

Railroad Retirement Board

§ 255.15

(e) Where recovery of the full amount of an overpayment would be made from income and resources required to meet ordinary and necessary living expenses, but recovery of a lesser amount would leave income or resources sufficient to meet such expenses, recovery of the lesser amount is not contrary to the purpose of the Act.

(f) This section may be illustrated by the following examples:

Example (1). A remarried widow, W, is overpaid \$6000 due to receipt of benefits on the wage records of both her late husbands. It has been determined that she is without fault. Her financial disclosure statement reveals monthly income greater than monthly expenses, and assets of \$12,000, \$10,000 of which is in cash. She claims to be saving these funds for future medical expenses, because she has a progressive disease. While it is not necessarily contrary to the purposes of the Act to recover the overpayment in these circumstances, the legitimate medical expenses associated with the disease must be considered.

Example (2). A disability annuitant, D, is overpaid \$33,000 because of simultaneous entitlement to workers' compensation payments. He is determined to be without fault. He claims he has assumed financial responsibility for his adult child and her children. A claimed expense for which the annuitant has no legal obligation to pay does not make recovery contrary to the purposes of the Act.

§ 255.13 When recovery is against equity or good conscience.

(a) Recovery is considered to be against equity or good conscience if a person, in reliance on payments made to him or her or on notice that payment would be made, relinquished a significant and valuable right (Example 1 of this section) or changed his or her position to his or her substantial detriment (Example 2 of this section).

(b) An individual's ability to repay an overpayment is not material to a finding that recovery would be against equity or good conscience but is relevant with respect to the credibility of a claim of detrimental reliance under paragraph (a) of this section.

(c) This section may be illustrated by the following examples:

Example (1). After being informed by the Board that he had been credited with sufficient years of railroad service to retire at age 60, an employee quit his railroad job and applied for benefits under the Railroad Re-

tirement Act. He receives benefits for six months when it is discovered that he had insufficient railroad service to retire at age 60 and was not entitled to the benefits he received. His annuity was terminated. Because the employee gave up his seniority rights when he quit his railroad job, he cannot get his job back. It is determined that the employee was not at fault in causing the overpayments. In this situation recovery of the overpayment would be against equity or good conscience because the overpaid individual gave up a valuable right.

Example (2). A widow, having been awarded annuities for herself and her daughter, entered her daughter in a private school. The widow did not have substantial assets and her income, apart from the annuities she received in the amounts payable, would not have been sufficient for her to have undertaken the obligation to send her daughter to private school. In order to pay for the schooling she took out a loan and used the monthly annuities to pay interest and principal on the loan. After the widow and her daughter had received payments for almost a year, the deceased employee was found not to have been insured under the Railroad Retirement Act. Therefore, all payments to the widow and child were erroneous and the annuities were terminated. It is determined that the widow was not at fault in causing the overpayment. Having incurred a financial obligation (the school loan) toward which the benefits had been applied, the widow was in a worse position financially than if she and her daughter had never been entitled to benefits. In this situation, the recovery of the overpayment would be against equity or good conscience.

§ 255.14 Waiver not available when recovery can be made from accrual of social security benefits.

Where the overpayment is the result of a reduction of benefits payable under the Railroad Retirement Act due to the overpaid individual's entitlement to social security benefits and recovery of such overpayment may be made by offset against an accrual of social security benefits, it shall not be considered to be against equity or good conscience or contrary to the purpose of the Railroad Retirement Act to recover the overpayment by offset against the accrual. Consequently, in such a case recovery of an overpayment is not subject to waiver consideration.

§ 255.15 Waiver to an estate.

It shall never be considered contrary to the purpose of the Railroad Retirement Act to recover an overpayment