

## Are You Experiencing Pain in Your Wrists, Elbows, or Shoulders?

**By Gretchen Rogers**

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### Occupational Diseases and Your Workers' Compensation Rights

Have you been experiencing pain in your wrists, elbows or shoulders, but don't know what caused it?

Just about all of you have jobs that require using your hands or arms in a repetitive manner to a greater extent than people working other jobs. Repetitive activity may involve hammering, stripping wire, using drills, digging, using screwdrivers, certain keyboard work, and many other activities. If you do that type of work and have been diagnosed with:

- carpal tunnel syndrome
- lateral epicondylitis (often called tennis elbow), or
- shoulder impingement (even rotator cuff injuries)

The medical problem might have been caused by your job. If so, it is called an "occupational disease" because it has occurred as a result of doing the same type of repetitive activity over a long period of time.

Verizon employees with job classifications that often have these types of problems are:

- Consultant
- Cable splicer
- Lineman
- Maintenance Administrator
- Service tech
- Or any other classification that requires repetitive activity of the arms

From time to time, Verizon has tried to alleviate the problem for consultants with ergonomic studies for people working at desks. However, it has been our experience that although changing the level of desks, checking chairs, providing arm rests, etc. has helped, it has not eliminated the problem and often was provided inconsistently and/or too late. And for outside people: stripping wire constantly, reaching overhead frequently, arduous digging, etc. is still pretty standard. Therefore, the hazards are still present.

We are concerned that many of you are feeling the pain and receiving medical treatment through your own medical insurer, but not filing the appropriate Workers' Compensation paperwork. Unfortunately, there are deadlines that may prevent you from doing so if you wait too long.

### Why File a Workers' Compensation Claim?

The short and quick answer is to ensure that you receive the benefits



you are entitled to if your injury was caused by your job. If your injury is covered under Workers' Compensation law you have the right to claim:

- Payment for medical treatment reasonably related to your injury
- Compensation while you are unable to work due to your injury
- Partial compensation should you return to work temporarily in a capacity that reduces your income
- Vocational rehabilitation benefits if you can't return to your regular job
- Permanent disability benefits even if you return to your regular job

### What Must You Do to File a Workers' Compensation Claim?

A claim form must be filed with the Maryland Workers' Compensation Commission. Merely notifying Verizon or even speaking with a representative from their insurance company is not enough. Even receiving paperwork from Verizon or its insurer that includes a claim number or payment of your medical bills is not sufficient to protect your right to file a workers' compensation claim. Only filing a claim on the appropriate form with the Maryland Workers' Compensation Commission in Baltimore protects your rights.

Once the claim is filed, Verizon has the right to object that your condition is job related. However, filing a claim does not jeopardize your job. If the Commission finds your condition compensable you will be entitled to many benefits in addition to those provided under your Union contract including, in some circumstances, some important extra benefits should you have to be on light duty while you are recovering.

Our firm has had the privilege of representing Verizon employees with regard to their Workers' Compensation claims for more than two decades. During that time we have represented employees with just about every job classification at the company. Please contact Gretchen Rogers if you have any questions at 301-670-7030 and for more information see our web site at [www.bsgfdlaw.com](http://www.bsgfdlaw.com) and download our workers' compensation app.

## DexYP Media Changes Name to Thryv

For those of you who have been around a while, you may have noticed the old Yellow Pages company has gone through significant transformations over the years. From Verizon VIS to SuperMedia to Idearc to Dex, the print company has been reinventing itself to stay afloat in a digital world.

The new company name "Thryv" is a rebranding effort to promote small business solutions which will allow owners to manage their business with software that enables them to communicate with clients, manage their schedules, and get paid, all in one place.

All provisions of the current collective bargaining agreements remain in effect. Currently, Thryv delivers business services to more than 400,000 small businesses across America.

I've followed the United Auto Workers' strike against General Motors daily since their 46,000 members walked off their jobs at 55 plants nationwide at 12:01a.m on September 16, one day after their 2015 contract expired. This strike is already the longest walkout at GM since 1970, when workers struck for 67 days and won better wages and inflation protection, improved pensions and the right to retire after 30 years. With organized labor's decline in recent decades, auto walkouts have become less frequent. More work is now being sent abroad, and foreign-owned car plants in the South have turned back unionization efforts. But the current strike coincides with a rise in assertiveness by unionized and nonunionized workers, from teachers to hotel workers to ride-share drivers.



