Preventing Strains and Sprains Fatality File

Maintenance Carpenter Suffers Permanent Back/Leg Injuries Substantial Compensation Payment Secured

The client lived and worked in country NSW. He had spent his entire working life working as a maintenance carpenter for various Government departments. Several years ago, he suffered a very serious injury to his back. On this occasion, he was directed to load a truck with equipment needed for a job. No assistance was provided and he was required to do a number of heavy lifts of various items onto the truck. Whilst attempting one lift, he felt a sharp pain in his back extending down to his foot. In fact, his leg gave way.

Having reported the accident, he attended his GP who diagnosed sciatica. He underwent various investigations including MRI scanning where disc damage to his spine was finally diagnosed. Initially, the specialist suggested conservative treatment. He underwent special spinal injections which only offered short-term relief. Eventually, he went under the surgeon’s knife. Initially, this surgery did help but unfortunately, as a result of the surgery, he developed “foot drop”. Over the following months and years, he struggled to return to work. He did his best but has been left with pain and weakness in his back, foot and leg. Painkilling medication was needed on a daily basis to get him through the days work, but eventually, he came to further surgery which involved a fusion of his ankle and a lengthening of his Achilles tendon and a tendon transfer.

After more rehabilitation, he attempted to get back to work. He has performed various light-duty tasks with his employer.

Ultimately he was given a choice; if he wanted to keep working he would somehow have to get back to doing his full-time maintenance work. Being “old school” and determined not to let his injuries and disabilities destroy his work, he has gotten back to doing maintenance work. Needless to say, he has to be very careful. He relies on his co-workers to do heavy lifts and because of his ongoing leg and back problems, he can’t work from ladders or scaffolds. He needs pain medication to get him through his days’ work. At home, most of his leisure time is spent resting. He can’t mow the lawns and jobs that were never a problem now can’t be attempted, such as painting the house and doing repairs from ladders.