Unlikely Roofer’s Sweat Gland Condition Was Caused by Wearing PPE



A roofer claimed that her Hidradenitis Suppurativa, a disorder of the sweat glands, was caused by the wearing of her fall prevention harness. Her claim was denied and the Appeals Tribunal agreed. The cause of Hidradenitis Suppurativa is unclear, but many factors appear to precipitate the condition, including genetics, medication usage, autoimmune and glandular factors. The roofer began experiencing symptoms of the condition years *before* she started wearing a safety harness and they’ve continued to worsen now that she no longer wears such PPE. It’s impossible to determine whether any particular breakout was related to the safety harness as opposed to other types of clothing, the wearing of deodorant or other factors. Because the evidence is too speculative to conclude that any particular breakout amounted to a personal injury by accident arising out of and in the course of employment, the Tribunal concluded that the roofer had failed to prove her claim on an ‘as likely as not’ basis [*2014-302-AD (Re)*, [2016] CanLII 20159 (NS WCAT), March 11, 2016].