Does Workers Comp Cover Hospital Worker's Carpal Tunnel Syndrome?



A year after returning to work from a work-related shoulder injury, a hospital worker tasked with sterilizing medical instruments was diagnosed with carpal tunnel syndrome. The workers comp case worker found that the new condition wasn't work-related because her job duties didn't subject her to the repetitive forces necessary to cause carpal tunnel syndrome. But the Nova Scotia appeals tribunal reversed the ruling. The evidence showed that her work duties were a factor in causing her carpal tunnel syndrome, it concluded. For 12 years, she worked 8 hours a day, 5 days a week cleaning, drying, assembling, disassembling, inspecting, and delivering trays and equipment relying on her dominant right hand. Heck, the hospital's own site hazard analysis specifically flagged this position as carrying the risk of carpal tunnel syndrome [*2017-580-AD (Re),* 2020 CanLII 106772 (NS WCAT), December 29, 2020].