



# WORKERS' COMPENSATION FUND

601 MORRIS STREET  
CHARLESTON, WEST VIRGINIA 25301

ARCH A. MOORE, JR.  
Governor

MARY MARTHA MERRITT  
Commissioner

April 15, 1986

## NOTICE OF FINAL FILING - LEGISLATIVE RULE

LEGISLATIVE RULE: Standards for Medical Examination in  
Occupational Pneumoconiosis Claims.

The attached legislative rule is hereby final filed with the  
Secretary of State by Workers' Compensation Commissioner  
as authorized by Senate Bill 434 Section 64-2-23(1)(13)(b).

*Mary Martha Merritt*

Mary Martha Merritt  
Commissioner

FILED IN THE OFFICE OF  
THE SECRETARY OF STATE  
THIS DATE April 15, 1986  
ADMINISTRATIVE LAW DIVISION



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Commissioner

April 15, 1986

Mr. Ken Hechler  
Secretary of State  
State Capitol  
Suite 157-K  
Executive Office  
Charleston, WV 25305

Re: Final Filing  
Amendment to Series I  
of Legislative Rules

Dear Mr. Hechler:

Attached hereto are the required documents for final filing of rules which are an addition to Series I of the Legislative Rules of this office.

These rules are to be effective July 1, 1986.

A copy of the first page of the series of rules being amended is enclosed herewith.

Thank you for your cooperation and assistance during the development of these rules.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Martha Merritt".

Mary Martha Merritt  
Commissioner

MMM:WM:cm

Enclosures



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## Promulgation History Abstract

Rule Title: Standards for Medical Examination in Occupational  
Pneumoconiosis Claims.

Rule Type: Legislative.

Filed Notice for Public Hearing: May 3, 1985.

Public Hearings Held: May 30, June 14, and June 21, 1985.

Filed Agency Approved Rule: August 6, 1985.

Filed Agency Approved Rule with LRMRC: August 6, 1985.

Action by LRMRC: Recommended that the Legislature authorize  
the agency to promulgate the Legislative Rule  
as originally filed.

Legislative Action: Authorized with amendments in Senate Bill 434,  
W.Va. Code, 64-2-23(1)(13)(b). Passed March 8,  
1986; in effect from passage.

Final Rule Filed with Secretary of State: April 15, 1986.

Effective Date: July 1, 1986.

*Mary Martha Merritt*

Mary Martha Merritt  
Commissioner

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Entered

Section 1. GENERAL

COPY OF 1<sup>ST</sup> PAGE  
OF RULES BEING  
AMENDED.

1.01 Scope

These rules and regulations are to provide for the general administration of the West Virginia Workmen's Compensation Fund.

1.02 Authority.

These regulations are issued pursuant to West Virginia Code, Chapter 23, (Michie 1973).

1.03 Effective Date.

These regulations were promulgated on December 5, 1975, and became effective January 5, 1976.

1.04 Filing Date.

These regulations were filed in the Office of the Secretary of State on December 5, 1975.

1.05 Definitions.

As used in these regulations:

- (a) "Claimant" shall mean any individual who files an application for Workmen's Compensation benefits.
- (b) "Filing" shall mean actual receipt in the office of the Commissioner.
- (c) "Paid" shall mean the time the check is deposited in the mail or presented in person to the claimant, claimant's attorney or anyone acting in his behalf.
- (d) "Receipt of . . . notice" shall be presumed to have occurred on the third day following the date of the notice. The next day (or the fourth day following the date of the notice) will be treated as the first day of the

Section 20.8 Standards for Medical Examination.

20.8.1 The following standards specify examination and evaluation criteria to guide the Occupational Pneumoconiosis Board in its examination and evaluation of claimants, and to guide other physicians and medical technicians who conduct examinations and evaluations of claimants on behalf of such claimants and their employers. These standards are established for the further purpose of ensuring that uniform procedures are used in administering and interpreting ventilatory function tests and arterial blood gas studies and that the best available medical evidence will be obtained in support of a claim for occupational pneumoconiosis benefits. The physician supervising any such testing and/or the technician administering any such testing will so indicate by signing the reports. Any report of test results submitted to the Occupational Pneumoconiosis Board must affirmatively state, as to each of the standards individually, the fact that the particular test or study was performed in compliance with that standard. In the event that any such report fails to affirmatively show compliance with these standards, the O.P. Board may disregard all or any part of such test or study or give such test or study such weight as the Board believes it deserves.

20.8.2 When two or more ventilatory function tests performed in reasonably close proximity in time produce differing but acceptable results, the Commissioner, at the request of the O.P. Board, may direct the parties to furnish additional evidence and/or order additional testing at the laboratory utilized by the O.P. Board or other laboratories, all for the purpose of determining whether any of the results are unreliable or incorrect or are clearly attributable to some identifiable disease or illness other than occupational pneumoconiosis.

20.8.3 When blood gas studies are performed and abnormal values are obtained and thereafter new blood gas studies are performed and normal or significantly higher values are further obtained, the Commissioner, at the request of the O.P. Board, may direct the parties to furnish additional evidence and/or order additional studies at the laboratory utilized by the O.P. Board or other laboratories, all for the purpose of determining whether any of the values are unreliable or incorrect or are clearly attributable to some identifiable disease or illness other than occupational pneumoconiosis.

20.8.4 As used herein, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated:

A. FVC - Forced Vital Capacity - Volume of air that can be forcefully exhaled from the lungs after a maximal inspiration.

B. FEV - Forced Expiratory Volume - Same as FVC.

C. FEV<sub>1</sub> - Forced Expiratory Volume in one second - Volume of air that can be exhaled forcefully from the lungs in one second after a maximal inspiration.

D. FEV<sub>3</sub> - Forced Expiratory Volume in three seconds - Volume of air that can be exhaled forcefully from the lungs in three seconds after a maximal inspiration.

E. FEV<sub>1</sub>/FEV - Forced Expiratory Volume (timed) to Forced Expiratory Volume - A ratio expressed as a percentage.

F. MVV - Maximal Voluntary Ventilation - The volume of air that can be exchanged over a unit period of time, usually 12 to 15 seconds.

G. BTPS - Body Temperature, Ambient Pressure, saturated with water.

H. Kpm - Kilopond Meter - The amount of work required to lift one kilogram one meter.

I. NIOSH - National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

J. BOARD - West Virginia Occupational Pneumoconiosis Board.

#### 20.8.5 Ventilatory Function Tests

A. Instruments to be used for the administration of ventilatory function tests should conform to the following criteria:

(1) The instrument must be accurate within +50 ml or within +3 percent of reading, whichever is greater.

(2) The instrument must be capable of measuring vital capacity from 0 to 7 liters BTPS.

(3) The instrument must have a low inertia and offer low resistance to airflow such that the resistance to airflow at 12 liters per second must be less than 1.5 cm H<sub>2</sub>O/liter/second.

(4) The Zero time point for the purpose of timing the FEV<sub>1</sub> must be determined by extrapolating the steepest portion of the volume-time curve back to the maximal inspiration volume or by an equivalent method.

(5) Instruments incorporating measurements of airflow to determine volume must conform to the same volume accuracy stated in paragraph A. (1) above when present with flow rates from at least 0 to 12 liters per second.

(6) The instrument or user of the instrument must correct volumes to body temperature saturated with water vapor (BTPS) under conditions of varying ambient spirometer temperatures and barometric pressures.

(7) The instrument used must provide a tracing of either flow versus volume or volume versus time during the entire forced expiration and volume versus time during the MVV Maneuver. Such tracing must be furnished to the Board with the test results. No results will be considered by the Board unless they are accompanied by the corresponding tracings. A tracing is necessary to determine whether the subject has performed the test properly. The tracing must be of sufficient size that hand measurements may be made within the requirement of paragraph A. (1) above.

(8) The instrument must be capable of accumulating volume for a minimum of 10 seconds after the onset of exhalation.

(9) The forced expiratory volume in 1 second ( $FEV_1$ ) measurement must comply with the accuracy requirements stated in paragraph A. (1) above; that is, the  $FEV_1$  must be accurately measured to within +50 ml or within +3 percent of reading, whichever is greater.

(10) The instrument must be capable of being calibrated in the field with respect to the  $FEV_1$ . This calibration of the  $FEV_1$  may be done either directly or indirectly through volume and time base measurements. The volume calibration source must provide a volume displacement of at least 3 liters and must be accurate to within +30 ml.

(11) For measuring maximum voluntary ventilation (MVV), the instrument must have a response which is flat within +10 percent at flow rates up to 12 liters per second over the volume range. The time for exhaled volume integration or recording must be no less than 12 seconds and no more than 15 seconds. The indicated time must be accurate to within +3 percent. A recording of the spirometer tracing is required, and the volume sensitivity must be such that 10 mm or more deflection corresponds to 1 liter volume.

B. The administration of ventilatory function tests must conform to the following criteria: For ascertainment of the  $FEV_1$  and FVC, a nose clip or alternative should be used. The procedures must be explained in simple terms to the subject who shall be instructed to loosen any tight clothing and sit or stand in front of the apparatus. Although the subject may sit or stand, care should be taken on repeat testing that the same position is used. Particular attention must be given to insure that the subject's chin is slightly elevated with the neck slightly extended. The subject must be instructed to make a full inspiration, either from the spirometer or the open atmosphere, and then blow into the apparatus, without interruption, as hard, fast, and completely as possible.

