

## SUMMARY STATEMENT

*Tyler v. Masterpiece Floors*

Docket Nos. 51520/51612

This consolidated appeal of a district court's decision and a corresponding decision from the Idaho Industrial Commission ("the Commission") addressed the district court's subject matter jurisdiction to determine whether an employee's injury falls within the "willful and unprovoked physical aggression" exception to the exclusive remedy rule under Idaho's worker's compensation laws. Cameron Demott Tyler suffered a serious hand injury resulting in the amputation of his right index finger while working. Tyler first filed a worker's compensation claim with the Commission and then a civil tort action against his employer in district court, alleging that his injuries fell within the exception to the exclusive remedy rule under Idaho Code section 72-209(3), which permits an employee to file a separate civil tort action if the employer commits an act of "willful or unprovoked physical aggression" against the employee.

After the employer failed to appear and defend against the action, Tyler subsequently applied for, and obtained, a default judgment in the civil tort action. About six months later, the employer filed a motion to set aside the default judgment on the ground that the district court lacked subject matter jurisdiction. Specifically, the employer argued that because the worker's compensation claim was filed first, Tyler was required to obtain a determination from the Commission that the willful and unprovoked physical aggression exception to the exclusive remedy rule applied before the district court had subject matter jurisdiction over any civil tort action. The district court agreed and entered an order staying enforcement of the default judgment until the Commission reached a determination on that issue. After the Commission reached a decision concluding Tyler's injury was not the result of the employer's willful or unprovoked physical aggression, that decision was filed with the district court, and the district court then granted the employer's motion to set aside the default judgment on grounds that it did not have subject matter jurisdiction. Tyler timely appealed.

The Idaho Supreme Court reversed the district court's decision setting aside the default judgment, vacated the Commission's findings of fact and conclusions of law, and remanded the case to the district court with instructions to reenter the default judgment. The Court held that the district court erred by ceding its subject matter jurisdiction over Tyler's civil tort action and staying enforcement of the default judgment.

***\*\*\*This summary constitutes no part of the opinion of the Court, but has been prepared by court staff for the convenience of the public.\*\*\****