

BEFORE THE ARKANSAS WORKERS' COMPENSATION COMMISSION

CLAIM NO.: H406682

LARRY LAZRINE, EMPLOYEE

CLAIMANT

SEWELL DRILLING, LLC.,
EMPLOYER

RESPONDENT

BITCO GENERAL INSURANCE CORPORATION,
INSURANCE CARRIER/TPA

RESPONDENT

OPINION FILED APRIL 8, 2026

Hearing held before Administrative Law Judge Chandra L. Black, in El Dorado, Union County, Arkansas.

Claimant represented by the Honorable F. Mattison Thomas III, Attorney at Law, El Dorado, Arkansas.

Respondents represented by the Honorable Micheal E. Ryburn, Attorney at Law, Little Rock, Arkansas.

Statement of the Case

On February 4, 2026, the above-captioned claim came on for a hearing in El Dorado, Arkansas. A Prehearing Telephone Conference was conducted with the parties on January 21, 2026, from which a Prehearing Order was filed on that same day. Said order and the parties' responsive filings have been marked as Commission's Exhibit No. 1.

Stipulations

During the Prehearing Telephone Conference, and/or the hearing, the parties agreed to the following stipulations:

1. The Arkansas Workers' Compensation Commission has jurisdiction of the within claim.

2. The employee-employer insurance carrier relationship existed among the parties on September 28, 2024, at which time the Claimant allegedly sustained a compensable injury to his right shoulder.

3. The Claimant earned wages at the time of the alleged September 2024 incident sufficient to entitle him to the maximum compensation rates for a 2024 injury.

4. The Respondents have controverted this claim in its entirety.

5. All issues not litigated herein are reserved under the Arkansas Workers' Compensation Act (referred to herein as the "Act").

Issues

The parties agreed to litigate the following issue:

Whether the Claimant is entitled to additional medical treatment for his alleged right shoulder injury.

Contentions

The Claimant's and the Respondents' respective contentions are as follows:

Claimant

The Claimant contends that he sustained a compensable injury on September 28, 2024, while working for the Respondents in a drilling rig capacity, injuring his right shoulder while performing the necessary duties of his employment.

Respondents

The Respondents contend that the Claimant did not injure his right shoulder at work on September 28, 2024. He has no objective findings.

Based on my review of the record as a whole, to include the aforementioned documentary evidence, other matters properly before the Commission, and after having had an opportunity to

hear the testimony of the Claimant and observe his demeanor, I hereby make the following findings of fact and conclusions of law in accordance with Ark. Code Ann. §11-9-704 (Repl. 2012):

FINDINGS OF FACT AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. The Arkansas Workers' Compensation Commission has jurisdiction over this claim.
2. I hereby accept the above-mentioned proposed stipulations as fact.
3. The Claimant did not prove by a preponderance of the evidence that there are any objective medical findings to show that he sustained an accidental injury to his right shoulder while working for the respondent-employer on September 28, 2024. Under these circumstances, I am compelled to find the Claimant has failed to prove his entitlement to any reasonable and necessary medical treatment for his alleged right shoulder injury. As a result, the employer is not liable for any medical treatment relating to this claim.
4. All issues not litigated herein are reserved under the Arkansas Workers' Compensation Act.

Summary of Evidence

The Claimant, Mr. Larry Lazrine, was the sole witness to testify during the hearing.

The record also consists of the hearing transcript of February 4, 2026, and the exhibits contained therein. Specifically, in addition Commission's Exhibit 1, the following exhibits have also been made a part of the record: the Claimant's and the Respondents' response to the Prehearing Questionnaire; Claimant's Exhibit 1 consisting of two pages of a Photocopy of a Check from Sewell Drilling, LLC to the Claimant; Claimant's Exhibit 2 entailing five pages of text messages; Claimant's Exhibit 3 consisting of two pages of Photographs; Claimant's Exhibit 4 consisting of two pages; Claimant's Exhibit 5 encompasses a one page Photocopy of a Text Message/Statement from Austin Duck to the Claimant; a Photocopy of a Text Message from

Daniel Crotty to the Claimant entailing only one was marked Claimant's Exhibit 6; and Claimant's Exhibit 7 comprising of a two-page Letter from the Claimant's attorney to my office dated February 3, 2026.