At least three forced expirations must be carried out. During the maneuvers, the subject must be observed for compliance with instructions. The expirations must be checked visually for reproducibility by examining the flow-volume or volume-time tracings. The effort shall be judged unacceptable and cannot be considered in evaluating pulmonary functional impairment when the subject:

(1) Has not reached full inspiration preceding the forced expiration; or

(2) Has not used maximal effort during the entire forced expiration; or

(3) Has not continued the expiration for at least 5 seconds or until an obvious plateau in the volume-time curve has occurred; or

(4) Has an obstructed mouthpiece or a leak around the mouthpiece (obstruction due to tongue being placed in front of mouthpiece, false teeth falling in front of mouthpiece, etc.); or

(5) Has coughed or closed his glottis; or

(6) Has an unsatisfactory start of expiration, one characterized by excessive hesitation (or false starts), and therefore did not allow back extrapolation of time 0 (extrapolated volume on the volume-time tracing must be less than 10 percent of the FVC); or

(7) Has an excessive variability between the three satisfactory curves. The variation between the two largest  $FEV_1$ 's of the three satisfactory tracings should not exceed 7 percent of the largest  $FEV_1$  or 100 ml, whichever is greater.

(8) Predicted values are derived from Kory's Nomogram.

C. For ascertainment of the MVV, the subject must be instructed before beginning the test that he or she will be asked to breathe as deeply and as rapidly as possible for approximately 15 seconds. The test may be performed with the subject in either a sitting or standing position. Care shall be taken on repeat testing that the same position is used. The subject should breathe normally into the mouthpiece of the apparatus for 10 to 15 seconds to become accustomed to the system. The subject should then be instructed to breathe as deeply and as rapidly as possible and shall be continually encouraged during the remainder of the maneuver. The subject shall continue the maneuver for 12 seconds. The subject should be allowed to rest between maneuvers. At least three MVV's must be observed to determine if there was compliance with instructions. The effort must be judged unacceptable and cannot be considered in evaluating pulmonary functional impairment when the patient:

(1) Has not maintained consistent effort for at least 12 to 15 seconds; or

(2) Has coughed or closed his glottis; or

(3) Has an obstructed mouthpiece or a leak around the mouthpiece (obstruction due to tongue being placed in front of mouthpiece, false teeth falling in front of mouthpiece, etc.); or

(4) Has an excessive variability between the three satisfactory curves. The variation between the three satisfactory tracings must not exceed 10 percent and should approximate forty times the greatest  $FEV_1$  volume.

D. A calibration check must be performed on the instrument each day before use, using a volume source of at least three liters, accurate to within +1 percent of full scale. The room air in the syringe must be introduced into the spirometer once with a flow rate of approximately 0.5 liters per second (six seconds emptying time with a 3-liter syringe) and once with a higher flow rate of approximately 3.0 liters per second (one second emptying time with a 3.0 liter syringe). The volume measured by the spirometer must be between 2.90 and 3.10 liters for both trials. Accuracy of the time measurement used in determining the  $FEV_1$  must be checked using the manufacturer's stated procedure and must be within +3 percent of actual. The procedure described herein must be performed as well as any other procedures suggested by the manufacturer of the spirometer being used.

E. The first step in evaluating a spirogram for the FEV and  $FEV_1$  shall be to determine whether or not the subject has performed the test properly or as described in B. (FEV) and the forced expiratory volume A. (1) above. From the three satisfactory tracings, the forced expiratory volume in one second ( $FEV_1$ ) must be measured and recorded. The largest observed  $FEV_1$  must be used in the analysis, corrected to BTPS.

F. Only MVV maneuvers which demonstrate consistent effort for at least 12 seconds shall be considered acceptable. The largest accumulated volume for a 12-second period corrected to BTPS and multiplied by five shall be reported as the MVV.

#### 20.8.6 Arterial Blood Gas Studies

A. In order to ensure comparability of data obtained in arterial blood studies, the following guidelines should be observed:

(1) The puncture site should be infiltrated with a local anesthetic to minimize pain and arterial spasm.

(2) The barrel of the syringe used to draw the blood sample should be wetted with heparin and the excess heparin must be expelled just prior to obtaining the blood sample.

(3) The subject should be allowed to rest for fifteen (15) minutes prior to beginning the study.

(4) Resting blood samples should be drawn with the subject in the sitting position.

(5) On occasions when the subject is unable to be exercised due to physical impairments; i.e., heart disease, artificial leg, etc., a resting sample of arterial blood may be drawn by direct puncture with a 20-25-gauge needle and a heparinized syringe.

(6) Blood samples must be discarded if contaminated by an air bubble.

(7) All blood samples should be analyzed immediately (less than ten minutes). If not, the sample should be iced in water. If the analysis is not performed within ten minutes, the metabolic activity of the cells in the blood will cause the  $pO_2$  to fall and the  $pCO_2$  to rise.

(8) If an exercise sample is to be obtained, a plastic catheter must be inserted into the radial or brachial artery for both the resting as well as the exercise sample.

(9) Exercise must be accomplished by having the subject pedal the bicycle ergometer at a rate of 50-60 revolutions per minute against a resistance of 75 Watts or 450 Kilopond Meters (Kpm) per minute for a period of five minutes. A treadmill may be used, and when used, exercise must be done at 2 mph and 10% grade. During the last twenty seconds of the fifth minute of exercise, the exercise sample must be drawn into a heparinized syringe and the pulse and respiration rates noted. If an added level of exercise is performed, this must be done at 120 Watts on the bicycle, or on the treadmill at 2.5 mph and 12% grade. Exercise testing beyond the level set forth herein shall be considered to be measurements of physical conditioning rather than of blood gas transfer abnormalities due to occupational pneumoconiosis. The EKG leads are then removed and the subject allowed to sit on a chair while the catheter is removed. Pressure must be held at the site of arterial cannulation for five minutes, and if there is no bleeding or hematoma present, a compression bandage must be placed on the radial artery. This bandage must be left in place for four hours. After about fifteen minutes of observation, the subject will be allowed to leave. The arterial blood sample should be drawn while exercise continues, not following cessation of exercise.

(10) EKG monitoring with a single lead should take place during exercise to determine the heart rate. It should be noted that this is not an EKG Stress Test.

(11) The report should indicate the place, date and time of the study, altitude of the testing site and barometric pressure at the testing site on the day of the testing, name and claim number of the subject, name of any assisting personnel, name and signature of the supervising physician, duration and type of exercise (if performed), pulse rate at the time the blood sample was drawn, and whether analysis equipment was calibrated before each test.

B. It is recognized that arterial blood gas studies done in laboratories throughout this state are obtained at different altitudes. Only by "standardizing" for altitude can an equitable assessment be made of impairment when values of arterial oxygen are being measured at remarkably different altitudes. Therefore, the results reported from laboratories should include the name of the laboratory and the date and time of the testing, altitude of the laboratory and barometric pressure at the laboratory on the day the samples were collected. The O.P. Board will evaluate the arterial blood gas values by converting those values to the average altitude of Charleston, West Virginia. For this purpose, it shall be sufficient to add 1 mmHg to each arterial oxygen tension for each 300 feet or fraction thereof that the testing laboratory is located above the average altitude of Charleston, because the relationship of barometric pressure (Altitude) and alveolar oxygen is approximately linear up to 4,000 feet as long as the subject breathes room air.

As an example, Bluefield is located approximately 2,600 feet above sea level. Charleston is approximately 600 feet above sea level. Thus, arterial oxygen values obtained in Bluefield should have 6.67 mmHg added to them before applying the table to them to obtain "percent impairment". The calculations are as follows:

"Bluefield (2,600') minus Charleston (600') equals 2,000'  
differential  
2,000' divided by 300' altitude equals 6.67  
6.67 multiplied by 1 mmHg per 300' altitude equals 6.67  
mmHg"

20.8.7 Table For Impairment of Pulmonary Function

A. The following table will be used as an indicator of impairment of pulmonary function if any of the acceptable values appear in the percentage of impairment column:

% IMPAIRMENT	0	10	15	20	25	30	40	50	60	TOTAL
FVC % PRED.	80	75	70	67	64	61	58	55	52	50
FEV <sub>1.0</sub> % PRED.	75	73	70	67	64	61	58	55	52	50
FEV <sub>1.0</sub> /FVC	75	73	70	67	64	61	56	51	48	45
MVV <sup>1</sup> % PRED.	80	75	70	67	64	61	58	55	52	50
<u>PaCO<sub>2</sub></u>	<u>PaO<sub>2</sub> Values Equal to or Less Than</u>									
30 or below	85	81	78	75	73	70	68	67	66	65
31	84	80	77	74	72	69	67	66	65	64
32	83	79	76	73	71	68	66	65	64	63
33	82	78	75	72	70	67	65	64	63	62
34	81	77	74	71	69	66	64	63	62	61
35	80	76	73	70	68	65	63	62	61	60
36	79	75	72	69	67	64	62	61	60	59
37	78	74	71	68	66	63	61	60	59	58
38	77	73	70	67	65	62	60	59	58	57
39	76	72	69	66	64	61	59	58	57	56
40 or above	75	71	68	65	63	60	58	57	56	55

B. Exercise pO<sub>2</sub> values that rise above the resting pO<sub>2</sub> values will indicate a lesser degree of impairment of pulmonary function, and if they are less than the resting values will indicate a greater degree of impairment of pulmonary function.

C. The results of any medically acceptable tests or procedures reported by a physician which are not addressed in this table but which tend to demonstrate the presence or absence of pneumoconiosis or sequela of pneumoconiosis or the presence or absence of a respiratory pulmonary impairment may be submitted and given appropriate consideration (Airway Resistance, Ear Oximetry, DLCO and A-a gradient, etc.). It is also important that the O.P. Board use all clinical history and physical findings that would enhance or detract from any percentage of impairment in the above table.

1 Bill 9

H. B. 1754

(By Delegate Casey)  
(Introduced February 5, 1986; referred to the  
Committee on the Judiciary.)

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3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10 A BILL to amend and reenact section twenty-three(one)(thirteen),  
11 article two, chapter sixty-four of the code of West Virginia,  
12 one thousand nine hundred thirty-one, as amended, relating to  
13 authorizing the workers' compensation commissioner to  
14 promulgate legislative rules relating to standards for  
15 medical examination in occupational pneumoconiosis claims.

