

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Department of Industrial Relations
Division of Workers' Compensation
DISABILITY EVALUATION UNIT

NOTICE OF OPTIONS FOLLOWING DISABILITY RATING

This is a disability rating determination (Rating) prepared by the State of California Disability Evaluation Unit within the Division of Workers' Compensation. It describes your percentage of disability. This percentage is based on your limitations as reported by the doctor, your potential loss of future earning capacity, your age, and the type of work you were doing at the time of your injury. If the rating indicates that you have some permanent disability, you should automatically begin to receive permanent disability payments. Payments are made in installments, every two weeks, for the number of weeks shown on the rating, less any permanent disability payments made to you prior to the rating.

If the rating is not disputed by you or your employer, you do not have to take any action to receive your benefits. We do want you to know that you may have two options you may want to consider. They are:

- 1) STIPULATED FINDINGS AND AWARD;
- 2) COMPROMISE AND RELEASE;

1) STIPULATED FINDINGS AND AWARD

If you and the employer, carrier or agent, accept the rating, written agreements may be submitted to the Workers' Compensation Appeals Board (WCAB) requesting that an Award be made without the need for a hearing. We recommend this option when the rating is not disputed, and you have a need for future medical care. A Workers' Compensation Judge will review the stipulations and issue an award.

ADVANTAGES

- A stipulated award is a quick, easy way to settle your case while protecting your rights;
- There is no need to take time off work to go to a hearing;
- The Division of Workers' Compensation will review the settlement to protect your rights at no cost to you; there is no need to hire a lawyer;
- If your condition worsens, you can apply for additional payments anytime within five years from the date of your injury;
- If you need additional medical care or you are to receive a life pension (rating of 70% or more), your rights to future benefits can be fully protected and a judge can enforce the award if there later becomes a problem.
- You may request a lump sum payment of all or part of your permanent disability if you can show a financial need or hardship. However, a Workers' Compensation Judge must first be convinced that it would be in your best interest.

DISADVANTAGES

- You normally will not receive a lump sum payment, but will receive your benefits in payments every two weeks.

2) COMPROMISE AND RELEASE

A Compromise and Release Agreement is a settlement which usually permanently closes all aspects of a workers' compensation claim except for vocational rehabilitation benefits, including any provision for future medical care.

The Compromise and Release is paid in one lump sum to you. It must be reviewed and approved by a Workers' Compensation Judge.

ADVANTAGES

- You may receive more money than you would receive under a Stipulated Findings and Award because you are giving up your future rights in exchange for money.
- If the employer or insurance company disputes the rating, a Compromise and Release will assure you receive an agreed amount of money now rather than risk getting nothing or a lesser amount later.
- You will receive your benefits in one lump sum.

DISADVANTAGES

- A Compromise and Release usually permanently releases the employer from all future responsibilities. After your case has been resolved by a Compromise and Release Agreement, you cannot ask for more medical treatment at your employer's expense, nor can you claim additional benefits if your disability or condition becomes worse. Also, if you later die as a result of the injury, your dependents would not be entitled to death benefits.
- Once a Workers' Compensation Judge has approved your Compromise and Release, the settlement is final and it cannot be set aside except in very rare circumstances.

If you would like more information, you can receive recorded information free of charge, by calling 1-800-736-7401 or you may contact your local Information and Assistance officer (listed in the state government section of your telephone book under Department of Industrial Relations, Division of Workers' Compensation). You may also consult an attorney of your choice.

SPECIAL NOTICE TO UNREPRESENTED INJURED WORKERS

If you disagree with the rating because you believe that the rating was improperly calculated or that the doctor failed to address any or all issues or failed to properly rate your impairment, you may request administrative review of the rating within 30 days of receipt of the rating, from the Administrative Director of the Division of Workers' Compensation. In some cases, you may be entitled to an additional medical evaluation or a different medical specialist. Your request should include a copy of the rating and a copy of the report from the doctor. A copy of the request must be sent to your claims adjustor.

If you have questions about whether to request administrative review of your rating or whether another medical evaluation is appropriate, you should contact the local Information and Assistance Officer listed in the state government section of your telephone book under Department of Industrial Relations, Division of Workers' Compensation. They can tell you how to file the request if you decide to do so.