

What To Say To a Pennsylvania Doctor When Seeking Treatment for a Work Injury

Almost anyone injured on the job in Pennsylvania is entitled to workers' compensation. But when dealing with doctors, there are a number of things injured workers should be aware of.

The first decision anyone who has been injured faces is which doctor to see. Of course, if the injury victim needs immediate medical attention, often the nearest emergency room is their only choice. But following emergency room treatment, or in potentially less-serious cases, often the employer will provide a list of six providers, approved by the employer's insurance company.

If the company properly posts this list, and the injured worker signs two documents acknowledging "rights and duties," then the worker must use one of the [approved doctors](#), at least for the first 90 days of treatment. However, not all employers follow this procedure, meaning that in most cases, the injured worker can choose his or her own doctor.

Regardless of who provides the medical care, there are a few things to keep in mind when dealing with doctors, to ensure your rights to worker's compensation benefits are preserved.

The first is to be certain to inform the doctor of all pain you may be experiencing – even if it seems to be minor. For instance, if you fall at work and suffer a serious leg injury, you may forget to mention a seemingly minor pain in the wrist, from when you tried to break the fall. Months later, this wrist injury could prevent you from doing certain tasks at work, but if it is not mentioned to the doctor at the time of the injury, a worker's compensation Judge may find little ground to support a claim for this injury. Similarly, if a

person is injured but chooses not to see a doctor until much later, it can be perceived as an admission that the injury was actually quite minor.

It's also important to be up-front with your doctor about any previous injuries or sicknesses, since your prior medical history may become a part of your claim. If it becomes clear to the work comp insurer that the doctor didn't know about your previous medical history, the insurer will likely question the validity of any of the doctor's opinions – including opinions about your ability to work.

Finally, be sure that you are following your doctor's advice regarding both recommended treatment, and what sort of tasks you can perform. If the insurance company learns that you did not see a recommended specialist, did not attend therapy sessions, did not take prescribed medication, or engaged in strenuous activities (such as heavy lifting) contrary to a doctor's instructions, it can easily derail a [workers' compensation claim](#).