

## Is It Hard to Prove Carpal Tunnel Is Work-Related?

### Our New York workers' compensation lawyers can fight for the benefits you deserve

Carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS) is regarded as one of the most common reasons for workers' compensation claims. Yet, obtaining benefits for carpal tunnel syndrome often proves more challenging than many people might anticipate.

If your job caused you to develop this painful medical condition, it's important to understand common obstacles to getting the benefits you rightfully deserve. An experienced New York [workers' compensation lawyer](#) can help you prove your claim and demand the compensation you need while you recover.

### What is carpal tunnel syndrome?

Carpal tunnel syndrome occurs when repetitive hand movements or injuries compress the median nerve in your wrist. This nerve controls the sensations and movements in your thumb and the first three fingers. Repetitive motions, such as typing or using machinery, can inflame or injure this nerve.

Traumatic incidents such as vehicle collisions or machinery accidents can also contribute to carpal tunnel syndrome. Often categorized as a musculoskeletal disorder or ergonomic injury, CTS can worsen over time if not addressed early. If left untreated, it might lead to permanent damage or require surgery.

### What are the symptoms of carpal tunnel syndrome to watch out for?

If you suspect you have carpal tunnel syndrome, it's important to recognize the symptoms early. They may include any of the following:

- **Tingling and numbness:** These sensations often occur in the thumb and first three fingers.
- **Muscle weakness:** Difficulty gripping objects or performing tasks with your hands might signal CTS.
- **Pain at night:** You might experience pain in your hands or fingers, especially at night, which can disturb your sleep.
- **Swelling sensation:** You might feel swelling in your fingers, even if they aren't visibly swollen.

If these symptoms sound familiar, seeking a medical diagnosis sooner rather than later can help prevent further damage and avoid potential surgery.

## What risk factors might impact your carpal tunnel workers' comp claim?

Several factors might complicate your claim for carpal tunnel syndrome benefits, including:

- **Family history:** If carpal tunnel syndrome runs in your family, you might have a naturally narrower carpal tunnel, which can make you more prone to the condition.
- **Gender:** Women are [three times more likely](#) to develop CTS than men. This increased risk may be due to smaller carpal tunnels or hormonal changes that affect nerve health.
- **Arthritis:** Osteoarthritis or rheumatoid arthritis can alter the shape of bones and joints, which often affects the median nerve.
- **Other health issues:** Conditions such as diabetes, obesity, previous wrist fractures, and dislocated joints can exacerbate the pressure on the median nerve.

## Which workers are most at risk for developing carpal tunnel syndrome?

Certain occupations expose workers to a higher risk of developing carpal tunnel syndrome due to repetitive motions or sustained pressure. Here are the top five job categories where CTS is prevalent:

- **Telephone operators:** Those who don't use headsets or ergonomic keyboards are at higher risk.
- **Factory workers:** Assembly line jobs with repetitive tasks can lead to CTS.
- **Office employees:** Data entry clerks, court reporters, and others who spend long hours typing or using a mouse are at risk.
- **Hairdressers and barbers:** The repetitive actions of styling and cutting hair can strain the wrist.
- **Construction workers:** Handheld tools that vibrate, such as jackhammers and power saws, can irritate the median nerve.

## Is carpal tunnel syndrome usually covered under workers' compensation?

Workers' compensation doesn't automatically cover carpal tunnel syndrome. You must prove that your job duties directly caused your symptoms. Additionally, you may need to show that symptoms persisted even with reasonable accommodations from your employer under the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#) (ADA).

You may have a stronger case if:

- **Your job caused the condition:** You need to demonstrate that performing your job duties led to carpal tunnel syndrome.
- **Medical treatment is required:** You must seek medical treatment and notify your employer about your condition.

Employers sometimes challenge claims by arguing that the condition results from a pre-existing issue rather than work activities.

### **How much carpal tunnel workers' comp money can I get?**

The amount of workers' compensation benefits you can receive for carpal tunnel syndrome in New York depends on the severity of your condition, the extent of your disability, and your average weekly wage before the injury.

In New York, the [Average Weekly Wage](#) (AWW) is calculated based on your gross earnings from the 52 weeks preceding your injury, including overtime. The AWW is determined by dividing your total gross pay by the number of days you were paid, adjusting for your typical workweek (four, five, or six days), and then standardizing that figure over a 52-week period.

The benefits you receive also depend on the degree of your disability, which is determined by a medical evaluation. Disabilities are categorized as:

- **Temporary Total Disability (TTD):** If you are completely unable to work temporarily, you may receive the full benefit amount based on your AWW.
- **Temporary Partial Disability (TPD):** If you can work in a limited capacity, you may receive a percentage of the full benefit.
- **Permanent Partial Disability (PPD):** If your carpal tunnel syndrome causes a permanent but partial disability, your compensation will be based on the percentage of disability and could be provided for a set number of weeks.
- **Permanent Total Disability (PTD):** If your condition results in a permanent total disability, you could receive benefits for life.

### **Why do I need a lawyer to get carpal tunnel workers' comp payments?**

Obtaining workers' compensation for carpal tunnel syndrome can be challenging, especially if you've never filed a claim before. You'll need to know how the process works and make sure there are no errors on your workers' comp claim application.

An experienced New York workers' compensation lawyer can walk you through the process, ensure that your C-3 form is filled out correctly, handle all complicated documents, and make sure that all deadlines are met.

Demonstrating that your CTS is work-related can be difficult, particularly if you work from home or developed symptoms shortly after starting your job. An attorney can help gather the necessary medical evidence and establish that your job duties caused your condition.

Additionally, employers sometimes attempt to deny claims for repetitive stress injuries, possibly due to the potential for long-term disability and the anticipated financial impact of such

workplace injuries. However, an attorney can help counteract these tactics and advocate for your legal rights.

[Pasternack Tilker Ziegler Walsh Stanton & Romano, LLP](#) has over 90 years of experience representing injured workers in New York. Our dedicated team of workers' compensation attorneys is committed to standing by your side every step of the way.

[Contact us](#) today for a free, no-obligation consultation, and let us help you explore your legal options. You can also call or visit any of our law offices in NYC and New York State.