16 Be it enacted by the Legislative of West Virginia:

17 That section twenty-three(one)(thirteen), article two,  
18 chapter sixty-four of the code of West Virginia, one thousand  
19 nine hundred thirty-one, as amended, be amended and reenacted to  
20 read as follows:

21 ARTICLE 2. EXECUTIVE AGENCY AUTHORIZATION TO PROMULGATE  
22 LEGISLATIVE RULES.

23 §64-2-23(1)(13). Workers' compensation commissioner.

1754

1           (a) The legislative rules filed in the state register on the  
2 twenty-fifth day of October, one thousand nine hundred eighty-  
3 four relating to the workers' compensation commissioner (time  
4 limits for the administration proceedings of adjudications and  
5 awards) are authorized.

6           (b) The legislative rules filed in the state register on the  
7 sixth day of August, one thousand nine hundred eighty-five,  
8 relating to the workers' compensation commissioner (standards for  
9 medical examination in occupational pneumoconiosis claims) are  
10 authorized.

11  
12  
13           NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to authorize the workers'  
14 compensation commissioner to promulgate legislative rules  
15 relating to the standards for medical examination in occupational  
16 pneumoconiosis claims.

17  
18           Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from  
19 the present law, and underscoring indicates new language that  
20 would be added.  
21

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATIVE RULES  
WORKERS' COMPENSATION COMMISSIONER  
Chapter 23-1  
Series I

FILED

Title: Administration of the Workers' Compensation Fund

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OFFICE OF WEST VIRGINIA  
SECRETARY OF STATE

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Title 85

FILED IN THE OFFICE OF  
THE SECRETARY OF STATE

FILED

THIS DATE April 15, 1986  
ADMINISTRATIVE LAW DIVISION

~~WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATIVE RULES~~  
WORKERS' COMPENSATION COMMISSIONER  
Chapter ~~23-1~~  
Series ~~R 1~~

OFFICE OF WEST VIRGINIA  
SECRETARY OF STATE

Title: Administration of the Workers' Compensation Fund

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Section 1. General

1.1 Scope - These Legislative Rules provide for the general administration of the West Virginia Workers' Compensation Fund.

1.2 Authority and Related Code - 23-1-13, 23-2-9, 23-3-1.

1.3 Filing Date - April 15, 1986.

1.4 Effective Date - July 1, 1986.

1.5 Definitions - As used in these regulations:

A. "Claimant" shall mean any individual who files an application for Workers' Compensation benefits.

B. "Filing" shall mean actual receipt in the office of the Commissioner.

C. "Paid" shall mean the time the check is deposited in the mail or presented in person to the claimant, claimant's attorney or anyone acting in his behalf.

D. "Receipt of . . . notice" shall be presumed to have occurred on the third day following the date of the notice. The next day (or the fourth day following the date of the notice) will be treated as the first day of the period during which a protest or appeal may be filed. Should the final day of such period be a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday (State or Federal), the period shall expire on the next business day immediately following such Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday.

E. "Subscriber" shall mean an employer for whom Workers' Compensation coverage has been effected.

F. "Within fifteen days of the mailing of such copy" shall mean within a fifteen day period beginning with the day immediately following the date of such copy. Should the fifteenth day be a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday (State or Federal), the fifteen day period shall expire on the next business day immediately following such Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday.

G. "Medical Vendor" shall mean a person or persons within the medical field as defined in West Virginia Chapter 30, as amended, and shall include any hospital licensed under West Virginia Code 16-5b.

## Section 2. Auditing and Adjusting Payroll Records

### 2.1 General

Every employer subject to the Workers' Compensation law shall keep, preserve and maintain complete records showing in detail all expenditures for payroll and the division of such expenditures in the various divisions and classifications of the employer's business. Such records shall be preserved for not less than five years after the respective times of the transaction upon which records are based.

All books, records, papers and documents reflecting upon the amount and the classifications of the payroll expenditures of an employer shall be kept available for inspection at any reasonable time by the duly authorized representatives of the Commissioner. If an employer fails to keep, preserve and maintain such records and other information reflecting upon payroll expenditures, or fails to make such records and information available for inspection, the Commissioner may determine upon such information as is available to him the amount of premium due from the employer and his findings shall constitute prima facie evidence.

The Commissioner shall have the right at any reasonable time to audit any or all books, records, papers, documents, works, and payroll of an employer for the purpose of verifying the correctness of reports made by an employer of wage expenditures as required by law. The Commissioner shall have the right to make adjustments as to classifications, allocation of wage expenditures to classifications, amount of wage expenditures, premium rates and amount of premium.

When the Commissioner has assigned two or more classifications for a subscriber's operation, the employer shall keep an appropriate record showing a correct and verifiable segregation of all his payroll into such classifications. If the subscriber has failed to keep such record, that part of the payroll which cannot be reasonably determined by the Commissioner as belonging to any other classification shall be placed under the assigned classification having the highest rate, and the employer shall be assessed premium accordingly. The highest rate of the subscriber's assigned classification shall be applied to such payroll as is expended after the subscriber has been notified of these requirements and which is not segregated as herein provided.

## 2.2 Duties Outside the State

In instances of temporary employment of certain employees without the State, the entire remuneration of those employees shall be included in the payroll reports to the Commissioner.

## Section 3. Employers

### 3.1 General

Any employer subject to the Workers' Compensation Act and required to subscribe and pay premiums into the Workers' Compensation Fund for the protection of its employees, as provided in Code 23-2-1, must use the form or forms designated by the Commissioner in order to subscribe. All information required by the form or forms must be supplied to the Commissioner in accordance with the directions contained on the form or forms. If the employer is a foreign corporation, it must provide a certified copy of its Certificate of Authority from the Secretary of State of West Virginia authorizing the employer to do business in this State.

### 3.2 Application

When the form or forms designated by the Commissioner, duly executed, have been returned to the Commissioner, together with a check for the required deposit, the Commissioner, if satisfied that all requirements have been met, shall promptly send the employer a notice of the acceptance of his application, stating the date of such acceptance.

### 3.3 Employees Covered

An employer's participation in the Fund must cover all of his eligible employees.

## Section 4. Self-Insurers

### 4.1 General

An employer desiring to become a self-insurer must complete and return to the Fund an application for permission to become a self-insurer on the form or forms designated by the Commissioner. This application shall be accompanied by:

A. A sworn itemized statement of the assets and liabilities of the employer.

B. A statement showing the kind of operation performed or to be performed.

#### 4.2 Acceptance of Employer as Self-Insurer

If, upon examination of the sworn application and other data submitted, the Commissioner is satisfied as to the ability of the employer to insure the payment of compensation to injured employees and the dependents of fatally injured employees, the application may be granted, subject to meeting all requirements of Code 23-2-9, and to the following conditions:

A. The Commissioner shall not approve a regular subscriber's application to become a self-insurer if the applicant's complete record on the books of the Commissioner shows that the amount of premiums paid by him is less than the total liability against the Workers' Compensation Fund incurred on account of injury to or death of any of his employees, including his proportion of any liability charged against the Fund on account of a catastrophe or second injury, until he shall pay into the Fund the amount of the excess of liability over premium paid, and shall agree to pay any such further excess as may exist on the date on which the self-insurance becomes effective.

B. The applicant must agree to assume liability on all awards made after effective date of self-insurance in respect to claims for an injury or death which may have occurred prior to that date.

C. The self-insurer must deposit with the Commissioner security or bond, in form approved by the Commissioner, in such amount as may, in the opinion of the Commissioner be sufficient to compel or secure payment of all compensation benefits and expenses that may be incurred as a result of injury to his employees. The Commissioner may require the posting of additional bond or security whenever in his opinion the existing bond or security is deemed insufficient.

D. A regular subscriber to the Fund will be granted permission to become a self-insurer only as of the first day of July following the Commissioner's approval of his application for such permission; provided that, the application asking for such permission is received no later than December 31 of the year preceding said first day of July before granting permission to become a self-insurer. The Commissioner may conduct an audit of all books, records, papers and documents reflecting upon the payroll expenditures.

E. Once the privilege of self-insuring has been granted said privilege will continue contingent upon the self-insurer providing on a year to year basis information showing current reserves for all open claims.

#### 4.3 Self-Insurers Duty to Comply with Rules and Regulations

Employers authorized by the Commissioner to become self-insurers are subject to all of the rules and regulations applicable to regular subscribers. Failure to comply with the Rules and Regulations as prescribed by the preceding sentence, or a default or obligation in any manner, may result in suspension of the privilege of self-insuring.

#### 4.4 Disposition of Pay Orders

Self-insurers may pay compensation benefits prior to receipt of the Commissioner's pay order if, and only if,

A. The Commissioner receives notice in writing from the employer within seven (7) days from the date of issuance of the first payment of benefits, and

B. Such notice is accompanied by properly completed form or forms designated by the Commissioner provided that such form or forms have not previously been received in the Commissioner's office, and

C. Such notice is accompanied by a properly completed Physician's Report Form or a statement that a blank copy of the Physician's Report Form has been sent by mail to the employee's treating physician with a report to file such form with the Commissioner's office within seven (7) days from the date of issuance of the first payment of benefits provided that such form has not previously been received in the Commissioner's office.

#### 4.5 Election to Pay Into Surplus Fund

Self-insurers shall elect to pay into the surplus fund to cover the second injury or catastrophe hazards or, in the alternative, to give written notice of security or bond in an amount deemed sufficient by the Commissioner to cover these hazards individually.

### Section 5. Computation and Assignment of Premium Rates

#### 5.1 General

On the first day of July of each year the Commissioner shall prepare a readjusted premium rate schedule, determined in accordance with the nature of the business conducted by each group or class of employers and the hazards incidental thereto.

Workers' Compensation Fund  
Leg. Rule, 23-1  
Series I, Sec. 5

The premium rate schedule shall specify the applicable Manual Rate for each group or class of employers. The Commissioner may prescribe allowable limitations upon modification of the Manual Rates which may be applied to individual premium rates.