Background

The Claimant, now age 62, confirmed that in September 2024, he was working for Sewell Drilling, LLC. He testified that he performed employment duties of what they classified as a motorman mechanic. According to the Claimant, he took care of the engines and helped maintain pipes and other equipment. At that time of his alleged incident, the Claimant had worked for Sewell Drilling a couple of days shy of one year. He confirmed that he is a resident of Texas, but previously he temporarily lived in Arkansas. Per the Claimant, while in Arkansas, he and his wife lived in a camper with his daughter and granddaughter.

In September 2024, the Claimant testified that they were drilling a new well in Union County out on Highway 335 in El Dorado. At that time, the Claimant's supervisor was Daniel Crotty. He explained that if his supervisor were unavailable when something happened, he would notify the tool pusher or a driller or even go to someone else about it.

He essentially confirmed that he was involved in an on-the-job injury on September 28, 2024, around 12:45 p.m. According to the Claimant, Daniel Crotty had directed him to start getting everything rigged down because they had finished up and completed all the work on the well.

The Claimant provided the following explanation of what happened on September 28:

A. We finished making a connection on – on the floor, and it's – it's me, the chain hand and the – the worm – what we call a worm, which is the one that works on the - - on the other side of the chain hand. And we finished making the connection and, as we kind of broke up and got ready to go do our thing, I was fixing to go check motors and check the oil and stuff in the motors, make sure they're running right, and Daniel said, "Okay, we are going to start rigging down and stuff. I want y'all to get to - - and make sure you get those tongs, those spare tongs, and put them in the parts house." And so he said, "Grab one of them, grab

either Austin or Todd.”

So I told Todd. Austin was busy, so I asked Todd to come help me, and when me and Todd went down there to move them, and we come off of a mat and there was some ruts, and Todd was walking backwards and he actually stumbled and we almost dropped them, and it jerked me forward and then to the side. But the arm up here, I was holding onto that, and that’s what caught my arm and – and kind of just bent it between my – my leg. My elbow was right here stuck and it just bent it backwards.

Q. All right. Did you feel any sensation when that occurred?

A. Yes, sir. A great pain.

According to the Claimant, they were able to get the tongs back up and carry them over to the parts house, which was about six feet away from them. The Claimant testified that the tongs weigh approximately 275 to 325 pounds. He confirmed that the two of them were able to physically carry them from one location to another. The Claimant testified that once they were at the parts house, he told Todd he pulled something in his back. He further testified that after this occurred he felt pain in his lower back and shoulder.

The Claimant confirmed that he is claiming injuries to his back and right shoulder, for which he seeks medical treatment. However, he agreed that the primary injury is to his shoulder. He testified that he reported his injury to Daniel. According to the Claimant, Daniel made a statement about how heavy those things are and adjusted his hat and sat back in the driller chair and went back to sleep. The Claimant testified that Daniel blew him off. According to the Claimant, he took the photograph to show to Terry, who runs the company for the owner/Gary Sewell. Per the Claimant, there were other employees present to witness him advising of his injury. The Claimant testified that Austin Duck was one of the employees present.

He admitted that he went to work the next day. However, the Claimant testified that he did not get anything done because he had shoulder pain. According to the Claimant, he complained about something seriously being wrong with his shoulder while at work that day. When the

Claimant got back home, he went to Urgent Care. The Claimant confirmed that he sent the above bills to Sewell and they reimbursed him by way of a check. Said check has been made a part of the record. He confirmed that he got some prescription medications pursuant to his clinic visit. The Claimant testified that he was on a regimen of medications for a period of ten days. He verified that the company reimbursed him for the cost of his medications. The Claimant testified that his wife contacted Sewell's secretary about his injury, and she was informed that Sewell does not use workers' compensation insurance. Instead, his wife was told that employees send their medical bills directly to them and they pay the medical bills and the employee.

At that time, the Claimant was on a five-day regimen of pain medicines, muscle relaxers, and steroids. He confirmed that the doctor prescribed muscle relaxers for him. The Claimant admitted that he had muscle spasms at that time. Per the Claimant, they gave him two injections at the Urgent Care Clinic. He denied having received any other medical treatment for his shoulder. The Claimant denied that he was paid for his lost time while off work. Since this time, the Claimant denied that he has ever gone back to work. The Claimant denied that he has been able to afford to go to the doctor to find out exactly what is going on with him.

On October 4, Daniel Crotty notified the Claimant not to return to work because the rig was back at the yard, and he told him he would let him know when to return to work. In other words, the Claimant explained that he was discharged, because this is how employees are terminated. He denied that he has received any calls from Sewell Oil checking on his condition or telling him to return to work. The Claimant denied ever having any prior back or shoulder problems or injuries. According to the Claimant, he has not had any kind of prior medical issues. In fact, the Claimant testified that he has not had any type of health issues. He stated that he has not seen a doctor since 1987.

