

Keeping check on heat injuries



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I have reviewed the number of heat injuries reported to me this year and believe that we have not received all the reports, as requested. I therefore ask that you navigate the NALC web pages, first hovering over “Workplace Issues,” then “Safety and Health” page and then “Extreme Weather.” As you scroll down that page, look for the second “+,” “Enforcing heat safety rules,” and open it. The bottom of that section opens the link to the Initial Heat Injury Report form, or you can type in the following: [nalc.org/workplace-issues/body/Heat-Injury-Initial-Report-](http://nalc.org/workplace-issues/body/Heat-Injury-Initial-Report-Form.pdf)

Form.pdf and download it. Fill it out and send it to me (the address on the bottom of the form), as well as your national business agent, for follow-up and assistance.

Why do we do this? We want to keep track of where we are having problems, and we want to help our injured members with their Office of Workers’ Compensation Programs (OWCP) claims if necessary.

About 10 years ago, I attended a branch Christmas party in a Southern state and while there, the president of the branch brought my attention to a heat injury suffered earlier that year. Neither the national business agent’s office nor I had been informed of the injury when it happened, and as a result, the injured employee did not receive the necessary assistance early in the process.

The issue brought to my attention was the fact that he was receiving bills from the hospital, demands for payment, and threats that it would be turned over to a collector.

The last thing that our injured employees need to deal with is being billed for medical services caused by an on-the-job injury. As a federal employee, you are covered by OWCP, whose mission statement is:

The Mission of the Office of Workers’ Compensation Programs is to protect the interests of workers who are injured or become ill on the job, their families and their employers by making timely, appropriate, and accurate decisions on claims, providing prompt payment of benefits and helping injured workers return to gainful work as early as is feasible.

Please go to the NALC’s web page, under “Workplace Issues” then “Injured on the Job,” or type in the following address: nalc.org/workplace-issues/injured-on-the-job.

Read through the information found on that page and discover (if you haven’t already) what the NALC has to offer to assist its members. Unlike other obligations that fall under the NALC’s duty of fair representation, assistance involving OWCP claims is a benefit for members only. If you are not a member and you need help, fill out a Form 1187 and join this union for help at no cost.

Remember, you should not be paying for medical treatment that should be covered by OWCP. Further, you should suffer no retaliation from your employer once you have filed an OWCP claim. Reach out for help and do all you can.

On a personal note, I want to take a moment to pay tribute to Art Turner, past president of my branch, a good friend, and a great union leader. I met Art at the beginning of my career and cannot praise him enough. He became our president in 1993 during a very contentious period in my branch’s history. He navigated the waters and steadied the ship like only a Navy veteran could do.

He is now reunited with Jane, the love of his life. Love you both.