5.2 Individual Premium Rates

Each subscriber will be assigned an individual premium rate as follows:

A. For a new subscriber, the manual rate for the applicable group or class.

B. For an active subscriber who has paid one thousand five hundred dollars (\$1,500.00) or more in premium during the rating period, the Commissioner may assign a merit rate based upon the subscriber's individual loss experience during the rating period. Such merit rate shall be computed in accordance with the Workers' Compensation Experience Rating Plan.

C. Any rate assigned by the Commissioner is subject to change whenever in his opinion a readjustment is deemed necessary.

Section 6. Computation and Payment of Premiums

6.1 General

Every subscriber shall file with the Commissioner quarterly payroll and premium reports and pay the premiums due thereon, in full. Unless otherwise provided by the Commissioner, said reports and premiums shall be remitted on or before the last day of the month immediately following the end of the quarter.

6.2 Manner of Reporting

Quarterly reports shall be made on the form or forms supplied by the Commissioner in compliance with the instructions given thereon. The reports must include all wages paid to employees, whether payable in money or other valuable consideration, and shall include salaries, bonuses, commissions, profit sharing, and the reasonable money value of board, rent, housing, lodging, and other goods or services.

6.3 Guidelines

The following guidelines shall be followed where appropriate:

A. Subscribers conducting operations in more than one classification shall separate wages by such classification.

Workers' Compensation Fund  
Leg. Rule, 23-1  
Series I, Sec. 6

B. If the subscriber had no employees during a quarter the report shall so state.

C. Theoretical wages should be reported for volunteers by multiplying the "whole man hours" worked by the state minimum wage.

D. Subscribers who regularly employ migrant laborers shall report wages for premium purposes in the same manner as reported in connection with a claim for benefits, taking into account the entire wage as above defined.

E. Names of employees should not be shown on the reporting form, but must appear on the payroll records of the subscriber.

F. Wages paid to employees while engaged in training programs must be reported and premiums must be paid thereon unless a valid contract exists which requires that said employees be covered by another subscriber to the Fund.

#### 6.4 Remittances

All remittances shall be made payable to the order of "State Workers' Compensation Commissioner" and shall be mailed with the payroll and premium report to the office of the Workers' Compensation Commissioner, Charleston, West Virginia.

#### 6.5 Remittance of Premium Improperly Paid

When an employer has reported wages of an individual who is not an employee within the meaning of the statute and paid premium thereon, such employer shall, upon proper request being made of the Commissioner, be entitled to a refund of such premium for a period not to exceed the preceding five fiscal years.

### Section 7. Name and Address of Subscriber; Legal Notice

#### 7.1 General

The name and address given by the subscriber on the application for coverage shall be used by the Commissioner for giving any notice required by the statute or by these rules, unless a formal request for a change of name and/or address is made by the subscriber as hereinafter provided.

#### 7.2 Change of Name or Address

Any subscriber changing the name or the address of his business must promptly notify the Commissioner, in writing, and

request that his name or address be changed on the Commissioner's records.

A. In case of the appointment of a receivership the full name of the receivership shall be reported.

B. If the subscriber wishes to have certain notices and correspondence directed to a subsidiary, a branch office or agent, he must notify the Commissioner of the name and address of said subsidiary, branch office or agent, and specify the circumstances under which said notice is to be given.

#### 7.3 Effect of Failure to Request Change of Name or Address

In the absence of a request for a change of name or address by the subscriber, any notice given by the Commissioner to the subscriber at the address and in the name shown on the Commissioner's records shall constitute constructive notice to the subscriber of any action taken.

#### 7.4 Legal Notice to Attorney or Agent

The Commissioner may continue to send legal notice to subscribers, attorneys or agents of record. However, the requirement of legal notice will be met by mailing said notice to the interested parties as provided by West Virginia Code 23-5-1.

### Section 8. Termination of Business

#### 8.1 General

In the event of a sale by an employer of all or any part of his business, the following rules will apply in respect to (a) assignment of premium rates, (b) assumption of charges in connection with the business made during the fiscal year in which the sale occurs, and (c) assumption of all contingent liabilities in connection with the business for injuries occurring prior to the effective date of sale:

A. If a subscriber sells all of his business to a purchaser who is not already conducting a business in the same classification the purchaser must assume all such charges and contingent liabilities and will be assigned the seller's premium rate. If, however, the subscriber sells only a portion of his business to such a purchaser, the purchaser will be assigned the base rate and the seller will continue to operate under his old rate, and will remain subject to all such charges and contingent liabilities.

Workers' Compensation Fund  
Leg. Rule, 23-1  
Series I, Sec. 8

B. If a subscriber sells all his business to a purchaser who is already a subscriber in respect to a business in the same classification, the purchaser must assume all such charges and contingent liabilities and will be assigned a new rate computed on the basis of his and the seller's combined experience record. If, however, a subscriber sells only a portion of his business to such a purchaser, the purchaser and the seller will each continue to operate under his old rate, and the seller will, as to that part of the business sold, remain subject to all such charges and contingent liabilities.

C. If a subscriber sells all of his business to a purchaser who is already conducting, as a self-insurer a business in the same classification, the purchaser must assume all contingent liabilities, must make application to the Commissioner for permission to become a self-insurer in respect to the business purchased, and must post such additional bond as the Commissioner may require. If, however, a subscriber sells only a portion of his business to such a purchaser, the purchaser must comply with the provisions of the preceding sentence in respect to the filing of an application and posting of additional bond, and the seller will continue to operate under his old rate and will remain subject to all such charges and contingent liabilities.

D. If a subscriber sells all of his business to a purchaser who is conducting a business in the same classification but who is not a subscriber or self-insurer, the purchaser must assume all such charges and contingent liabilities and will be assigned the seller's premium rate unless such rate is less than the base rate, in which case he will be assigned the base rate. The sale to such a purchaser of only a portion of the subscriber's business will be governed by the same rule in respect to partial successorship as that stated in subsection (A) above.

E. If a self-insurer sells all or part of his business he will remain liable on his bond for all accrued and contingent liabilities in respect to injuries occurring prior to the sale, unless the Commissioner permits him to pay into the Workers' Compensation Fund an amount sufficient to cover the estimated cost of all such liabilities, in which case all future payments in respect thereto will be made from the Fund.

F. The purchaser of all or a part of the business of a self-insurer will, if he becomes a new subscriber, be assigned the base rate, or if he is an old subscriber in respect to a business in the same classification, will continue under his old premium rate, or if he is a self-insurer in respect to a business in the same classification, will be required to comply with the provisions of subsection (C) of this rule in respect to the filing of an application and posting of additional bond.

G. In the case of any sale not covered by the above provisions, the Commissioner will make such ruling in the particular case as to him seems proper, following as nearly as practicable the principles and policies set forth in this rule.

#### 8.2 Agreements on Assumption of Charges and Contingent Liabilities

If in the contract of sale the parties make an agreement in respect to the assumption of charges and contingent liabilities for injuries occurring prior to the effective date of the sale, and if a complete copy of such contract is filed with the Commissioner, he will give effect to such agreement unless in his opinion it would be improper to do so in the particular case.

### Section 9. Employer's Report of Injuries; Wage Information

#### 9.1 Wage Information

Failure to report wage information may result in payment of maximum benefits for temporary total disability if the injury results in lost time. Upon receipt of proper information the benefit rate will be adjusted prospectively, but there shall be no adjustments to previous overpayments caused by the employer's failure to provide proper wage information.

#### 9.2 Temporary Total Disability Benefits

If the claimant is injured during the first half of the working day, the date of injury will be considered the first day of disability. If the claimant is injured during the second half of the working day, the following day will be considered the first day of disability.

#### 9.3 Permanent Disability Awards

In any claim, including claims for occupational pneumoconiosis or other occupational diseases, where the file contains insufficient wage information, the Commissioner shall, before granting an award of permanent disability, request additional wage information from the employer. If such information is not received within ten (10) days from request, benefits shall be payable at the maximum rate provided by law, including any adjustments to the maximum rate which occur through operation of law.

In the event that claimant, while receiving payments under an award of permanent disability, becomes temporarily disabled as a result of another compensable injury and is entitled to receive

temporary total disability payments therefore, payments under the permanent partial disability award shall cease until such time as claimant has returned to work. Upon returning to work claimant shall be entitled to a lump sum payment of accrued permanent partial disability benefits which were suspended.

#### 9.4 Information Required of Claimant

Where the employer is no longer a subscriber in good standing the Commissioner may require the claimant to supply proof of earnings. In the absence of proof to the contrary, permanent disability benefits shall be payable at the minimum rate, but nothing in these rules shall be construed as limiting the claimant's right to file information to show that he is entitled to the higher rate.

### Section 10. Employee's Report of Injury and Application For Compensation

#### 10.1 General

The injured employee should immediately give notice to his employer, in writing, that he has suffered an injury.

This requirement may be satisfied by giving the employer a copy of the application for benefits or by giving him any other writing which gives the name and address of the employer, the name and address of the employee, the time, place, nature and cause of the injury, and whether or not the employee is, at the time of writing, unable to return to work as a result of the injury. A copy of the application or other writing must also be filed with the Commissioner.

Failure to give written notice will relieve the employer of the responsibility of filing the report of injury until such time as the employer is notified in writing that an injury has occurred, and may result in delaying benefits to the injured employee.

### Section 11. Injured Employee's Responsibilities Concerning Medical Examination and Treatment

#### 11.1 Examination and Treatment

The Commissioner may order an injured employee to report for examination and may further order him to undergo such treatment or hospitalization as is indicated in the particular case. It shall be the duty of the injured employee to comply fully and promptly with any such order issued by the Commissioner.

