

# Connecticut Expands Workers' Compensation Coverage for Post-Traumatic Stress Injuries for All Employees

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Nicole S. Mulé

Stamford

Author



Chelsea R. Sousa

Stamford

Author

On June 5, 2023, Substitute Bill No. 913 was enacted as [Public Act \(PA\) No. 23-35](#), “An Act Expanding Workers' Compensation Coverage for Post-Traumatic Stress Injuries for All Employees.”

## Quick Hits

- Public Act No. 23-35 expands the definition of “employee” to allow nearly all workers—not just first responders—who suffer certain tragic qualifying events to claim workers' compensation benefits.
- The law will take effect on January 1, 2024.

PA 23-35 amends Connecticut General Statutes § 31-294k, which governs benefits for post-traumatic stress injuries. PA 23-35 expands the law to cover an “employee,” a broad definition that includes any person who:

- has entered into or works under any contract of service or apprenticeship with an employer; or
- is a sole proprietor or business partner.

PA 23-35 also expands the “qualifying events” for which an individual—including an employee—may seek workers' compensation benefits. Under PA 23-35, a “qualifying event” includes:

- “View[ing] a deceased minor”;
- “Witness[ing] the death of a person or an incident involving the death of a person”;
- “Witness[ing] an injury to a person who subsequently dies before or upon admission at a hospital as a result of the injury”;
- Having “physical contact with and treat[ing] an injured person who subsequently dies before or upon admission at a hospital as a result of the injury”;
- “Carr[ying] an injured person who subsequently dies before or upon admission at a hospital as a result of the injury”; and
- “Witness[ing] a traumatic physical injury that results in the loss of a vital body part or a vital body function that results in permanent disfigurement of the victim.”

Finally, PA 23-35 permits employees to seek recovery through workers' compensation for qualifying post-traumatic stress injuries to the same extent that first responders in Connecticut are permitted to recover.

To the extent possible, employers may want to review and refine their health and safety protocols to reduce the risk of a “qualifying event” in the workplace. Employers may also want to consider reviewing and familiarizing themselves with applicable Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) standards to ensure compliance in an effort to maximize healthful working conditions in the workplace, and to reduce opportunities for post-traumatic events to occur in the workplace.

Ogletree Deakins' [Stamford office](#) will continue to monitor developments with respect to employment-related bills introduced in the 2023 legislative session and will provide updates on the [Connecticut](#) and [Workplace Safety and Health](#) blogs as additional information becomes available.

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