

Work-at-Home Accident Now a Workplace Injury

VOCABULARY WORDS

1. commute /kə'myoot/ travel some distance between one's home and place of work on a regular basis.
Example: She commuted her work to the concert hall.
2. payout /'pā,out/ a large payment of money, especially as compensation or a dividend.
Example: The woman received her insurance payout and bought a car.
3. route /root,rout/ a way or course taken in getting from a starting point to a destination.
Example: I prefer to take this route as compared to the suggested one.
4. implication /,implə'kāSH(ə)n/ the conclusion that can be drawn from something although it is not explicitly stated.
Example: We heard of his implication in a conspiracy.
5. insurer /in'SHoorər/ a person or company that underwrites an insurance risk; the party in an insurance contract undertaking to pay compensation.
Example: She should contact her insurer directly for her questions.



A German court has ruled that experiencing an injury while walking from your bedroom to your home office is a workplace accident. The judges decided that walking a few meters from your bed to your desk in another room in your house can be considered a **commute** to work. As such, any injuries sustained on that short journey can be eligible for compensation **payouts**.

The significant ruling was made in a case where a man slipped while descending a staircase from his bedroom to his home office and broke his back. The court decided that the "first morning journey from bed to the home office is a protected work **route**". This decision could be the beginning of hearing similar cases in courts.

The idea of what constitutes a workplace has changed since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic. Millions of people have switched from working in offices to working at

home. This has **implications** on health and safety issues as well as the legalities around workplace accidents.

One big question concerns who is responsible for ensuring a home office satisfies safety requirements, and to what extent an employer is responsible for injuries sustained in an employee's home. An expert on German employment law said new legislation would be needed to decide future claims. He told the CNN news agency that: "It seems likely that **insurers** will...have to re-examine this decision often."

DISCUSSION

1. What are the disadvantages of working from home?
2. Who is responsible for injuries at home while working?
3. Should companies provide desks for workers' homes?
4. Is commuting to work a waste of time?
5. Who is responsible for health and safety in a home office?
6. Do you think more people will claim home office injuries?