

Risky Business

Did You Know?

- The federal minimum wage increased to \$7.25 an hour on July 24, 2009.
- The Secretary of Labor, Hilda Solis, has announced 17 grants which will provide 3000 veterans with job training for civilian careers.
- An employee must be granted a leave of absence to perform military service.
- Effective 06/29/2009 the Canton Industrial Commission office has merged with the Akron office.

UNION ORGANIZATION CHANGES TO COME?

The Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA) could boost union activity. The Act proposes stiffer penalties for employers who interfere with union activities. In recent years the unionization rates have dropped due in part to employees feeling that they will be retaliated against for union activity. The EFCA would also require that parties submit to mandatory mediation and binding arbitration if they are unable to reach an

agreement on the initial contract within 90 days.

Until recently there was a “card-check provision” included in the Act. The provision would force employers to recognize a union when a majority of workers signed cards asking for one. After reviewing the provision a group of senators dropped the provision indicating it eliminated the privacy of secret ballot.

RECENT RULINGS

Schlegel, State ex rel. v. Stykemain Pontiac GMC, Ltd—When an appeal is filed against the Staff Hearing order the Industrial Commission is not required to consider evidence which existed at the time of the Staff Hearing but was not submitted.

Pierron, State ex rel. v. Indus. Comm.—When a worker retires for reasons other than the industrial injury and further employment was not sought he/she is not eligible for temporary total compensation.

Masden v. CCI Supply, Inc.—Claim allowed for traveling employee who was injured in a fight while staying at a hotel required by the employer.

Scouler, State ex rel. v. Indus. Comm—Order was found to be invalid based on the fact it stated “all relevant evidence” was considered however did not discuss the relevant evidence.

ANOTHER CARPAL TUNNEL CLAIM?

Do you feel like your claim history is inundated with Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (CTS) cases? Maybe its time to make some changes. A majority of the time CTS is related to repetitive hand motions, strong gripping or vibration. Workers who often perform these kinds of tasks include: factory workers, mechanics, clerical workers, and many more.

CTS can of course be caused by conditions completely unrelated with work. Some of these conditions include: arthritis, diabetes, pregnancy, gout, and menopause.

Signs to look for include: tingling of the thumb and fingers, night pain, and weakness of hand. If symptoms are experienced the individual should seek testing from a physician which may include both physical

testing and electrodiagnostic testing.

A suggestion on how to prevent CTS claims would be to redesign work stations, work methods, and tools. An ergonomics specialist could be contacted to assist in redesigning work stations. Redesigning work methods might include frequent breaks and taking time to gently stretch and bend wrists and hands.

Treatment of CTS includes rest, anti-inflammatory drugs, a splint, and possible surgery. Surgery could result in at least 2 weeks off work before being allowed to return to work in any capacity and at least 1 month before return to full duty. It's possible that a few inexpensive changes could help avoid the costly medical bills and time off work.



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Quote Corner

Whatever you are be a good one.—*Abraham Lincoln*

Watch the little things; a small leak will sink a ship.—*Benjamin Franklin*

To know the road ahead, ask those coming back.—*Chinese Proverb*

Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off your goal.—*Henry Ford*

Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life.—*Confucius*

Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen.—*Winston Churchill*

DROWSY DRIVING—signs and prevention

Ever feel a little sleepy while driving a long distance? You're not alone. According to a survey done by the National Sleep Foundation, more than half of adult drivers say they have driven while drowsy. Wake up! The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that 100,000 reported crashes each year are a result of driver fatigue. Some warning signs indicating you may soon doze off include:

- Difficulty focusing
 - Daydreaming
 - Missing exits or signs
 - Yawning
 - Drifting from your lane
 - Feeling restless
- Take a minute to present the warning signs to your employees, especially those who travel for work. Suggest countermeasures that may prove to be helpful such as:

- Get adequate sleep
- Schedule proper breaks
- Arrange for a travel companion
- Avoid alcohol and sedating medications
- Drink a caffeinated beverage

CHANGES TO EMPLOYMENT ELIGIBILITY VERIFICATION HELP REDUCE FRAUD

Beginning April 3, 2009 reforms have been made by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to the Form I-9. Form I-9 is the Employment Eligibility Verification that must be completed by an employer for each person hired in the United States on or after November 6, 1986. A reform was made back in June 30, 2008 which reduced the number of acceptable documents which could be used to establish identity and employment authorization. This latest reform, effective April 3, 2009, also makes changes to the acceptable documents. Three documents have been removed from the acceptable list and three different documents have been added. Previously expired U.S. passports were accepted however Form I-9 has now been amended so that all documents presented must be unexpired. Employers that do not complete the new Form I-9 for employees hired on or after April 3, 2009 will be subject to a penalty up to \$1,100 per violation. The new form can be found on the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services website at www.USCIS.gov.

Cranberry Baked Beans

Makes 12-16 servings

- 1 (16 oz) can cranberry sauce, jellied
- 1 (8 oz) can tomato sauce
- 2 (31 oz) cans pork and beans, undrained
- 1 tablespoon mustard, prepared
- ½ cup onion, chopped
- 6 slices bacon, halved
- 3 tablespoons brown sugar

In a large bowl, combine cranberry sauce, tomato sauce, beans, mustard and onion. Place in greased 13x9x2 baking dish. Lay bacon on top, and then sprinkle with brown sugar. Bake at 350° for 1 hour.