## 11.2 Violation of Rule

If violation of any provision of this rule, or refusal to comply with any order of the Commissioner issued as provided herein, should result in an increase in the duration of temporary disability or in the degree of permanent disability, such violation or refusal will be considered in determining the compensation, if any, to be awarded, and no compensation will be awarded for extension or increase of disability caused thereby.

### 11.03 Injured Employee's Right To Choice Of Medical Vendor

An injured employee has a legal right to select a medical vendor of his own choice, and an employer cannot interfere in any way with this right.

## Section 12. Investigation of Claims

### 12.1 General

The Commissioner shall consider all information and proof properly submitted in connection with each claim. Whenever he is of the opinion that a claim has not been adequately or properly developed for his consideration, he may require the parties to produce additional evidence. In his investigation and consideration of a claim the Commissioner shall accept ex parte statements at any time prior to the filing by an interested party of such protest as will entitle him to a formal hearing. After the filing of a protest, ex parte statements will be accepted only by agreement of all interested parties.

### 12.2 Investigation of Claim by Commissioner

The Commissioner may independently investigate any claim prior to making initial decision. Parties must cooperate with Commissioner's investigators.

## Section 13. Awards

### 13.1 Notice

Upon the making of or refusing to make an award, the Commissioner shall send to each interested party a written notice setting forth his decision and the terms thereof and informing the parties of their right to protest his decision by filing objection thereto in writing at any time within thirty days after receipt of notice.

### 13.2 Computation of Awards

When a claimant is found to have a permanent disability, his award shall be computed from the date of injury, excluding all periods for which the claimant receives other Workers' Compensation. Accrued benefits shall be computed in accordance with the benefit rate or rates in effect during the period or periods for which they are payable. Where non-accrued benefits are commuted to a lump sum, the same shall be computed on the basis of the benefit rate as of the date of delivery of said benefits.

### 13.3 Lump Sum Payment of Permanent Partial Disability Award

A. The Commissioner may, in his discretion, commute a permanent partial disability award to one or more lump sum payments. Beneficiaries of a permanent partial disability award who desire commutation of the award to a lump sum payment must petition the Commissioner on forms provided by the Commissioner. The forms will be made available. Such forms will include a form to be completed by the employer. The petition must set forth reasons for the petitioner's request and, when appropriate, must be accompanied by the following documents:

(1) When the reason for the request is to purchase real property,

(i) a brief opinion from a licensed attorney regarding the legal and equitable title to the property sought to be purchased.

(ii) the opinion of two or more disinterested persons having a knowledge of real estate values in the locality of the petitioner's prospective purchase regarding the advisability of the purchase.

(2) When the reason for the request is to liquidate pressing debts,

(i) statements from the petitioner's creditors regarding petitioner's debts,

(ii) a recapitulation by petitioner of his total indebtedness.

(3) The Commissioner may require such other documentation as deemed necessary.

B. The Commissioner, after determining that the claimant has a means of support and the non-accrued benefits are for a period not exceeding 100 weeks, may commute an award of permanent partial disability benefits.

C. Any lump sum payment shall be subject to discount at the rate of 4%, provided, however, that the first 100 weeks of benefits shall not be discounted. The charge to the employer's account shall not be discounted.

Section 14. Reports of Examination, Treatment and  
Payment of Bills

14.1 Obligation For Submitting Reports

All medical vendors, upon accepting a claimant as a patient, assume an obligation to submit a report of such case to the Commissioner immediately and to make continuing reports. The preliminary report must be made by the medical vendor on a form prescribed by the Commissioner and completed in its entirety. Inasmuch as an attending physician's reports (Form WC-219) of disability are an essential part of each claim, it is extremely important that they be submitted to the Commissioner promptly in order that the claimant may receive his compensation payments regularly during the period of disability. Failure to make reports promptly may result in the delay of payments of benefits to the claimant and payment to the medical vendors for services rendered.

14.2 Periodic Reports

In case of any medical or similar service being rendered during a period longer than a month, the attending medical vendor must file with the Commissioner a narrative report upon request indicating the progress of the injured employee. Completion of Form WC-219 (Attending Physician's Report) will not satisfy the requirement of a narrative report. If such reports are not made when requested by the Commissioner, payment for services may be withheld until such report is submitted.

14.3 Signature of Medical Vendor is Required

Medical reports and fee bills must be signed by the medical vendor rendering the services or his authorized representative with the name in legible printing or typing beneath the signature.

14.4 Payment for Appearance at Hearings

A medical vendor appearing at a hearing to give testimony

regarding an examination of a claimant will be paid a fee commensurate with the service rendered for such appearance and testimony, provided the examination was made at the request of the Commissioner. If the medical vendor appears to give testimony on behalf of the claimant or employer regarding an examination made at the instance of such claimant or employer, payments must be made by the party requesting the testimony.

#### 14.5 Change of Medical Vendors

A claimant will not be permitted to change medical vendors without obtaining written consent of the Commissioner for such change. This rule does not apply to cases transferred after emergency or first aid treatment, cases transferred to a specialist by the original attending physician, or cases where an unforeseen emergency develops which requires special facilities and skills not available to the attending physician or hospital.

Any removal or transfer made without proper authorization must be explained in detail for the Commissioner's consideration and disposition of fee bills submitted. When a change of physicians is authorized, the original attending physician will file a final report of the claimant's physical status on the effective date of change. It is the responsibility of every doctor to make a reasonable effort to ascertain whether he is the first attending physician.

#### 14.6 Treatment by More Than One Medical Vendor

Except in cases where a consultant, anesthetist or surgical assistant is required, or the necessity for treatment by a specialist is clearly shown, fees will not be approved for treatment by more than one medical vendor for the same condition over the same period of time.

#### 14.7 Unusual Treatment

In cases requiring unusual treatment not contemplated under ordinary circumstances, the medical vendor must inform the Commissioner immediately of the condition or complications present. If the necessity for additional treatment is clearly indicated, authorization for such treatment shall be granted by the Commissioner and additional professional fees shall be paid at a rate commensurate with the services rendered in addition to the fee specified by the Commissioner.

#### 14.8 Treatment of Unrelated Conditions

The Commissioner will pay for treatment of a condition which was not caused by the injury, provided that it is clearly

evident that the unrelated condition is aggravating the occupational injury by preventing recovery from said occupational injury. Any unrelated condition must be reported to the Commissioner before payment is considered.

#### 14.9 Surgical Procedures

Except in emergencies or where the condition of the patient, in the opinion of the medical vendor, is likely to be endangered by delay, written authorization must be obtained from the Commissioner in advance for all surgical procedures. Failure to comply with this rule may result in disapproval of the medical vendor's bill. This rule does not apply in cases involving initial treatment.

#### 14.10 Hernia

The Commissioner shall not approve payment for conservative treatment of a hernia, except for the initial examination for diagnostic purposes, and except where it is shown that the employee has some chronic disease, or is otherwise in such physical condition that it is considered unsafe for him to undergo such operation. Payment for surgical repair of a hernia cannot be considered until all required forms have been filed and the claim determined compensable.

#### 14.11 Amputation of Upper or Lower Extremities

In cases involving amputation of either upper or lower extremities, the attending medical vendor must file a report of the claimant's physical status when he is of the opinion that the stump is ready for fitting of a prosthesis. Upon receipt of the attending medical vendor's report, the Commissioner may refer the claimant to a medical vendor or a Rehabilitation Center for evaluation to determine the type of prosthesis most beneficial for the particular claimant involved and whether the claimant is in need of training in use of the prosthesis.

Upon receipt of the medical recommendations, the Commissioner shall authorize the fitting of the recommended prosthesis. Payment shall not be approved until the prosthesis is determined to be serviceable and satisfactory. The requirement for prior approval for prosthesis shall not apply when the attending medical vendor utilizes the procedure of immediate amputation prosthetic application.

#### 14.12 Braces and Appliances

The Commissioner will not approve payment for braces and appliances unless the necessity for their use is clearly indicated

by the medical vendor and authorization is granted prior to fitting the brace or appliance. The request must specify the exact type of brace or appliance and the name and address of the supplier.

This rule does not apply in cases where back supports, crutches, and minor appliances are necessary in order that a claimant may be released from a hospital following initial or authorized treatment, nor shall it apply when the medical vendor utilizes the procedure of immediate amputation prosthetic application. In such cases, the medical vendor must inform the Commissioner immediately of the device obtained and the name and address of the supplier.

#### 14.13 Payment for Physical or Vocational Rehabilitation Services, or Appliances

The Commissioner will not approve payment for physical or vocational rehabilitation services rendered, or appliances furnished, unless authorization is secured in advance of the rendering of such services or providing of such appliances, and then only if application for payment is filed within the statutory period after the service has been rendered or the appliance furnished to the claimant.

#### 14.14 Necessity for X-ray Examination Must be Apparent

An x-ray examination may be made in any case where it is clearly shown that such an examination is necessary in the diagnosis or treatment of the industrial injury.

#### 14.15 To Whom Payments Are Approved

The Commissioner will approve payment for x-ray examinations to medical vendors who take such x-rays or refer claimants for x-ray examination. Medical vendors and hospitals must bill separately when the hospital furnishes the x-ray facilities and the medical vendor charges a separate fee for review and interpretation of the film with the report.

#### 14.16 Filing and Mailing X-ray Films

All x-ray films made in or out of the hospital by medical vendors in connection with the treatment or examination of industrial injuries must be labelled with the date the film was made, the claim number, if available, and name of the claimant. All films must be retained so that they may be forwarded to the Commissioner upon written request. If x-ray films for which previous interpretative reports have been filed and paid for by the Commissioner, are not furnished upon request, the physician, hospital, or dentist will be required to reimburse the Fund for the amount originally paid.

