



CANADIAN UNION OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES  
SYNDICAT CANADIEN DE LA FONCTION PUBLIQUE

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N O T I C E

**RECEIVED**  
AUG - 5 1986

To all Local Unions **UNIVERSITY EMPLOYEES' UNION (C.U.P.E.)**  
To all CUPE Representatives  
To all Health and Safety Committees

Does your VDT make you see red?

WCB Claim for Chromatopsia due to VDT use accepted in B.C.

A WCB claim initiated by CUPE staff Representative Doris Hanson was finally accepted by the British Columbia Workers' Compensation Board after appealing to B.C. Board. A claim by Margaret Lewis of LU 1091 was accepted by the board recognizing eye problems associated with the operation of Visual Display Terminals. The condition known as chromatopsia causes saturation of the green photo-receptors of the eye. This results in white objects being seen as pink.

It is not know if continued exposure will result in long term changes to the eye. Workers experiencing chromatopsia should seek medical attention and file for a WCB claim. In this way a record will be started and should problems develop later the claim is on file and further claims will be easier to obtain.

Enclosed with this notice is a copy of the decision of the B.C. Workers' Compensation Board.

For further information, please contact Health and Safety Department, National CUPE Office.

*Colin Lambert*

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CL/jp  
Encl.



## IN THE MATTER OF THE WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT

AND

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPEAL OF Margaret Lewis  
WORKERS' COMPENSATION BOARD CLAIM NUMBER XY85081194

This is an appeal from the decision of a Claims Adjudicator contained in a letter dated April 22nd, 1985. As explained in that letter, the appellant was advised that the pink sensation which she was experiencing, related to saturation of the green photo receptors after using a visual display terminal could not be considered as an injury to the eye. The adjudicator noted that claims for compensation were allowed only where a worker has suffered an injury or suffers from an industrial disease and this claim could not be considered further as she had suffered neither. Therefore, the claim was not accepted for wage loss or medical aid benefits.

An appeal was received from this decision on July 22nd, 1985. An oral hearing was requested but as it was considered that the issue could be dealt with adequately by written submission, this was denied by a letter of August 9th, 1985. This appeal has, therefore, been considered from a review of the claim file together with a written submission from the appellant's union representative, Ms. Doris Hanson.

The claim file history indicates that the appellant while employed as a secretary began to experience a visual phenomenon where all white objects took on a pink-red hue. The appellant related this to operating a video display terminal subsequent to September of 1984. A report of injury was made to the employer on February 20th, 1985.

The appellant was seen by her doctor on March 5th, 1985 and was referred to an ophthalmologist. An ophthalmologist report of March 18th, 1985 notes that . . .

"I feel that the pink sensation is related to saturation of the green photo receptors after looking at the video display terminal for prolonged periods. As a result, when she looks at a white object, this has a pinkish hue to it. This is not surprising and I don't feel it merits any therapy."

It was submitted on the appellant's behalf that her eye complaints fit comfortably within the Board's definition of injury as it includes any physiological change arising from some cause. Reference was made to the phenomenon experienced by the appellant as having been reported in the American Journal of Ophthalmology of December, 1984, entitled "Prolonged Complementary Chromatopsia in Users of Video Display Terminals". The conclusion



RE: LEWIS, Margaret  
Claim No. XY85081194

of this study was that "the prevalence, possible genetic basis, mechanism, significance, and long-term sequelae of this phenomenon are unknown".

After careful consideration of all the evidence, the majority of this Review Board panel would allow the appellant's appeal for investigative medical costs. In reaching this conclusion we have considered the medical dictionary description of an injury (Dorland's Pocket 21st Edition) which describes an injury as:

"A specific impairment of body structure or function caused by an outside agent or force, which may be physical, chemical or psychic."

We would accept that the appellant had an impairment of body structure or function caused by the effects of the video display terminal which she operated. This phenomenon has been recognized by the American Journal of Ophthalmology, a copy of which was submitted by her union representative. The majority is satisfied that the appellant's "injury" arose out of an in the course of her employment. Although there is no disability involved and wage loss benefits have not been requested there were medical costs concerning the investigation and diagnosis of her condition. As this phenomenon is a consequence of her work and fits within the definition of an injury, these costs should be accepted as a responsibility of the Board.