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Office of Injured Employee Counsel Appoints a First Responders Liaison to Assist With Workers' Compensation Claims

House Bill 2082 by State Rep. Dustin Burrows First Responder Liaison

First responders in Texas now have a new tool to navigate the often complex workers' compensation system. HB 2082 went into effect September 1, 2017. HB 2082 by Representative Dustin Burrows created a first responder liaison at the Office of Injured Employee Counsel (OIEC). Representative Burrows remarked, "Our State's injured first responders -- now, more than ever, deserve a voice and representation when contending with the intricacies and complexities of the worker's compensation system. As the author of House Bill 2082, I am grateful to Governor Abbott for his support of the bill, and I look forward to its implementation. The First Responder Liaison at the State's Office of Injured Employee Counsel will serve as a direct source of help and resources for the people who offer their lives to protect and serve us."

OIEC is the state agency that assists injured employees with workers' compensation issues. OIEC's public counsel, Jessica Barta, appointed Yolanda Garcia as OIEC's first responder liaison.

Mrs. Garcia has worked for over a decade as an ombudsman assisting injured employees with the Division of Workers' Compensation dispute resolution system. She comes from a family of first responders. Her husband and brother are police officers.

"It is an honor to serve as OIEC's first responder liaison. I know how daunting the workers' compensation system can be. I am excited about the opportunity to assist those who assist us."

First responders who need assistance can reach the liaison at a dedicated phone number, 512-804-4173 or by emailing FirstResponderHelp@oiec.texas.gov.

"Texans rely on first responders during some of the most challenging and dangerous circumstances of their lives. The aftermath of Hurricane Harvey is a reminder of the vital role first responders. OIEC is committed to helping first responders obtain their workers' compensation benefits so that they can return to their important work on behalf of the people of Texas."

For more about the Office of Injured Employee Counsel visit oiec.texas.gov.

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