GM wants their employees to pay a higher percentage of their health care costs, and wants to lower their labor costs by increasing the number of "temporary workers". I placed quotation marks around the term temporary workers for a very important reason. Back in 2010, one year after the auto maker emerged from bankruptcy, the UAW made huge concessions in order to help keep the company afloat. Employees hired before 2007 (known as "legacy workers") earn about \$31 an hour and retire with a lifelong pension. But those hired after 2007, which is nearly a third of GM's hourly work force, start at \$17 an hour, get a 401(k) retirement account instead of a pension, and are easier to "get rid of". To get out of this arrangement, widely deemed unfair, the union negotiated a new contract in 2015, in which new hires would still have lower starting salaries, but could "grow into" the full UAW hourly wage after eight years. Union leaders - citing GM's clear improved financial position with \$8.1 billion in after-tax profits last year - now want to shorten that process under the basic principle of equal pay for equal work. When members were polled last year, they told their Union that a clear path for these temporary workers to become permanent workers, and to earn better pay and benefits along the way, was their most important bargaining demand.

In a typical management ploy to divide the UAW membership, GM has reportedly proposed a boost to the company's profit-sharing formula, a financial gain that would only go to permanent, full-time employees. The legacy employees aren't falling for it, though. It warmed my heart to read about Leon Harvey, a 66 year old with 45 years on the job as a metal model maker. The strike is his third, he said, and also his last. His wife is a retired school teacher, their house is paid off, and his plan is to leap at the next buyout. "I'm out here for the younger guys," he said. "When I was young, somebody was out here for me."

Reminiscent of Verigreedy Verizon, GM spends their time at the bargaining table crying about the uncertainty around declining car sales, a trade war with China, and the fact that nonunionized foreign rivals' hourly labor costs, including benefits, are \$13 less per hour than GM's costs. The message on the picket lines is radically different, where they point out that GM Chairman and CEO Mary Barra received a total compensation packet in 2018 of \$21.87 million - 240 times the average pay of hourly employees. Adjusted for inflation, the GM Chief Executive's base salary is flat from 2010, but the top-earning production employees' adjusted base wages have fallen roughly 10% during that same period of time. UAW members calculate Barra's pay at about \$11,000 per hour. "She gets that money off the sweat of my back," said Matt Moorhead, a GM employee at the Lansing assembly and stamping plant. "If I don't sweat, she doesn't make money." Members point out that the union bent over backward and made huge concessions in order to keep the company afloat when it was needed. Now that the company is doing well financially, they demand that be reflected in their new contract.

My favorite UAW strike story is about auto workers LaCrystal Robertson and Steven Ferguson, who met on the manufacturing floor of the Spring

Hill, TN, plant three years ago. After their wedding on September 21, the new bride put down her bouquet and picked up a picket sign, as the newlyweds joined their fellow employees on the picket line. LaCrystal said that just because it was their special day they were not forgetting what they were fighting for. Steven said if any of his four kids became the fourth generation of auto workers in his family, he wants to ensure that they have the same benefits he has now. This couple certainly has their priorities straight!

**In Maryland, UAW Local 239 has a picket line at 10301 Philadelphia Rd, in White Marsh, from 6a-2p Monday through Friday, and 10a-2p on Saturday and Sunday.** If you are near there, please consider joining their picket line for a little while, and/or dropping off donuts, drinks or pizza to the strikers. I'm sure you all remember how uplifting it was when others did the same for us during our 49-day strike in 2016. It is important that the 12.5 million working people of the AFL-CIO are ready to march alongside and support the striking UAW workers so they can win this fight for fairness, dignity and security after delivering record-breaking profits for years. The UAW members' hard work should be rewarded with a fair share of the success they have created. If I become aware of other ways that CWA members can support the striking UAW members, I will keep you informed.

In Solidarity,

*Marilyn*

## CWA Customer Service Members Stand United with MAXIMUS Call Center Workers!

Every year CWA holds actions throughout the country to recognize the professionalism of our members who work in call centers or in direct customer contact. CWA has more than 100,000 members in all industries and sectors of our union who provide customer support and for this year's CWA Customer Service Week of Action, the Customer Service Program is supporting CWA's organizing campaign at MAXIMUS call centers.

