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State of California

DWCNewsline

Division of Workers' Compensation
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Injured employee gets help from California Division of Workers' Compensation

Now more workers can receive assistance through a free Spanish-language seminar in Salinas

Norma Guzman didn't expect to have a problem getting medical treatment following an injury she received working as a sign installer at a Salinas department store. But when a paperwork mistake led to her being denied access to the doctor she'd chosen, Guzman got the help she needed to resolve the problem from the California Division of Workers' Compensation (DWC). Guzman, who speaks Spanish, found assistance through the DWC's Information & Assistance Unit.

"The DWC office was the only place that provided me with assistance in my own language," said Guzman. "Even though I didn't have an attorney, I felt I was supported."

Now more Spanish-speaking workers can get information on workers' compensation rules by attending a free seminar provided by the DWC on Jun. 21.

At the seminar employees will receive information on medical treatment, disability payments, returning to work after an injury and resolving a disagreement over a claim. The workshop will take place in Salinas on:

Thursday, Jun. 21, 2007

6-7 p.m.

Christ the King Church

240 Calle Cebu

Salinas CA

"This is the first seminar in our new program for Spanish-speaking workers," said Information & Assistance Officer Silvia Gutierrez. "While Spanish-speaking individuals have always been able to come to DWC for assistance, conducting a seminar will help us reach many more workers who need to understand their rights."

Gutierrez works in the DWC's Salinas office where about 40 percent of the workers she sees speak Spanish, so holding regular Spanish-language seminars will provide a higher level of service for the community.

"I'll be conducting the seminar on the third Thursday of every other month at Christ the King Church," said Gutierrez. "We'll see how the time and location work out and we'll make changes if we need to so that workers are able to attend."

The one-hour program includes a presentation followed by a question and answer session, and is conducted by the DWC Information and Assistance (I&A) Unit. The I&A Unit plays a major role in resolving disagreements over workers' compensation benefits and is the state's main information source for injured workers.

The DWC conducts English-language seminars for injured workers on a monthly basis at each of its 24 local offices. A listing of workshop days, times and locations in English and Spanish can be found on DWC's Web site at www.dir.ca.gov/dwc. Click on the link that says, "Injured on the job? Need to know your rights?" Injured workers can also call 1-800-736-7401 to find the workshop near them and hear other recorded information. To go directly to workshop locations in English, callers should press 7, then 7 again, then 1 after dialing the 800 number. Spanish-speaking workers may call 1-800-736-7401 and press 2 for details.

The division also provides free workshop posters in English and Spanish to community based organizations, employers, medical providers and others who'd like to post them. Call 510.286.7076 for more information.

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