

**'Socso favouring employers instead of workers'**  
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The Social Security Organisation (Socso), seems to have forgotten its objective of helping workers but has instead turned into an employers' friendly organisation.

ipoh ktm land title dispute m saraswathy This is the claim of Parti Sosialis Malaysia (PSM) national deputy chairperson M Saraswathy (left).

She said the present procedures and conditions for applying for compensation are very restrictive, cumbersome and worker-unfriendly.

"Low-income workers face an uphill task in claiming their compensation and it takes years before the lucky few to receive their payments," said the angry socialist.

PSM suggests that Socso take the following measures to ensure that workers get returns for social security investments made during the man hours:

- \* Socso insurance coverage should be for 24 hours (seven days a week) instead of the present eight-hour working day.

- \* Socso deductions should be made on the gross wages (including overtime, working benefits and bonus) instead of rates based on basic pay.

- \* Doctors who handle medical problems of workers should undergo occupational health and disease training to understand the working conditions of the victims.

- \* Socso, instead of referring patients to only government hospitals which do not have specialist equipment, should instead allow affected workers to go to private specialist centres for such treatment.

- \* The RM1,500 burial amount for each Socso contributor should be extended to all workers across the board instead of restricting it to the present age limit of 55 years.

- \* The government should speed up the timeframe of affected workers' appeal cases in Industrial Appellant Courts which now takes between two to three years for the hearing.

- \* The government should increase the Socso workforce and open more offices nationwide as the present 46 Socso offices in the country is insufficient to cope with the increasing workforce.

#### Diseases misdiagnosed

On Feb 26, 2009 a media report quoted Human Resources Minister Dr S Subramaniam as saying that doctors are not well-versed when handling work-related diseases.

NONE Saraswathy said it is important for doctors to undergo such training as they often tend to misdiagnose diseases as not work-related. Hence the workers cannot claim compensation for such incidents.

The social worker cited the case of a 28-year-old factory Indian female worker in Sungai

Siput, who was scalped when her hair got entangled in a factory machine about three months ago.

This victim had to spend RM28,000 borrowed from loan sharks to get the necessary medical attention from a private hospital.

NONE However, Socso refused to pay so PSM Sungai Siput MP Dr Jeyakumar had to intervene and finally the security organisation refunded the amount.

Earlier, Saraswathy and about 70 affected workers handed over a 10 page memorandum to the state Socso director Abdul Hamid Said, to address the shortcomings in the organisation's system.

They carried a banner calling for Socso "Not to be Pro-management but to be Pro-worker" under the watchful eyes of police personnel and special branch officers.

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