tarsal tunnel is to the foot what carpal tunnel is to the wrist). She ultimately developed reflex sympathetic dystrophy in her right foot, and she now has to wear shoes two sizes too big because her foot is so sensitive to touch.



Brenda suffered two more injuries afterward, the last happening while power-washing a bus. She underwent three surgeries under this claim, including a cervical discectomy, fusion at C5-6, and two right knee surgeries.

Being so limited after experiencing injuries from head to toe (literally!), having ongoing pain, and requiring a lot of medication, Brenda understandably became depressed. She began working at an early age and loved her work with children, but she couldn't continue. Brenda is now on permanent total disability, so at least she needn't worry about paying for her ongoing treatment and financial future.

We just love this gal!

Releasing Your Medical Records to the BWC

AN INTRUSION OF PRIVACY OR A NECESSARY STEP?

If you feel your medical history is private and your employer has no business asking about it, you'd be right.

However, when you file a workers' compensation claim, the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) may request your medical records. If you want your claim to be approved, you must comply. Your privacy is still important, but you may need a lawyer's help to protect it.

Why the BWC Needs Your Records Because you're filing a claim seeking benefits for a work-related illness or injury, the BWC requires proof that your injury or illness is work-related.

Your recent medical records show the BWC you saw a doctor; had medical testing, like X-rays or MRIs; and were diagnosed with a specific injury or illness. The BWC also looks at your records to see if you have any pre-existing condition that may explain your health issue, or to find evidence of any previous treatment for your symptoms or condition. Either finding may suggest this was not a workplace injury.

Should You Release Your Records? To file a successful claim, you have no choice but to sign the BWC's authorization to release medical information. Generally, if you have

nothing to hide, there's no reason not to sign this authorization.

While the BWC is only permitted to access information "related causally or historically to physical or mental injuries relevant to [your] workers' compensation," the information accessed can include past records. For example, if you have a history of back problems documented in your medical records, the BWC could use this information to deny a claim for a new back injury suffered at work. At the very least, you'll have some 'splainin' to do, Lucy.

How an Attorney Can Help No one should be digging through your medical records for reasons to deny a legitimate claim, but once you sign the BWC authorization, you may not be able to stop them.

If you're worried about what's in your medical history, call Jim Monast at **614-515-2595** before signing an authorization. We can talk about whether you have a claim for compensation given your medical history, and your options going forward.



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ANSWER



NIBBLES WITH NUG

BLT DOGS

Is a hot dog a sandwich or not? We're not here to weigh in on the ever-contentious debate, but when you combine a hot dog with a BLT, it definitely becomes more sandwich-like — and way more delicious.

INGREDIENTS

- 4 strips bacon
- 4 hot dogs (ideally Boar's Head Beef Frankfurters, but any all-beef variety will do)
- 4 hot dog buns
- 1 tbsp mayonnaise
- 1 head romaine lettuce, shredded
- 1 large tomato, seeded and diced
- Salt and pepper, to taste

DIRECTIONS

1. Heat a skillet to medium and fry bacon until rendered and crisp. Transfer to a paper towel to drain.
2. Fry hot dogs in bacon drippings, creating a crust and cooking until warmed through.
3. Using a dry skillet or oven, toast buns.
4. Spread mayonnaise on buns, place hot dog and bacon inside, and top with tomatoes and lettuce. Serve.

Inspired by FoodNetwork.com



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Is Your Pillow Affecting Your Health?



WHAT BAD PILLOWS DO TO YOU

If you're feeling stiff and tired during the day or constantly waking up at night, it could be because of your pillow. Many people don't think about their pillows when it comes to health, but your pillow plays a significant role in your overall well-being.

Rest Everyone knows that getting eight hours of sleep per night is ideal for a healthy body and mind, and your pillow can make all the difference in how you sleep. A lousy pillow causes discomfort and makes it difficult to relax, which can prevent you from getting the quality of sleep that is best for your health.

Stiffness The way you sleep is connected to the type of pillow you use at night. For instance, a side sleeper needs a thicker pillow to support their neck, while a back sleeper needs a thinner one. Your pillow should allow your neck to rest comfortably without straining your muscles. If you're sleeping with the wrong kind, it can cause stiffness and pain in the neck, which can lead to dizziness, anxiety, nausea, and headaches.

Acne Breakouts are no fun, and they happen to everyone. Pillowcases tend to collect oil and dirt through constant contact with your skin, hair, and the environment. This buildup can irritate your skin and result in acne. By washing your pillowcase once a week, you can significantly reduce unpleasant breakouts.

Allergies Along with collecting dirt and oil, pillows can accumulate dust mites and dead skin cells, which are key triggers for allergies. If you suffer from severe allergies, it's a good idea to invest in a dustproof, zipper-locked pillowcase to keep irritants away.

There's one excellent way to see if you need a new pillow or not: Try bending it in half. If it returns to its original shape, your pillow is fine, but if it doesn't, it's time to invest in a new one.