

*Nevada*  
**Workers' Compensation Law Blog**  
NEWS & UPDATES ON WORKERS' COMPENSATION LAWS & HELPFUL INFORMATION ON THE CLAIMS PROCESS

## **The Worst Time to Hire a Workers' Compensation Attorney**

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Three people who met with me for a free consultation last week all told me that they thought the best time to hire a workers compensation lawyer to help them with their claim was right before they were scheduled for a permanent partial disability evaluation. Two told me that they had had free consultations with other attorneys in the past, and those attorneys were not interested in representing them while they were still actively treating for their injuries. Those other lawyers told them to come back when they were finished getting treatment and were ready for a settlement. The third person had relied on advice from a co-worker who thought that a lawyer was only necessary to obtain the best settlement. Unfortunately, those three people were given bad information on when to hire a lawyer. The best time to hire a lawyer, after meeting with one you like, is **at the beginning of your claim**. Here's why:

### **1. Get More Legal Service for the Fee You Pay**

Most attorneys charge a contingency fee from the permanent partial disability award at the end of the claim. That fee is usually the same regardless of whether you hire the lawyer at the beginning of your claim, or right before you have the evaluation to determine your settlement. If you hire a lawyer who actually provides a valuable service in assisting you on your claim each step of the way, you get more legal service for the attorney fee by hiring the attorney at the beginning of your claim. *If an attorney is only interested in representing you at the end of your claim, that is a red flag, and should alert you that the attorney is only wanting a quick fee for providing very little help.*

### **2. A Work Comp Attorney Should Guide You Each Step on Your Claim**

If you hire a lawyer who is committed to helping you on your claim, and is not solely interested in getting his fee from the settlement, you have someone who is experienced in selecting the best doctors for your care. You also have someone to make sure that your benefit checks are the correct and highest amount, and that they are paid on time. An experienced work comp lawyer will also guide you through any employment issues while you are treating, and will get a jump start on the retraining process if it appears that the client will not be able to return to her old job.

### **3. The Most Important Decisions Are Made at the Beginning of the Claim**

The most important service I provide as a workers compensation lawyer is making sure that my clients get the best possible medical care as quickly as possible. My clients are normal, honest,

hard-working people who like their jobs. They just want to get their injuries fixed and to get back to work and their regular lives. It is at the beginning of the claim that injured workers decide whether they need a specialist, whether they want to change doctors, whether to have surgery, whether to have a second opinion, and what other treatment options are available. The beginning of the claim is when insurers deny additional body parts on the claim and deny treatment or surgeries that your doctor requests. Insurers will try to usurp control over what happens to the injured worker's body at the beginning of the claim.

#### **4. The Best Lawyers Practice Preventative Law**

It is always easier to prevent a problem from happening on a claim than it is to try to fix a problem that has happened. By the time most injured workers consult with a lawyer on their claim, they have spent many frustrating months trying to handle problems by themselves. Injured workers are at a terrible disadvantage when dealing with adjusters, because injured workers do not know what their rights are and whether the adjuster is acting properly on their claim. A lot can go wrong very quickly, and the time to file an appeal on any determination made by the insurer is only 70 days.

#### **5. What to Do If You Have Waited Until the End of Your Claim**

If you have tried to go it alone on your claim, are fed up, and want to hire a lawyer now because you are concerned about the settlement process, get a free consultation with an attorney. You might be able to negotiate a lower attorney fee if you are just about to get a rating evaluation, and you don't have ongoing problems or potential future problems with your claim. Be sure to ask whether the attorney will be attending the rating with you. Also ask whether the attorney will be helping you with any vocational rehabilitation issues, and whether the attorney will be available in the future to help you reopen your claim for more medical care. Find out whether an actual attorney is handling your claim, particularly if you hire a celebrity attorney law firm. You might also ask whether the attorney is able to predict what your percentage of impairment should be. Those attorneys who are honest and who care about their reputations among injured workers will give you a straight answer. Finally, there is a ton of information about the rating process in my blogs and on my website.

*Get Well Again Soon!*

Virginia Hunt Law Office  
1945 E. Warm Springs Road, Las Vegas, NV 89119  
Phone: (702) 699-5336  
Fax: (702) 731-9097  
Email: [virginia@huntlawoffice.com](mailto:virginia@huntlawoffice.com)