Workplace Safety for Healthcare Professionals

When we begin our commute to our workplace, we spend most of our time thinking about our daily tasks. What do we need to do and when do we need to have it complete. Planning out our workday rarely involves thinking about what could go wrong.

Many employees in the healthcare field do not have this luxury, as workplace safety is becoming a growing concern. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration is investigating the recent hospital shooting in Pittsburgh, and is treating it as an incident of workplace violence. The attack killed one person and injured five others. This issue could become a major factor in the filing of Pennsylvania workers' compensation claims.

Some hospitals in the Philadelphia area have taken steps to prevent nurses from being placed into unsafe situations. The Temple University Hospital System has implemented a workplace violence committee, which is focused on providing the necessary training to personnel to help eliminate potential problems from occurring.

While this has helped to bring the number of workplace violence incidents down, the issue remains a serious problem. Healthcare professionals are placed at serious risk by nature of their jobs, and unruly patients can make a dangerous situation even worse. Workers are unable to protect themselves from these attacks because they are unaware that they are about to happen.

Hospital employees injured as a result of workplace violence may have an opportunity to file for workers' compensation. Workers in the medical field already face a potential for serious injuries prior to this increase in violent patients.

Workers may need to lift or move heavy objects, receive infections due to sick patients or have to worry about spills that have not been cleaned on hospital floors.

Source: Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, “OSHA investigating Western Psych shootings as workplace safety matter”, Sadie Gurman, March 20, 2012.