

**Case Name:** James Siegel v Metro-North Commuter Railroad Co.

**Date Decided:** April 1st, 2009

**Originally Filed in:** New York (Federal)

**Decided by:** New York Southern District Court (Federal)

**Court:** U.S.D.C. " S.D. New York

**Judge:** District Judge Chin

**Citation:** 2009 WL 889985 (S.D.N.Y.)

**Background:**

Plaintiff, James Siegel, worked for defendant, Metro-North Commuter Railroad Co. ("Metro-North") from 1978 until his retirement in 2008. Siegel was most recently a signalman. In either 2004 or 2005, Siegel began experiencing pain in his wrists and hands. He went to see an orthopedist, who diagnosed him with carpal tunnel syndrome ("CTS"). Eventually he had surgery. On October 11, 2005, Siegel injured his back while lifting a heavy piece of equipment. His back injury required Siegel to go to physical therapy. Siegel filed suit and amended his complaint six months later. Metro-North brought a motion for summary judgment only as to Siegel's CTS claim. They argued that no reasonable jury could find that Siegel's CTS was caused by working for Metro-North.

**Issue:**

Whether the Court will grant summary judgment for Metro-North.

**Overall Issues Discussed or Touched Upon in this Case:**

- *Cumulative Trauma Case*
- *Ruling on Summary Judgment*
- *Insufficient Evidence of Negligence*

**Held:**

Siegel failed to prove that his CTS was caused by his work for Metro-North. None of the evidence introduced was sufficient to meet Siegel's burden of proof as to causation. Siegel submitted numerous publications to the Court discussing CTS generally. This general evidence did not specifically address Siegel, his workplace, or the types of activities he did at work. The Court also noted that Siegel did not submit an affidavit in opposition to the motion for summary judgment. There was no evidence from which a reasonable jury could find that Metro-North caused Siegel's CTS. Therefore, Metro-North's motion for summary judgment is granted.

**Comments:**

In a motion for summary judgment, the judge has to decide what the facts are and apply the law. When a motion is granted, the lawsuit stops and does not proceed to trial. Conversely, when a motion is denied, the lawsuit moves to trial. At trial each party has the opportunity to

give their side to a judge or jury. The party moving for summary judgment must prove that there are no material issues of fact remaining to be tried. If there's nothing for the jury to decide, then the moving party rhetorically asks, why have a trial? However, when a party moves for summary judgment, the judge may find that it is the other party who is entitled to judgment.

Steve Gordon <http://www.gordon-elias.com>