14.17 Interpretations of X-ray Films Must Be Submitted  
With Fee Bill

A written report, signed by the medical vendor who interpreted the film and bearing the date the film was made, claim number, and name of the claimant must accompany the fee bill on which x-ray charges are submitted. Reports must contain interpretations of each study. Fee bills must be fully itemized including the portion of the body studied and the exact number of complete x-ray examinations made. This bill should also contain the coded number of the medical vendor who interprets the film.

14.18 X-ray Therapy

The Commissioner will approve payment for x-ray therapy treatment when administered by a qualified roentgenologist or dermatologist when such services have been duly authorized.

14.19 Requirements for Payment of Fees

Fees for examination or treatment are approved only when made by the medical vendor duly licensed to make such examination or to render such treatment, and then only when the medical vendor actually sees and examines the patient and actually renders or directly supervises such treatment.

14.20 Payment of Bills

Bills for medical services rendered in cases involving minor injuries should be submitted immediately upon cessation of treatment. In the case of medical or similar services extending over a period longer than one month, medical vendors should submit fee bills monthly.

In contested cases consideration of fee bills will be deferred until the compensability of the claim is determined; however, bills should be filed promptly in expectation of payment at a later date and in order to comply with the statute of limitations on payment of medical, hospital and dental treatment, crutches, artificial limbs, and other such devices. In those cases requiring medical or similar services over a period longer than one month, medical vendors shall submit reports monthly or at other required intervals, stating the treatment rendered and the progress of the injured claimant. If such reports are not submitted, the Commissioner may refuse payment for such services.

14.21 Additional Charges to Claimant, Failure to Submit  
Fee Bills

Additional services and accommodations not reasonably required for treatment of the compensable injury but requested by the claimant shall be the responsibility of the claimant.

\* Failure on the part of the medical vendor or other person, firm or corporation to submit fee bills to the Commissioner for services rendered within the statutory period prohibits collection thereof from the injured employee, the employer, or the Fund.\*

#### 14.22 Provisions for Separate Billing

Medical vendor services must be filed on a separate billing form. Fee bills for medical vendor services, other than hospital services, must be signed by the medical vendor rendering the service or his representative. The bills for hospital services must be signed by the hospital administrator or his qualified representative.

#### 14.23 Payment for Drugs or Medicine

The Commissioner may approve payment for drugs or medicines furnished to the injured claimant as part of routine treatment rendered by the medical vendor. If unusual treatment is necessary, or if drugs or medicines are to be used by the injured claimant at his home in the absence of the medical vendor, payment of a reasonable amount of such drugs or medicines may be approved. Application for such payment must be accompanied by a statement of the medical vendor setting forth the necessity and purpose of the use of such drugs or medicines.

#### 14.24 Available Funds for Treatment

The law presently provides that the Commissioner may charge to an employer's account medical expenses not to exceed a statutory limit applicable at the date of injury. If medical expenses exceeding the statutory limit are authorized, payments are made from an unlimited medical expense reserve and are not charged to the individual employer's account.

#### 14.25 Rules for Physicians and Nurses

##### A. Amputation Reports

In cases involving amputations, the physician must mark the exact line of amputation on the prescribed form (Amputation Chart). To avoid error, the exact point of amputation must also be described in the written report and the Amputation Chart and report must be carefully checked to be certain that they agree.

##### B. Nomenclature to be Used in Describing Amputations of Digits

Inasmuch as different nomenclature is often used in describing the amputation of digits of the hand or foot and the involved phalanx (distal, proximal, or metacarpal, for example),

it is necessary for the purpose of conformity the terminology given on the Amputation Chart be used in describing the member injured resulting in an amputation.

C. Payment to Two Physicians When Claimant Transferred

In cases when a change of physicians is authorized in accordance with these rules and regulations, the Commissioner will pay a fee commensurate with reasonable and customary charges for the services rendered. In all such cases it is incumbent upon the referring physician to set forth the services rendered, including the name and address of the physician to whom the claimant is referred. The Commissioner shall be notified in writing at the time the referral is made.

D. Physiotherapy (Authorization and Payment)

The first twenty physiotherapy treatments may be administered without prior authorization if the nature of the injury clearly indicates the necessity. The Commissioner will not approve payment for additional physiotherapy treatments unless prior authorization is granted. The physician must accompany his request for such authorization with a report and recommendation showing the necessity for the additional treatments and the type of physiotherapy contemplated. Such treatment must be rendered by a registered physical therapist or by a licensed physician who is equipped for and uses physiotherapy as an integral part of his practice or medicine.

E. Payment for Nursing Service

Fee bills for nursing services must be filed on the form prescribed by the Commissioner as soon as practical. The fee bill should show the number of nurses engaged in the treatment and the number of hours worked by each.

F. Transfer to Another Hospital Must be Authorized

A claimant is not permitted, upon his own initiative, to transfer from one hospital to another without submitting the reason for such transfer in writing and obtaining authorization from the Commissioner prior to the transfer. No hospital will be paid unless the authorization is made in advance.

G. Use of the Operating Room

Before the Commissioner will allow a fee for the use of the operating room, a detailed narrative operative report, must be submitted with the fee bill and must clearly show that the nature

of the injury and the procedure performed warranted the use of the operating room.

#### H. Emergency Room Service

The Commissioner will approve payment for initial use of emergency room facilities and services such as routine dressings, routine medications, and routine local anesthesia. Subsequent use of the emergency room will not be approved without a statement from the physician explaining the necessity for the services rendered.

#### I. Inpatient Hospital Stay

The Commissioner shall approve payment for inpatient hospitalization of a claimant at the prevailing semi-private room rate; however, the Commissioner will approve payment for a private room if the claimant's attending physician deems it medically necessary. If the claimant's condition warrants treatment in an intensive care unit, the Commissioner will approve payment at the usual and customary rates until the claimant can be transferred to a private or semi-private room. The Commissioner shall have the right to exclude any charges from the hospital bill that do not specifically relate to the treatment of the occupational injury or occupational disease.

#### 14.26 Physiotherapy

The following rules will govern the authorization of the payment of physiotherapy administered in hospitals:

A. Fees for physiotherapy administered in a hospital on an out-patient basis will be approved for twenty (20) treatments without prior authorization if the nature of the injury indicates the necessity for such treatment.

B. If the nature of the injury clearly indicates that more than twenty (20) physiotherapy treatments are necessary, authorization must be obtained from the Commissioner prior to additional treatment.

C. Such treatment must be rendered by a registered physical therapist or by a licensed physician who is equipped for and uses physiotherapy as an integral part of his practice.

#### 14.27 Subsequent Periods of Hospitalization

Following the initial period of hospitalization, all subsequent periods of hospitalization must be authorized by the Commissioner prior to the time the claimant is admitted. However,

in cases of emergencies requiring hospitalization, the Commissioner should be notified promptly of such admission and provided with a complete medical report of the claimant's condition.

#### 14.28 Fee Bills and Reports

All fee bills must be itemized and completed in full. Failure to do so may result in the delay of payment to the hospital. Reports covering x-rays and operative procedures must be filed with the fee bill containing the charges.

#### 14.29 Reporting

When a dentist renders treatment for injuries involving the teeth and gums, he must complete the physician's preliminary report form provided by the Commissioner.

#### 14.30 Payment for Dental Treatment

In addition to standard dental treatment in industrial accidents, the Commissioner will approve payment for repair and/or replacement of partial or complete dentures or crowns or bridges broken or destroyed in a compensable accident. Except in case of an emergency or where the condition of the patient may be endangered by delay, the dentist must obtain prior authorization from the Commissioner for all treatment involving crown and bridge work or partial or full dentures. Such request must fully describe the appliance or procedure to be used and the cost thereof. Also accompanying such request should be a dental chart designating the natural teeth and/or artificial teeth which were injured and/or damaged in the accident and also listing missing and/or diseased teeth that could be a factor in determining proper course of treatment.

#### 14.31 Treatment of a Pre-existing Dental Deficiency or Disease

The Commissioner will not approve payment for treatment of a pre-existing dental deficiency or disease, unless it is clearly established that such pre-existing condition is prohibiting treatment of or recovery from an industrial injury. In such cases the Commissioner must be provided with a complete report of the pre-existing condition and authorization granted prior to rendering treatment.

#### 14.32 Chiropractors, Number of Treatments and Authorizations

Number of treatments shall be limited to twenty (20)

treatments without authorization. Treatments and x-rays thereafter will be authorized by the Commissioner upon receipt of such request or report from the chiropractor setting forth the condition of the claimant and the number of additional treatments, or x-rays required. Each subsequent request for treatments must be accompanied by a progress report.

After a reasonable period of treatment, the case will be reviewed by the Commissioner to determine whether a consultation examination is desired. Chiropractors will be considered in selecting the consultants. If the particular case indicates a herniated disc or severe deformity of the spine which may require operative treatment, then an orthopedic and/or neurological diagnosis and evaluation may be secured.

#### 14.33 Ambulance Service

The Commissioner will approve payment for ambulance service from the scene of the accident to the hospital or in the event an emergency situation develops. Payment for other ambulance service will not be approved without a letter from the attending physician explaining the medical reasons for such services.

#### 14.34 Filing of Ambulance Service Bills

Fee bills must be completed in full listing the name and address of the claimant and the employer, claim identification number, as well as vendor's identification number. The fee bill must show the loading fee, round trip mileage and the total amount of charges.

### Section 15. Travel Expenses - Medical Examination and Treatment

#### 15.1 General

Claimants are entitled to reasonable traveling, meals and lodging expenses actually incurred in connection with medical examinations or treatment. In making a determination on the "reasonableness" of such expenses the Commissioner shall utilize the "Travel Regulations for State Employees" as a guide, unless specific provisions to the contrary are otherwise contained herein.

#### 15.2 Physical Limitations

Where a medical vendor certifies that a claimant, because of the state of his health, requires special travel arrangements

in order to report for an authorized examination, the claimant shall be reimbursed for the cost of such arrangements.

