

APPEAL NO. 030047  
FILED FEBRUARY 27, 2003

This appeal arises pursuant to the Texas Workers' Compensation Act, TEX. LAB. CODE ANN. § 401.001 *et seq.* (1989 Act). A contested case hearing was held on November 19, 2002. The hearing officer determined that the respondent/cross-appellant (claimant) sustained a compensable injury on \_\_\_\_\_; that he had disability for the week beginning June 19, 2002, and again from July 13, 2002, through the date of the hearing; and that the claimant gave timely notice of the injury to his employer. Both the appellant (carrier) and the claimant urge on appeal that the hearing officer's decision should clarify whether the claimant's wrists are part of the compensable injury. The appeal file does not contain a response from either party to the opposing party's appeal.

DECISION

Affirmed.

We have stated many times that when determining whether or not a claimant sustained a compensable injury, it is useful and desirable for a hearing officer to indicate the nature of the injury. However, there is a balance to be struck here; it generally does not seem appropriate for a hearing officer to forever set in stone the parameters of an injury in determining whether or not there was a compensable injury. The hearing officer is generally limited to the issues before him or her. To broadly determine the issue of extent of injury when the stated issue is whether or not there is an injury can lead to a dispute resolution that goes beyond the issues before the hearing officer. Additionally, setting the parameters of an injury in stone when determining the issue of injury raises the specter of a hearing officer exceeding his or her jurisdiction by prejudging what medical care may be reasonable and necessary for an injury. This raises thorny jurisdictional issues. See Texas Workers' Compensation Commission Appeal No. 971871, decided October 29, 1997.

In the present case, the hearing officer described in Finding of Fact No. 2 the areas of the claimant's body that were damaged or harmed in the \_\_\_\_\_, injury. However, the hearing officer determined, as reflected in Conclusion of Law No. 3 and the Decision paragraph, only that the claimant sustained a compensable injury. We perceive no error in her doing so and, furthermore, do not read Finding of Fact No. 2 and Conclusion of Law No. 3 to be in conflict with one another. We explicitly find no binding determination has been made regarding the extent of the claimant's injury.

The hearing officer's decision and order is affirmed.

The true corporate name of the insurance carrier is **FEDERATED MUTUAL INSURANCE COMPANY** and the name and address of its registered agent for service of process is

**RUSS LARSEN  
860 AIRPORT FREEWAY WEST, SUITE 500  
HURST, TEXAS 75054-3286.**

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Chris Cowan  
Appeals Judge

CONCUR:

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Gary L. Kilgore  
Appeals Judge

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Edward Vilano  
Appeals Judge