Federally contracted customer service professionals at MAXIMUS are organizing with CWA to form a union. MAXIMUS employs about 10,000 non-union customer service agents at 11 call centers it operates under a contract with the federal government to respond to inquiries about Medicare and the federal Affordable Care Act exchange and help ensure access to healthcare for Americans across the country. These call centers are in Arizona, Florida, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, Utah, and Virginia. GDIT was the employer at these call centers up to November 2018 when MAXIMUS acquired GDIT's call center business.

MAXIMUS pays its customer service professionals at these call centers as little as \$10.60 an hour despite the critical service they provide. The U.S. Department of Labor is investigating allegations of widespread wage theft at these call centers that could amount to workers being owed \$100 million in back pay. And the company's family health plans are unaffordable for employees making poverty wages.

Now MAXIMUS workers are uniting to fight for the better pay, working conditions, and respect they deserve! They've formed organizing committees, met with members of Congress, held rallies, signed petitions, and wear CWA red to work every week.

But MAXIMUS has responded with a campaign of fear and intimidation aimed at scaring workers from joining together and achieving collective power and a voice at work.

CWA is urging all members to help with this organizing campaign by going online and signing the petition:

<https://www.actionnetwork.org/petitions/stand-with-fellow-customer-service-workers-at-maximus>

For the 2020 plan year, Via Benefits will be adding the following amount(s) into the Health Reimbursement Account (HRA) on January 1, 2020: If you have any questions about this announcement, please contact Via Benefits on 1-855-535-7157 for Medicare eligible retirees and 1-844-669-3681 for Non-Medicare eligible retirees.

Table 1: HRA Funding for Non-Medicare-Eligible Represented Retirees and their Spouse/Domestic Partner

Coverage Tier	2020 HRA Allocation*
Retiree opted-in to individual coverage	\$4,300
Retiree and spouse/domestic partner opted-in to coverage (regardless of spouse/domestic partner's Medicare status)	\$8,250

\*Amounts above will be pro-rated for mid-year Medicare eligibility or mid-year plan enrollment.

Table 2: HRA Funding for Medicare-Eligible Represented Retirees and their Spouse/Domestic Partner

Coverage Tier	2020 HRA Allocation**
Retiree enrolled in individual Via Benefits Medical/Rx coverage	\$2,300
Retiree and spouse/domestic partner enrolled in Via Benefits Medical/Rx coverage (regardless of spouse/DP's Medicare status)	\$4,100

\*\*Amounts above will be pro-rated for mid-year plan enrollment.

If you are a represented retiree or a Non-Medicare retiree, you must opt-in to your HRA by contacting Via Benefits prior to December 15, 2019 in order to receive the HRA funding. For Represented Retirees that are Medicare eligible, you must enroll in a medical and prescription drug plan through Via Benefits by December 7, 2019 in order to receive the HRA funding. If you already have a medical plan through Via Benefits and want to change your provider for 2020, the same deadlines apply. For more information on utilizing the funds in your HRA account or changing providers, please contact Via Benefits.

## Workers Helping Workers You Make a Difference !!



The mission of the Community Services Agency is to improve the lives of workers and their families by meeting their human and social services needs; by building diverse coalitions to promote and protect dignity and justice for workers; and by empowering workers and their unions to make their communities better places to live, work, raise a family and retire. Some of the critical services provided by the Community Services Agency are:

### Emergency Assistance Fund

CSA raises and spends approximately \$120,000 annually and assists about 350 families with emergency financial needs- prevention of utility cut-offs and evictions, needed prescriptions, transportation so members can keep working, food, child care and other needs. Eligibility criteria apply.

### Information and Referral Services

CSA annually refers hundreds of metro area residents to community resources for all kinds of social services assistance.

### Lay-off and Strike Preparation and Support for workers and their families

CSA provides assistance preparing for interruption in work and income due to layoff, RIF or strike, as well as help accessing available services.

### Educational Workshops for Unions and Their Members

CSA provides information and workshops on a variety of topics including budgeting and financial management, retirement planning, preparing for lay-off and job loss, helping co-workers with substance abuse problems, finding care for aging parents, and other topics of interest to workers.

Please support the Community Services Agency using these Designation Numbers: United Way and DC One Fund Campaigns: #8253 \* Combined Federal Campaign: #19579 Maryland Charity Campaign: #9320

## Personals

*We wish to extend sincere sympathy to the family and friends of:*

**Merilyn Johnson**, mother of **Karen Copeman** who passed away on August 29, 2019.

**Alice Aline Jemmott**, grandmother of **Justin Lettsome** who passed away on September 2, 2019.

## Welcome to Local 2108

### New Members

**Rocio Leonzo**

Martha Suarez-Gomez

**Matt Klingman**

Ralph Picarella, Jr

**Kendra Whitaker Hughes**

Sudath Munasinghe

### Transferred Members



**Teresa Thomas**

Hiram Sean Bonner



### Congratulations to Recent Retirees:



Jodie Geary



## Thinking About Retirement?

You may want to check out one of these important workshops presented by **Nettworth Financial** Group to see if the reality of retirement is on your horizon!!

