

To Whom It May Concern:

If you need to file a worker's comp claim or a disability claim, then this does concern you. When I began my career as a PTF city letter carrier with the United States Postal Service, I was healthy enough, strong enough and ambitious enough to go for a 30 year career before retiring. Four years into that career, my life changed.

I began having muscle spasms, intense burning pain and stiffness in my neck and shoulders. When I realized it wasn't getting any better on its own, I wised up and went to the doctor. The diagnosis wasn't something that I wanted to hear especially at the ripe old age of 40. I had degenerative disc disease of the cervical spine. The excessive head turning, reaching, stretching, heavy lifting, pushing, pulling and repetitive motions of my job duties brought this condition on and aggravated and worsened it.

Loving my job, I continued to work. Hoping, that I could make it, at least, to my 20 year retirement eligibility. As the years went by, my condition worsened. I eventually was diagnosed with degenerative disc disease of the lumbar spine, fibromyalgia, Raynaud's and hypothyroidism, all of which made it even more difficult for me to perform my day to day job duties. At this point, I had 16 years and 2 months of active employment with the USPS. I knew I would never make it another 4 years.

Earlier that year I had a fall while on the job delivering mail. I filed a worker's comp claim on my own and was promptly denied. I also filed another worker's comp claim for occupational disease, again on my own and was promptly denied.

Now, here I go thinking I will file for disability but in the back of my mind, I was afraid it would be denied. I went to my doctor and I discussed my medical conditions with him and how difficult and painful it was for me to perform my job duties. He said I had already pushed myself too far and he proceeded to fill out the disability papers and placed me on permanent/indefinite sick leave effective immediately.

Well, I thought that since my doctor took me out of work and filed disability on me, I shouldn't be denied. I sent the disability claim in on my own again and was promptly denied. I could not return to my job and my claim had been denied. I felt like a sinking ship with no land in sight.

I went in search of an attorney but was turned down again and again because this was a federal claim and they only did state claims. Finally, an attorney, who was also a family friend, called the Attorney General's office and asked where in the state of South Carolina, could we find an attorney who would handle a federal claim. We were told that there are none in SC. They did recommend an attorney in Savannah, Georgia, Paul Felser of Felser Law Firm.

I called his office and set up an appointment for a phone conference. I never knew how many details needed to be explicitly cited in supporting a claim for worker's comp or disability. Paul Felser knew exactly what had to be stated and how to present each claim. We had a hearing before an administrative law judge, appointed by the Merit System Protection Board. My disability retirement was granted. Paul Felser also helped me file a new owcp claim for occupational disease. That claim has been approved.

Filing any claim is a major step to take. There is an extreme amount of time and paperwork involved. You have to be concise, honest, and thorough with all of your supporting evidence. Even at that, your claim may still be denied. I've been through the filing process, the denials, the reconsideration, more denials. It became very frustrating and very easy to just say forget it. But, with the guidance and assistance of an attorney who is knowledgeable and experienced at these claims, you can be approved.

I could have finalized my claims sooner if I had contacted the Felser Law Firm from the beginning. Not to mention the sleepless nights and headaches worrying about the situation and sweating the deadlines. Take it from someone who has been there, it is definitely worth the call.

I highly recommend Paul Felser and his staff at Felser Law Firm. They helped me get all my evidence presented within the allotted time and won approval for my disability and my owcp claim. I thank them all for all they have done on my behalf.

*Minnie Walsh*

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PTF City Letter Carrier - Retired