About his current physical condition, the Claimant testified that he has difficulties walking to his mailbox, which is about the distance of a half-a-city block from his residence. According to the Claimant, by the time he turns around from the mailbox and starts walking back, his hips and lower back start burning so bad that he has to stop for a minute and then start walking again.

On cross-examination, the Claimant explained that he is unable to work because he cannot stand for lengthy periods of time or walk too far because his back goes to hurting. However, he testified that the main issue is with his right shoulder. According to the Claimant, he cannot pick up or move anything with his shoulder without it feeling “like it is going to pop out of socket.”

The following exchange took place with the Claimant and Respondents’ attorney:

Q. You understand that the issue for today in the Judge’s Prehearing Order is your left shoulder?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. There is no back?

A. No, it’s -- it’s actually my right shoulder.

Q. There’s no back claim being litigated today. But the reason you can’t work is not your – your right shoulder, it’s your back.

A. No. It’s my shoulder. My shoulder --

He insisted that his shoulder hangs down an inch and a half lower than the other one. According to the Claimant, he cannot do anything with it physically, and all night and day his shoulder aches and burns. He confirmed that he is asking his employer to pay for him to go to the doctor.

Under further questioning, the Claimant admitted that he was told by Sewell’s management to fill out an injury report and take a drug, but he failed to do so. The Claimant denied using marijuana.

No medical documentation or report to establish a compensable injury by medical evidence supported by objective findings has been presented in this matter. In fact, no medical evidence whatsoever has been made a part of the record in this claim.

Adjudication

The Claimant has alleged that he sustained injuries to his back and shoulder as a result of a specific incident while working for the respondent-employer on September 28, 2024. However, the only issue to be litigated related to the Claimant’s right shoulder.

In that regard, for the Claimant to establish a compensable injury as a result of a specific incident, the following requirements of Ark. Code Ann. §11-9-102(4)(A)(i) (Repl. 2012), must be established: (1) proof by a preponderance of the evidence of an injury arising out of and in the course of employment; (2) proof by a preponderance of the evidence that the injury caused internal or external physical harm to the body which required medical services or resulted in disability or death; (3) medical evidence supported by objective findings, as defined in Ark. Code Ann. §11-9-102 (4)(D), establishing the injury; and (4) proof by a preponderance of the evidence that the injury was caused by a specific incident and is identifiable by time and place of occurrence. *Mikel v. Engineered Specialty Plastics*, 56 Ark. App. 126, 938 S.W.2d 876 (1997).

A compensable injury must be proven by medical evidence supported by objective findings. Ark. Code Ann. § 11-9-102(4)(D) (Repl. 2012). “Objective findings” are those findings that cannot come under the voluntary control of the patient. *Id.* § 11-9-102(16). The element “arising out of . . . [the] employment” relates to the causal connection between the Claimant’s injury and their employment. *City of El Dorado v. Sartor*, 21 Ark. App. 143, 729 S.W.2d 430 (1987). An injury arises out of a Claimant’s employment “when a causal connection between work conditions and the injury is apparent to the rational mind.” *Id.*

If the Claimant fails to prove by a preponderance of the evidence any of the requirements for proving compensability, compensation must be denied. *Mikel v. Engineered Specialty Plastics*, 56 Ark. App. 126, 938 S.W.2d 876 (1997). This standard means evidence that has greater weight or more convincing force. *Barre v. Hoffman*, 2009 Ark. 373, 326 S.W.3d 415; *Smith v. Magnet Cove Barium Corp.*, 212 Ark. 491, 206 S.W.2d 442 (1947).

After reviewing the evidence as a whole, without giving the benefit of the doubt to either party, I find that the Claimant has failed to prove that he sustained a compensable injury while working for the respondent-employer on September 28, 2024. Specifically, the Claimant did not offer any documentary medical evidence whatsoever in support of objective medical findings to authenticate a finding of compensability for his alleged right shoulder injury. Therefore, I am compelled to find that the Claimant did not prove he sustained a compensable right shoulder injury on September 28, 2024. As a result, the respondent-employer has no liability to provide the Claimant with any reasonably necessary medical treatment in connection with his alleged right shoulder injury.

ORDER

The Claimant did not furnish objective medical evidence so as to prove all the necessary elements for proving a compensable right shoulder injury, for which he would be entitled reasonable and necessary medical treatment.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

CHANDRA L. BLACK
Administrative Law Judge

