

Railroad Retirement Board

§216.17

to pay a supplemental or survivor annuity if he or she meets all of the following requirements:

(1) Has been credited with at least 25 years of railroad service;

(2) Stopped working in the railroad industry “involuntarily and without fault” on or after October 1, 1975, or was on furlough, leave of absence or absent for injury on that date;

(3) Did not decline an offer of employment in the same “class or craft” as his or her most recent railroad service; and

(4) Was alive on October 1, 1981.

(c) “*Involuntarily and without fault*” defined. An employee is considered to have stopped railroad employment involuntarily and without fault if:

(1) The employee loses his or her job;

(2) The employee could not, through the exercise of seniority rights, remain in railroad service in the same class or craft as his or her most recent railroad service, regardless of the location where that service would be performed; and

(3) The employee did not lose his or her job because of poor job performance, misconduct, medical reasons or other action or inaction on the part of the employee.

(d) *Effect of separation allowance*. An employee who accepts a separation allowance and in so doing relinquishes his or her seniority rights to railroad employment is deemed to have voluntarily terminated his or her railroad service. However, if the employee stopped railroad employment involuntarily and without fault, as defined in paragraph (c) of this section, receipt of a separation allowance will not affect a current connection under paragraph (b) of this section.

(e) “*Class or craft*” defined. The terms “class or craft,” as used in this section, have the same meaning as they do generally in the railroad industry.

(f) *For supplemental annuities only*. An additional special current connection test is required for an individual who was receiving a disability annuity which terminated due to the individual’s recovery from disability. If the individual becomes entitled to a new annuity, a new current connection test based on the new annuity beginning

date must be made. This test is made using the rules contained in §§216.13 and 216.17.

§216.16 What is regular non-railroad employment.

(a) Regular non-railroad employment is full or part-time employment for pay.

(b) Regular non-railroad employment does not include any of the following:

(1) Self-employment;

(2) Temporary work provided as relief by an agency of a Federal, State, or local government;

(3) Service inside or outside the United States for an employer under the Railroad Retirement Act, even if the employer does not conduct the main part of its business in the United States;

(4) Involuntary military service not creditable under the Railroad Retirement Act;

(5) Employment with the following agencies of the United States Government:

(i) Department of Transportation;

(ii) Interstate Commerce Commission;

(iii) National Mediation Board;

(iv) Railroad Retirement Board;

(v) National Transportation Safety Board; or

(vi) Surface Transportation Board.

(6) Employment entered into after early retirement by an employee who is receiving an annuity under Conrail’s voluntary annuity program. This program is provided under the Staggers Rail Act of 1980 (Pub. L. 96-448); or

(7) Employment with the Alaska Railroad so long as it is an instrumentality of the State of Alaska.

[56 FR 28692, June 24, 1991, as amended at 62 FR 11324, Mar. 12, 1997]

§216.17 What amount of regular non-railroad employment will break a current connection.

The amount of regular non-railroad employment needed to break a current connection depends on when the applicable 30-month period ends (see §216.13 of this part), as follows:

(a) If the 30-month period ends in the calendar year before or in the same calendar year as the annuity begins or the

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month the employee dies, the current connection is broken if the employee:

(1) Works in each month in the interval after the end of the 30-month period and before the earlier of the month the annuity begins or the employee dies; or

(2) Works and earns at least \$200 in wages in any 3 months within the interval described in paragraph (a)(1) of this section.

(b) If the 30-month period ends more than a year before the calendar year in which the annuity begins or the employee dies, the current connection is broken if the employee:

(1) Works in any 2 consecutive years wholly or partially within the interval after the end of the 30-month period and before the month the annuity begins or the employee dies, whichever is earlier; and

(2) Earns at least \$1,000 in wages in any year wholly or partially within the interval described in paragraph (b)(1) of this section (but not counting earnings during the 30-month period and after the annuity beginning date), even if that year is not one of the 2 consecutive years described in paragraph (b)(1) of this section.

Subpart C—Railroad and Last Non-Railroad Employment

§216.21 General.

To be eligible for an employee, a spouse, or a divorced spouse annuity, the Railroad Retirement Act requires that an applicant must stop work for pay performed as an employee for a railroad employer. In addition, no employee, spouse or divorced spouse annuity may be paid for any month in which the employee, spouse or divorced spouse annuitant works for pay for any railroad employer after the date his or her annuity began. No annuity may be paid to a widow or widower, surviving divorced spouse, remarried widow or widower, child, or parent for any month such individual works for pay for a railroad employer.

§216.22 Work as an employee which affects payment.

(a) *Work for a railroad employer.* Work for pay as an employee of a railroad employer always prevents payment of an annuity.

(b) *Work for last non-railroad employer.* Work for pay in the service of the last non-railroad employer by whom an individual is employed will reduce the amount of the tier II benefit of the employee, spouse and supplemental annuity as provided in part 230 of this chapter. An individual's last non-railroad employer is:

(1) Any non-railroad employer from whom the individual last resigned (in point of time) in order to receive an annuity; and

(2) Any additional non-railroad employer from whom the individual resigned in order to have an annuity become payable. Employment which an individual stops within 6 months of the date on which the individual files for an annuity will be presumed in the absence of evidence to the contrary to be service from which the individual resigned in order to receive an annuity.

(c) *Corporate officers.* An officer of a corporation will be considered to be an employee of the corporation. A director of a corporation acting solely in his or her capacity as such director is not an employee of the corporation.

§216.23 Work which does not affect eligibility.

An individual may engage in any of the following without adversely affecting his or her annuity:

(a) *Work for a railway labor organization.* An individual may work for a local lodge or division of a railway labor organization if the pay is under \$25 a month, unless the work performed is solely for the purpose of collecting insurance premiums.

(b) *Work without pay.* Work performed for any person or entity for which no pay is received, or where the pay merely constitutes reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses, or where the amount received consists only of free will donations and there is no agreement that such donation shall constitute remuneration for services, does not affect entitlement to an annuity.

(c) *Self-employment.* Self-employment is work performed in an individual's own business, trade or profession as an independent contractor, rather than as an employee. An individual is not self-employed if the business is incorporated. The designation or description