

COURT OF APPEALS OF ARKANSAS

Dardanelle Public Schools and Arkansas School Boards Association v.
Andrea Ewton

Dardanelle Public Schools, 2025 Ark. App. 575 (Ark. Ct. App. 2025) · No. CV-25-148 · Decided December 3, 2025

SUMMARY

The Arkansas Court of Appeals affirmed the Arkansas Workers’ Compensation Commission’s determination that Andrea Ewton suffered a compensable injury while working as a substitute custodian for Dardanelle Public Schools. The court held that substantial evidence supported the Commission’s finding that Ewton was performing employment services when she was injured while retrieving keys and water from her car. The court deferred to the Commission’s credibility determinations regarding Ewton’s inconsistent statements.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Court of Appeals of Arkansas
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Bart F. Virden; Gladwin, J.; Harrison, J.
JURISDICTION	Arkansas Court of Appeals
DECIDED	December 3, 2025
DOCKET	CV-25-148
DISPOSITION	affirmed
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Appeal from the Arkansas Workers’ Compensation Commission’s decision finding that Andrea Ewton sustained a compensable work-related injury.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court views the evidence and all reasonable inferences in the light most favorable to the Commission’s findings and affirms if the decision is supported by substantial evidence. Reversal is warranted only when fair-minded persons could not have reached the same conclusion on the same facts. The Commission has exclusive authority to determine witness credibility and the weight of testimony.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Published opinion
PARTIES	Dardanelle Public Schools, Arkansas School Boards Association v. Andrea Ewton

TOPICS

workers compensation

standard of review

appellate procedure

employment law

administrative law

PRACTICE AREAS

workers compensation

employment law

administrative law

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether substantial evidence supported the Commission's finding that Ewton sustained a compensable injury arising out of and in the course of her employment.
2. Whether the court could revisit the Commission's credibility determination concerning Ewton's purpose for walking to her car.

HOLDINGS

1. The Commission did not err in finding Ewton's knee and ankle injuries compensable because substantial evidence supported the finding that she was performing employment services and advancing her employer's interest when the injury occurred.
2. The court was bound by the Commission's credibility determination and could not reweigh Ewton's inconsistent statements or substitute the ALJ's credibility findings for those of the Commission.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"We must affirm the decision of the Commission if it is supported by substantial evidence." (4)

"Ewton's inconsistent earlier statements are for the Commission to weigh, and once the Commission has made its decision on issues of credibility, this court is bound by that decision." (7)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Andrea Ewton was working as a substitute custodian at a Dardanelle intermediate school and was on the clock when she walked through the school parking lot toward her car. She testified that she was retrieving water and keys needed to access buildings she was assigned to clean when she stepped off a curb, broke her ankle, and injured her knee. The Commission credited her testimony that she was retrieving the keys in furtherance of her work and found that she was on campus, not on a break, and within the scope of her employment when injured.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Ewton filed a workers'-compensation claim for knee and ankle injuries sustained while working as a substitute custodian for Dardanelle Public Schools. The administrative law judge denied compensability, finding that Ewton was not performing employment services when injured. The Full Commission reversed, found the injury compensable, awarded temporary total-disability benefits and attorney's fees, and appellants appealed. The Arkansas Court of Appeals affirmed.

DISPOSITION

affirmed

CASES CITED

- Arkansas Department of Parks & Tourism v. Price, 2016 Ark. App. 109, 483 S.W.3d 320
- Bronco Industrial Services, LLC v. Brooks, 2021 Ark. App. 279, 625 S.W.3d 753
- Continental Construction Co. v. Nabors, 2015 Ark. App. 60, 454 S.W.3d 762
- Pifer v. Single Source Transportation, 347 Ark. 851, 69 S.W.3d 1 (2002)
- Centers for Youth & Families v. Wood, 2015 Ark. App. 380, 466 S.W.3d 422
- Fulbright v. St. Bernard's Medical Center, 2016 Ark. App. 417, 502 S.W.3d 540
- Hill v. LDA Leasing, Inc., 2010 Ark. App. 271, 374 S.W.3d 268
- Black v. First Step, Inc., 2014 Ark. App. 341
- Campbell v. Randal Tyler Ford Mercury, Inc., 70 Ark. App. 35, 13 S.W.3d 916 (2000)
- McKinney v. Trane Co., 84 Ark. App. 424, 143 S.W.3d 581 (2004)
- Sheridan School District v. Wise, 2021 Ark. App. 459, 637 S.W.3d 280
- Bean v. Reynolds Consumer Products, 2022 Ark. App. 276, 646 S.W.3d 655
- Multi-Craft Contractors, Inc. v. Yousey, 2018 Ark. 107, 542 S.W.3d 155
- Johnson v. Hux, 28 Ark. App. 187, 772 S.W.2d 362 (1989)
- Clark v. Peabody Testing Service, 265 Ark. 489, 579 S.W.2d 360 (1979)