

Railroad Retirement Board

§ 320.10

what steps the claimant can take to contest the denial.

(c) *Communication of notice of denial.* When the adjudicating office mails the denial notice to the claimant's address of record, it shall be considered that notice of the denial has been communicated to the claimant on the date of mailing such notice. If the adjudicating office has been notified that a claimant has an attorney or other representative helping him or her with the claim, a copy of the denial notice shall be sent to the attorney or such other representative.

[53 FR 2486, Jan. 28, 1988, as amended at 56 FR 65679, Dec. 18, 1991]

§ 320.9 Notice of erroneous benefit payment.

(a) *Content of notice.* When an adjudicating office determines that benefits were paid erroneously, that office shall issue to the claimant a notice of the amount of the erroneous payment and the basis for the determination. The notice shall include a statement telling the claimant of his or her right to request reconsideration of the determination, of the provisions for waiver and of his or her right to request waiver.

(b) *Communication of notice of erroneous payment.* When the adjudicating office mails the erroneous payment notice to the claimant's address of record, it shall be considered that notice of the erroneous payment has been communicated to the claimant on the date of mailing such notice. If the adjudicating office has been notified that a claimant has an attorney or other representative helping him or her with the claim, a copy of the erroneous payment notice shall be sent to the attorney or such other representative.

[53 FR 2486, Jan. 28, 1988]

§ 320.10 Reconsideration of initial determination.

(a) *Request.* A claimant shall have the right to request reconsideration of an initial determination under § 320.5 of this part which denies in whole or in part his or her claim for benefits. A claimant shall have the right to request reconsideration of a notice of overpayment under § 320.9 of this part.

The base-year employer(s) shall have the right to request reconsideration of an initial determination under § 320.5 of this part which awards in whole or in part a claimant's claim for benefits. A reconsideration request shall be made in writing and addressed to the adjudicating office that issued the initial determination and must be received by the adjudicating office no later than 60 days from the date of the notice of the initial decision. A railroad employer may fulfill the written request requirement by using an electronic system that has been approved by the agency in the manner prescribed by the agency.

(b) *Review of evidence.* Upon request, the party requesting reconsideration shall have an opportunity to review all evidence and documents that pertain to the initial determination. The Board shall make all reasonable efforts to protect the identity of the source of adverse evidence.

(c) *Notice of decision.* The adjudicating office shall, as soon as possible, render a decision on the request for reconsideration. If a decision rendered by a district office, as the adjudicating office, sustains the initial determination, either in whole or in part, the decision shall be referred to the appropriate regional office for review prior to issuance. The party who requested reconsideration shall be notified, in writing, of the decision on reconsideration no later than 15 days from the date of the decision or, where the regional office has conducted a review of the decision, within 7 days following the completion of the review. If the decision results in denial of benefits, the claimant shall be notified of the right to appeal as provided in § 320.12 of this part. If the decision results in payment of benefits, the base-year employer(s) shall be notified of the right to appeal as provided in § 320.12 of this part.

(d) *Right to further review of initial determination.* The right to further review of a determination made under § 320.5 or § 320.9 of this part shall be forfeited unless a written request for reconsideration is filed within the time period prescribed in this section or good cause is shown by the party requesting reconsideration for failing to file a timely request for reconsideration. A railroad

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employer may fulfill the written request requirement by using an electronic system approved by the agency in the manner prescribed by the agency.

(e) *Timely request for reconsideration.* In determining whether either the claimant or the base-year employer(s) has good cause for failure to file a timely request for reconsideration, the adjudicating office shall consider the circumstances which kept either the claimant or the base-year employer(s) from filing the request on time and whether any action by the Board misled either of them. Examples of circumstances where good cause may exist include, but are not limited to:

- (1) A serious illness which prevented the claimant from contacting the Board in person, in writing, or through a friend, relative or other person;
- (2) A death or serious illness in the claimant's immediate family which prevented him or her from filing.
- (3) The destruction of important and relevant records;
- (4) A failure to be notified of a decision;
- (5) The existence of an unusual or unavoidable circumstance which demonstrates that either the claimant or the base-year employer(s) would not have known of the need to file timely or which prevented either of them from filing in a timely manner; or
- (6) The claimant thought that his or her representative had requested reconsideration.

[56 FR 65679, Dec. 18, 1991, as amended at 67 FR 77156, Dec. 17, 2002; 71 FR 53004, Sept. 8, 2006]

§ 320.11 Request for waiver of recovery.

(a) *Time limitation.* The claimant shall have 60 days from the date of the notification of the erroneous payment determination in which to file a request for waiver, except that where an erroneous payment is not subject to waiver in accordance with § 340.10(e) of this chapter, waiver may not be requested and recovery will not be stayed. Such requests shall be made in writing and be filed by mail or in person at any Board office. The claimant shall, along with the request, submit any evidence and argument which he or she would

like to present in support of his or her case. A request solely for reconsideration of an overpayment shall not be considered a request for waiver under this section but shall be treated as a request for reconsideration under § 320.10 of this part.

(b) *Recovery action.* Where a claimant has made a timely request for waiver of recovery, no action will be taken to recover the erroneous payment by setoff against current benefits prior to a decision on such request; *provided however*, That the Board may, prior to a decision, withhold the amount of the erroneous payment from benefit payments under any of the following circumstances:

- (1) The claimant admits he or she was at fault in causing the overpayment;
- (2) The claimant is found to have committed fraud;
- (3) The claimant authorizes recovery by setoff or agrees to repayment; or
- (4) The amount of erroneous payment is not subject to waiver or provided for in § 340.10(e) of this chapter.

(c) *Review of evidence.* Upon request, the claimant shall have an opportunity to review all evidence and documents that pertain to the erroneous payment determination.

(d) *Decision.* The Debt Recovery Manager shall make a decision on the claimant's request for waiver of recovery and shall notify the claimant accordingly. The decision of the Manager shall include the basis of the decision, setting forth his or her reasons for the decision including the impact, if any, of any evidence submitted by the base-year or last employer. If the Manager decides that waiver of recovery is not appropriate, the adjudicating office shall wait 15 days from the date of the notification of the waiver decision before taking any action to recover the erroneous payment. If the Manager decides that recovery should be waived, any amount of the erroneous payment so waived but previously recovered by setoff shall be refunded to the claimant.

(e) *Appeal.* If the Debt Recovery Manager decides that waiver of recovery is not appropriate, the claimant shall have the right to appeal such decision as provided under § 320.12 of this part.