



# BarNotes

A Publication of the  
San Fernando Valley Bar Association

## In This Issue

President's Message .....3

LRIS Report .....5

ADR Special Focus .....7

Notice to Attorneys.....11

Members in the News .....12

Santa Clarita Valley Bar .....13  
Association

Classified Ads .....19

New Members .....20

Calendar of Events  
Page 23

Judges' Night

See Page 15

## FOCUS ON WORKERS COMPENSATION SECTION BIG CHANGES IN LAW AND REGULATION

The year 2005 was one of the most tumultuous years in Workers' Compensation law that many practitioners have ever known. Existing laws were revised and new ones implemented with breathtaking speed, according to SFVBA Workers' Compensation Section Chair William J. Kropach.

Workers' Compensation law requires that if an employee is injured on the job, the employer must provide workers' compensation benefits. Employee injuries can be caused by a single event at work, for example, a slip and fall, chemical burn, or car accident. Repeated exposure at work can also cause injury, including repetitive motion syndrome or hearing loss caused by constant loud noise.



"The last year and a half has seen the most dramatic changes in the workers' compensation system since its inception over 90 years ago," Kropach, principal of Encino's Law Offices of William J. Kropach, says.

The focus of Workers' Compensation law is to provide benefits to injured workers, he says. These benefits include medical treatment, temporary or permanent disability benefits, vocational rehabilitation and death benefits.

"The Workers' Compensation Section of the San Fernando Valley Bar Association holds monthly meetings designed to help practitioners deal with the realities of this new, changing world," Kropach says.

Kropach recommends that clients consider using certified specialists to handle their workers compensation cases.

"A certified specialist is more than just an attorney who specializes in a particular area or law," Kropach explains. "A California attorney who is certified by the State Bar

must have taken and passed a written examination in Workers' Compensation law, demonstrated a high level of experience in the area, fulfilled ongoing education requirements and been favorably evaluated by other attorneys and judges."

The Section offers members guidance on understanding the Workers' Compensation process, which Kropach terms "very complicated."

"The outcome of any client's case can be seriously affected by who presents the matter," he says. "A certified specialist can explain rights and benefits, help get the medical care that the client needs and choose qualified doctors to evaluate the client's medical condition, help the client return to work or vocational rehabilitation, maximize results and provide quality representation before the Workers' Compensation Appeals Board."

Kropach says that the Section's overall goal is to continue to assist practitioners in keeping abreast of all the changes in the statutory and regulatory schemes as well as Board and Appellate decisions affecting those changes. This includes Senate Bill 46, which would allow a panel of voter-elected politicians to decide workers' compensation rates.

Section programming in 2005 included "The New Ratings Schedule," "New GAF Schedule for Rating Psychiatric Disability," "AMA Guides to the Evaluation of Permanent Impairment," "Impairment Ratings as They Affect Individual's Ability to Perform Activities of Daily Living," "Application of AMA Guides in Internal Medicine Toxicology" and "Case Law Update."

For more information on the SFVBA Workers' Compensation Section, contact the Law Offices of William J. Kropach at (818) 609-7005. 📞