### 15.3 Claimant's Residence

The parties to a claim shall be bound by the claimant's residence on the date of injury, and the claimant shall be reimbursed for reasonable expenses from the residence to the situs of examination, whether the claimant be a resident or a non-resident of this state. It shall be the policy of the Commissioner to arrange for examination as near as practicable to the claimant's residence. However, nothing herein shall be taken as limiting the rights of the parties to have examinations performed by physicians of their choice.

If the claimant changes his residence after the date of injury to a location outside of West Virginia or to a location substantially further from the state than the residence on the date of injury, the following limitations shall be observed:

A. Where the change of residence is necessitated by reason of health or financial hardship, upon a proper showing of such reasons the Commissioner shall, in writing, endorse the change of residence, and direct payment of travel expenses as follows:

(1) Where the distance between the residence and the situs of the examination is less than 400 miles, travel expenses shall be payable as provided in Sections 15.1 and 15.2 of these Rules;

(2) Where the distance between the residence and the situs of the examination is greater than 400 miles, expenses actually incurred en route shall be payable, to a maximum of the Round Trip Air Fare, Economy Class, between the closest airports offering scheduled commercial passenger service;

(3) Where the claimant objects to any order or finding, and the employer does not object thereto, and the claimant is subsequently directed to report for examination upon request of the employer, the claimant will be entitled to reimbursement of expenses from point of entry into West Virginia;

B. Where the claimant's change of residence is not necessitated by reason of health or financial hardship, expenses shall be payable only from point of entry into West Virginia.

### 15.4 Occupational Pneumoconiosis Claims

Notwithstanding any other provisions of these rules, the

employer must avail itself of the opportunity to participate in the examination scheduled before the Occupational Pneumoconiosis Board, or, pay the entire expense of any re-examination conducted on its behalf, including out of state travel, if any, to the extent provided under these Rules.

Section 16. Hearings

16.1 General

The following general rules apply to hearings:

A. After a hearing docket has been completed by the Commissioner and hearing notices pertaining to the claims listed on such docket have been mailed to the parties, additional claims shall not be added to such docket at the request of one party or his counsel except by agreement of the other party or his counsel.

B. After a continuance is granted in a claim, such claim shall be again set for hearing as soon as possible without waiting for preparation of a transcript of the preceding hearing, but good cause for a continuance of such subsequent hearing by either party shall be deemed to have been shown if the transcript of such preceding hearing at which testimony was taken is not available one week prior to the time of such subsequent hearing.

C. Any party to a hearing desiring medical examination or examinations to be made shall, if the request therefor and the designation of the physician or physicians to conduct the same are not made at such hearing, make such request and designation in writing to the Commissioner within fifteen days after such hearing. In no event shall either party be allowed to wait until receipt of the transcript of such hearing before in fact arranging for (in the case of the claimant) or requesting such examination or examinations or designating such physician or physicians (in the case of the employer).

D. After a claim has been set for hearing, a continuance may be granted (1) by the Commissioner on his own motion, or (2) by agreement of the parties or their counsel or (3) at the request of either party only for good cause shown.

E. A request for a continuance of a hearing made before the date set for such hearing on the basis of agreement of the parties or their counsel may be made orally to the Commissioner or his duly authorized representative in the office of the Commissioner or in writing filed with the Commissioner, and the request for a continuance on this basis may be made at any time. A request for a continuance of a hearing made before the date set for such hearing on the basis of good cause may be made only in writing

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filed with the Commissioner and mailed to the opposing party or his counsel as far in advance of the date set for such hearing as possible under the circumstances. When a hearing is continued for good cause shown within five days before the date set for such hearing, it shall be the responsibility of the party or his counsel who requested such continuance to notify the opposing party or his counsel of such continuance. A request for a continuance made at a scheduled hearing on the basis of agreement of the parties or their counsel or for good cause shall be made on the record to the Commissioner or his duly authorized representative at such hearing.

F. Any request for a continuance by agreement of the parties or their counsel shall be granted as a matter of right, unless the Commissioner has notified the parties or their counsel in writing at least ten days before the scheduled hearing that such hearing will not be continued by agreement of the parties or their counsel. In determining whether to grant a request for a continuance on the basis of good cause, the following principles and standards shall be observed in determining if good cause for the requested continuance has in fact been shown:

(1) The first hearing scheduled in any claim with respect to the issue then in litigation may be continued one time only on the basis of good cause shown if it appears that the requesting party or his counsel needs additional time to investigate the matters in issue in order to determine his position thereon. When a continuance is requested in accordance with the provisions of this subparagraph, the Commissioner may require such additional information as he may deem necessary in order for him to be satisfied that there is a need for further investigation and that the request is not made for the purpose of delay.

(2) When one party or his counsel cross-examines the other party, a representative of such other party, or a witness, good cause for a continuance requested by the cross-examining party or his counsel shall be deemed to have been shown if such continuance is requested for the purpose of enabling such cross-examining party or his counsel to investigate the claim in light of the information developed during cross-examination. When a continuance is requested in accordance with the provisions of this subparagraph, the Commissioner may require such additional information as he may deem necessary in order for him to be satisfied that there is a need for further investigation and that the request is not made for the purpose of delay.

(3) After a protesting party or his counsel has completed the presentation of his evidence, including when the

protesting party is the claimant the presentation for cross-examination by the other party or his counsel of any physicians who examined the protesting party at his instance, the other party or his counsel shall be entitled to at least one continuance as a matter of right in order to obtain and present his evidence.

(4) When request for one or more medical examinations at the expense of the party requesting same was made and the examination or examinations have not been performed or the report or reports pertaining thereto received by the date and time of the scheduled hearing, good cause shall be deemed to have been shown if a continuance is requested to permit such examination or examinations to be performed or such report or reports received or both.

(5) Good cause shall be deemed to have been shown when the requested continuance is necessary because of the unavailability or nonappearance of a witness (including either party) when the party or his counsel desiring the presence of such witness made a reasonable effort to have such witness present, and this principle shall apply even if a subpoena were not issued for such witness if the party or his counsel desiring the presence of such witness had reasonable cause to believe that a subpoena would not be necessary.

(6) When counsel for one of the parties is unable to be present at a scheduled hearing or is not present because he did not receive notice of such hearing, good cause for a continuance thereof on the basis of such unavailability or nonappearance shall be deemed to have been shown, but if it appears that any counsel is unable to be present with any degree of regularity or often fails to appear, a request for a continuance on such ground, unless such unavailability be due to illness, may be denied.

(7) If it appears that a continuance is requested because the requesting party or his counsel did not make any effort to prepare his case for such hearing, the requested continuance shall be denied. It is recognized that it is impossible to specify by rule and regulation all of the instances in which good cause for a continuance should be considered to exist: The foregoing principles and standards shall not, therefore, under any circumstances, be construed as constituting the only instances of good cause, but they shall serve as guidelines in the light of which requests for continuances for other reasons shall be judged.

#### 16.2 Pre-Hearing Conferences

In an effort to further expedite claims in litigation, the Commissioner or his duly authorized representative may at his own

instance or by agreement of the parties or their counsel, conduct, upon due notice giving the date, time and place, such conferences prior to hearing as may be necessary for the purpose of stipulating facts and defining issues.

### 16.3 Subpoenas

All subpoenas requiring the presence of a witness or the production of any records or documents at any hearing shall be issued by the Commissioner, but the party requesting their issuance must see that they are properly served. The fee for service of any such subpoena, and the witness fee and mileage of any witness who in obedience thereto appears at a hearing, shall be paid as provided by West Virginia Code, Chapter 23, Article 1, Section 10.

## Section 17. Appearances

### 17.1 Appearance by Individuals

Representation of claimants or employers is a matter of individual free choice. A claimant or an employer, who is a natural person may appear before the Commissioner or his duly authorized representative, at hearings or other like proceedings taken and had on a claim, either in person or by an attorney duly licensed and admitted to the practice of law in the State of West Virginia; or by a non-resident attorney duly licensed and admitted to practice before a court of record of general jurisdiction in another state or county or in the District of Columbia, if such non-resident attorney shall fully comply with the "Rules Relating to Non-Resident Attorneys Who Desire To Become Resident Practitioners," as promulgated and adopted by the Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia. The Commissioner or duly authorized representative may require any attorney to produce satisfactory evidence that he meets the standards of this Section.

### 17.2 Appearance by Corporations

A corporate employer may appear before the Commissioner or his duly authorized representative at hearings or other like proceedings taken and had on a claim only by an attorney duly licensed and admitted to the practice of law in the State of West Virginia or by a non-resident attorney who shall have qualified as set forth in Section 17.1 of these Rules.

### 17.3 Lay Representative

An interested party may not be represented at a hearing by anyone not licensed to practice law.

#### 17.4 Nonappearance

No case shall be decided upon the nonappearance of a claimant or an employer at a scheduled hearing until fifteen (15) days after the issuance of a letter to the nonappearing party granting leave to show cause for such nonappearance.

### Section 18. Access to Records

#### 18.1 General

All proceedings, orders and awards of the Commissioner are public records and subject to inspection by all who have a legitimate interest therein.

All other records of the Commissioner which are kept not as a memorial of official transactions but as evidence of internal operations, and information necessary to the proper administration of the Workers' Compensation Fund are private except as to parties in interest and their duly authorized representatives. The Commissioner or his duly authorized representative may require any person to produce satisfactory evidence of his authority before such person will be permitted to file any papers or examine claim records of the Commissioner.

The Commissioner may require satisfactory evidence of one's interest in the records of the Workers' Compensation Fund, and such interest must be a legitimate interest before such records will be produced for inspection.

### SECTION 19. Transcripts and Other Papers

#### 19.1 Copies of Transcripts and Other Papers

Copies of transcripts of hearings or other like proceedings taken and had on a claim and any other paper pertinent to a claim will be furnished on request to either party to a claim or to any third person that can satisfy the Commissioner that it has a legitimate interest in the claim. The Commissioner may charge a fee for such copies. However, each party will be entitled to one copy of all proceedings in which he is involved free of charge.