### Retirement Preparedness Score

**Saturday, October 12, 2019 at 10AM - CWA Local 2336, 151 Riggs Road NE, Washington D.C. 20011**

### Retirement Exploration

**Saturday, October 19, 2019 at 10AM - CWA Local 2100, 12436 Eastern Avenue, Middle River, MD 21220**

**Wednesday, October 23, 2019 at 6:30PM - Ruth's Chris, 1110 Town Center Blvd., Odenton, MD 21113**

Reservations are required and to RSVP you may call Nettworth at (800)-859-2212, or register online at [Nettworth.net](http://Nettworth.net). Space



**is limited and the workshop is limited to CWA members 55 and older with 20+ years of net credited service and their spouse only.**

## RMC 2108 Retirees Corner

### RMC 2108 Officer Nominations and Elections - October 9, 2019, 11:00AM

Local 2108 Office, Beltsville, MD  
See you there!!



Typical worker compensation has risen only 12% during that time

CEO compensation has grown 940% since 1978

Chief executive officers (CEOs) of the largest firms in the U.S. earn far more today than they did in the mid-1990s and many times what they earned in the 1960s or late 1970s. They also earn far more than the typical worker, and their pay has grown much more rapidly. Importantly, rising CEO pay does not reflect rising value of skills, but rather CEOs' use of their power to set their own pay. And this growing power at the top has been driving the growth of inequality in our country.



Corporate boards running America's largest public firms are giving top executives enormous compensation packages. Average pay of CEOs at the top 350 firms in 2018 was \$17.2 million—or \$14.0 million using a more conservative measure. (Stock options make up a big part of CEO pay packages, and the conservative measure values the options when granted, versus when cashed in, or "realized.") CEO compensation is very high relative to typical worker compensation (by a ratio of 278-to-1 or 221-to-1). In contrast, the CEO-to-typical-worker compensation ratio (options realized) was 20-to-1 in 1965 and 58-to-1 in 1989.

Exorbitant CEO pay is a major contributor to rising inequality that we could safely do away with. CEOs are getting more because of their power to set pay, not because they are increasing productivity or possess specific, high-demand skills. This escalation of CEO compensation, and of executive compensation more generally, has fueled the growth of top 1.0% and top 0.1% incomes, leaving less of the fruits of economic growth for ordinary workers and widening the gap between very high earners and the bottom 90%. The economy would suffer no harm if CEOs were paid less (or taxed more).

**How we can solve the problem:** We need to enact policy solutions that would both reduce incentives for CEOs to extract economic concessions and limit their ability to do so. Such policies could include reinstating higher marginal income tax rates at the very top; setting corporate tax rates higher for companies that have higher ratios of CEO-to-worker compensation; establishing a luxury tax on compensation such that for every dollar in compensation over a set cap, a firm must pay a dollar in taxes; reforming corporate governance to give other stakeholders better tools to exercise countervailing power against CEOs' pay demands; and allowing greater use of "say on pay," which allows a firm's shareholders to vote on top executives' compensation.

Local 2108 Calendar

OCTOBER 2019

- 2 Chief Stewards Meeting - 9:30am
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
9 RMC 2108 Meeting - 11:00am
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
9 Membership Meeting - 6:00pm
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
31 Halloween



NOVEMBER 2019

- 3 Daylight Savings Time Ends
Turn Clocks Back One Hour
11 Veteran's Day
Local Office Closed
13 RMC 2108 Meeting - 11:00am
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
13 Membership Meeting - 6:00pm
Local Office, Beltsville, MD
28-29 Thanksgiving Holiday
Local Office Closed



WEINGARTEN RIGHTS

If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated or have any effect on my personal working conditions, I respectfully request my union representative, officer or steward to be present at this meeting. Without union representation, I choose not to participate in this discussion.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR: Membership Meeting - Wednesday, October 9, 2019, 6:00pm RMC 2108 Meeting - Wednesday, October 9, 2019, - 11:00am



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