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State of California

DWCNewsline

Division of Workers' Compensation
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Bulletin No. 27-08

April 23, 2008

State Division of Workers' Compensation to hold free Spanish-language seminar on workers' compensation benefits and laws in Oxnard

After hurting her back while performing her duties as a housekeeper, Tereza Coronado, 45, went to her employer for help but her employer did nothing. After three more days Coronado went to a doctor on her own.

"I was in so much pain I had to do something," said Coronado. "But after I told my employer I went to see a doctor I was fired."

Coronado sought help from several attorneys, but her employer had no workers' compensation insurance and the attorneys she met with did not want to take her case. An additional difficulty for Coronado was that she speaks only Spanish.

"I had received some letters but had no idea what they meant. The attorneys I saw did not have time to explain them to me," she said. One of the attorneys Coronado saw did suggest she speak to a state information and assistance (I&A) officer, whose services are free of charge.

"I met with an I&A officer in my local state workers' compensation office and she helped me a lot," Coronado said. "I was much more relaxed after talking to her."

The state Division of Workers' Compensation (DWC) Information and Assistance Unit plays a major role in resolving disagreements over workers' compensation benefits and is the state's main information source for injured workers who don't have attorneys handling their cases.

Coronado said the I&A officer explained what those letters she received meant, gave her information about her workers' compensation rights and helped her get the right forms filed at the Oxnard workers' compensation district office.

"I am so grateful for all the help I received," Coronado said.

Similar assistance—including what to do if an employer doesn't have the required workers' compensation insurance or discriminates against a worker who files a claim—will be offered to injured workers at a free Spanish-language seminar on workers' compensation in Oxnard on April 29. The seminar, which is free of charge and will be conducted in Spanish, will help injured workers understand their rights and assist them in resolving individual workers'

compensation issues. Oxnard is the largest city in Ventura County, with a population of nearly 200,000. According to the 2000 census, of that population, 66.2 percent is Hispanic.

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 Oxnard on:

Tuesday, April 29, 2008

6-7 p.m.

Oxnard Public Library

251 South "A" Street

Oxnard, CA

The program consists of a short presentation followed by a question and answer session, which is conducted by the DWC I&A Unit.

"It is good to know that there are people like this who can help people like me who do not speak English. Just because we do not speak English does not mean we do not have rights," Coronado said.

The DWC also 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 the DWC's Web site at www.dwc.ca.gov. Click on the link in the left navigation window under "I want to" that says, "Know my 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 program posters in English and Spanish to community based organizations, employers, medical providers and others. Call 510-286-7076 for more information.

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