

December 18, 2001

Board of Directors Approves New Interest Policy

The Board of Directors of the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board has approved a new interest policy.

The interest policy sets the terms and conditions under which the board will pay interest on compensation benefits, as required under the *Workers' Compensation Act*. The section of the Act calling for the interest policy was part of the Bill 83 amendments coming into effect on April 1, 2000.

According to the policy, if the board is responsible for a processing time of longer than 30 days on a worker's claim, the worker receives interest on the money owed. In such a case, the interest calculation begins 31 days following the date of receipt of that worker's injury report. The policy states that simple interest be paid on outstanding amounts at the rate established by section 35(1) of the *Judicature Act*.

The policy only allows for interest to be paid if the board is responsible for the 30-day delay. Determining the eligibility of a claim requires input, documentation and cooperation from the injured worker and health professionals. The policy also recognizes that employers play an important role in the claims process.

President and CEO Tony Armstrong believes the new interest policy fits well with the feedback the board received from workers in a recent survey. "In the survey that the Bureau of Statistics did on our services, a majority of injured workers said they feel a period of 30 days or less is acceptable for processing a claim," said Armstrong. "There may be times when we don't meet the challenge of delivering in 30 days. In that case, the interest policy provides workers with some redress when we've failed to meet the service expectation."

The effective date of the new interest policy is April 1, 2000.

The board will be reviewing approximately 1,600 files—filed between April 1, 2000 and the present—to see if a retroactive payment of interest is required. "We're not certain, but we expect that about 10% of these files may be eligible for a retroactive payment," said Armstrong.

In January, the board will send letters to all workers whose file will be reviewed. The letter will inform workers of the review and when they can expect to hear if they are eligible for an interest payment.

"Because the policy is retroactive to April 1, 2000 it will take time to implement," said Armstrong. "We recognize we owe some people an interest payment. But while we are doing the file review we also need to promptly adjudicate new workers' claims."

The board will begin reviewing files in January starting with those from April 1, 2000. They expect to complete all of the file reviews in the next few months.

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