### SECTION 20. Procedure in Occupational Pneumoconiosis Cases

#### 20.1 General

In addition to the applicable provisions of other rules, the following shall apply to the determination of claims in Occupational Pneumoconiosis cases:

## 20.2 Non-Medical Hearing

Upon receipt of a proper application, employer's reports, and investigation (if requested by the Commissioner), the Commissioner shall determine the non-medical questions, and shall notify all interested parties of his decision. After the Commissioner makes or has made a determination, any dissatisfied party may, within fifteen days after receipt of written notice of the Commissioner's decision, file objection thereto in writing, whereupon the Commissioner will set a time and place for a hearing thereon. The procedure in non-medical hearings shall be subject to the provisions of Section 16 of these Rules.

Upon completion of the non-medical hearing, the Commissioner will enter a final non-medical ruling and shall notify the claimant and employer of this decision. The Commissioner's final non-medical ruling will be subject to appeal to the Workers' Compensation Appeal Board.

## 20.3 Occupational Pneumoconiosis Board Hearing

Subject to and upon the completion of, the protest and/or appellate review of the Commissioner's initial non-medical order, the Commissioner shall refer this claim to the Occupational Pneumoconiosis Board, provided the requirements of Code 23-4-15b have been satisfied. In the case of such reference, the Commissioner will notify the claimant and the interested employer or employers to appear before the Board at the time and place stated in the notice. A quorum of the Board will then proceed to hear and determine all medical questions relating to the claim.

At such hearing the claimant and each employer must produce as evidence all reports of medical and x-ray examinations that may be in their respective possession or control showing the past or present condition of the employee.

## 20.4 Report of Occupational Pneumoconiosis Board

Upon completion of the hearing the participating members of the Occupational Pneumoconiosis Board shall prepare a written report to the Commissioner setting forth their findings and decision, and shall prepare a sufficient number of signed copies of report so that the Commissioner may file one in his office, send one to the claimant and one to each employer interested in the claim.

## 20.5 Objections

Any interested party who objects, in whole or in part, to the findings and conclusions of the Board may, within the

statutory period after the mailing to him of the copy of the report, or within such additional time as may be allowed by the Commissioner for good cause shown, file with the Commissioner his written objections, specifying the particular statements of the Board's findings and conclusions to which he objects. Upon receipt of such objection the Commissioner shall set a time and place for a hearing thereon and shall notify each interested party and each member of the Board of the time and place of the hearing.

#### 20.6 Hearings on Protest

Hearings held upon protest to the findings of the Occupational Pneumoconiosis Board will be held at the offices of the Commissioner in Charleston unless the Commissioner shall otherwise direct. The procedure in protest hearings shall be governed by the provisions of Section 16 of these Rules, except that evidence shall be limited to medical testimony and other competent medical evidence, unless the Board has passed upon non-medical aspects under the Commissioner's referral. Cross-examination of the Board shall be limited to those members who examined the claimant. However, if the Commissioner, or his duly authorized representative, decides that testimony of other members of the Board is necessary or desirable, he may permit such testimony at the protest hearing.

#### \*20.7 Employer's Request for Medical Examination

An employer's request for medical examination of the claimant by a physician of its choice, shall be rejected if filed before the findings of the Occupational Pneumoconiosis Board have been transmitted to the claimant and the employer. Such requests shall be entertained only when filed subsequent to the transmittal of the Occupational Pneumoconiosis Board findings.

#### 20.8 Standards for Medical Examination

20.8.1 The following standards specify examination and evaluation criteria to guide the Occupational Pneumoconiosis Board in its examination and evaluation of claimants, and to guide other physicians and medical technicians who conduct examinations and evaluations of claimants on behalf of such claimants and their employers. These standards are established for the further purpose of ensuring that uniform procedures are used in administering and interpreting ventilatory function tests and arterial blood gas studies and that the best available medical evidence will be obtained in support of a claim for occupational pneumoconiosis benefits. The physician supervising any such

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testing and/or the technician administering any such testing will so indicate by signing the reports. Any report of test results submitted to the Occupational Pneumoconiosis Board must affirmatively state, as to each of the standards individually, the fact that the particular test or study was performed in compliance with that standard. In the event that any such report fails to affirmatively show compliance with these standards, the O.P. Board may disregard all or any part of such test or study or give such test or study such weight as the Board believes it deserves.

20.8.2 When two or more ventilatory function tests performed in reasonably close proximity in time produce differing but acceptable results, the Commissioner, at the request of the O.P. Board, may direct the parties to furnish additional evidence and/or order additional testing at the laboratory utilized by the O.P. Board or other laboratories, all for the purpose of determining whether any of the results are unreliable or incorrect or are clearly attributable to some identifiable disease or illness other than occupational pneumoconiosis.

20.8.3 When blood gas studies are performed and abnormal values are obtained and thereafter new blood gas studies are performed and normal or significantly higher values are further obtained, the Commissioner, at the request of the O.P. Board, may direct the parties to furnish additional evidence and/or order additional studies at the laboratory utilized by the O.P. Board or other laboratories, all for the purpose of determining whether any of the values are unreliable or incorrect or are clearly attributable to some identifiable disease or illness other than occupational pneumoconiosis.

20.8.4 As used herein, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated:

A. FVC - Forced Vital Capacity - Volume of air that can be forcefully exhaled from the lungs after a maximal inspiration.

B. FEV - Forced Expiratory Volume - Same as FVC.

C. FEV<sub>1</sub> - Forced Expiratory Volume in one second - Volume of air that can be exhaled forcefully from the lungs in one second after a maximal inspiration.

D. FEV<sub>3</sub> - Forced Expiratory Volume in three seconds - Volume of air that can be exhaled forcefully from the lungs in three seconds after a maximal inspiration.

E. FEV<sub>1</sub>/FEV - Forced Expiratory Volume (timed) to Forced Expiratory Volume - A ratio expressed as a percentage.

F. MVV - Maximal Voluntary Ventilation - The volume of air that can be exchanged over a unit period of time, usually 12 to 15 seconds.

G. BTPS - Body Temperature, Ambient Pressure, saturated with water.

H. Kpm - Kilopond Meter - The amount of work required to lift one kilogram one meter.

I. NIOSH - National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

J. BOARD - West Virginia Occupational Pneumoconiosis Board.

#### 20.8.5 Ventilatory Function Tests

A. Instruments to be used for the administration of ventilatory function tests should conform to the following criteria:

(1) The instrument must be accurate within +50 ml or within +3 percent of reading, whichever is greater.

(2) The instrument must be capable of measuring vital capacity from 0 to 7 liters BTPS.

(3) The instrument must have a low inertia and offer low resistance to airflow such that the resistance to airflow at 12 liters per second must be less than 1.5 cm H<sub>2</sub>O/liter/second.

(4) The Zero time point for the purpose of timing the FEV<sub>1</sub> must be determined by extrapolating the steepest portion of the volume-time curve back to the maximal inspiration volume or by an equivalent method.

(5) Instruments incorporating measurements of airflow to determine volume must conform to the same volume accuracy stated in paragraph A. (1) above when present with flow rates from at least 0 to 12 liters per second.

(6) The instrument or user of the instrument must correct volumes to body temperature saturated with water vapor (BTPS) under conditions of varying ambient spirometer temperatures and barometric pressures.

(7) The instrument used must provide a tracing of either flow versus volume or volume versus time during the entire forced expiration and volume versus time during the MVV Maneuver.

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Such tracing must be furnished to the Board with the test results. No results will be considered by the Board unless they are accompanied by the corresponding tracings. A tracing is necessary to determine whether the subject has performed the test properly. The tracing must be of sufficient size that hand measurements may be made within the requirement of paragraph A. (1) above.

(8) The instrument must be capable of accumulating volume for a minimum of 10 seconds after the onset of exhalation.

(9) The forced expiratory volume in 1 second (FEV<sub>1</sub>) measurement must comply with the accuracy requirements stated in paragraph A. (1) above; that is, the FEV<sub>1</sub> must be accurately measured to within +50 ml or within +3<sup>1</sup> percent of reading, whichever is greater.

(10) The instrument must be capable of being calibrated in the field with respect to the FEV<sub>1</sub>. This calibration of the FEV<sub>1</sub> may be done either directly or indirectly through volume and time base measurements. The volume calibration source must provide a volume displacement of at least 3 liters and must be accurate to within +30 ml.

(11) For measuring maximum voluntary ventilation (MVV), the instrument must have a response which is flat within +10 percent at flow rates up to 12 liters per second over the volume range. The time for exhaled volume integration or recording must be no less than 12 seconds and no more than 15 seconds. The indicated time must be accurate to within +3 percent. A recording of the spirometer tracing is required, and the volume sensitivity must be such that 10 mm or more deflection corresponds to 1 liter volume.

B. The administration of ventilatory function tests must conform to the following criteria: For ascertainment of the FEV<sub>1</sub> and FVC, a nose clip or alternative should be used. The procedures must be explained in simple terms to the subject who shall be instructed to loosen any tight clothing and sit or stand in front of the apparatus. Although the subject may sit or stand, care should be taken on repeat testing that the same position is used. Particular attention must be given to insure that the subject's chin is slightly elevated with the neck slightly extended. The subject must be instructed to make a full inspiration, either from the spirometer or the open atmosphere, and then blow into the apparatus, without interruption, as hard, fast, and completely as possible.

At least three forced expirations must be carried out. During the maneuvers, the subject must be observed for compliance with instructions. The expirations must be checked visually for reproducibility by examining the flow-volume or volume-time

tracings. The effort shall be judged unacceptable and cannot be considered in evaluating pulmonary functional impairment when the subject:

(1) Has not reached full inspiration preceding the forced expiration; or

(2) Has not used maximal effort during the entire forced expiration; or

(3) Has not continued the expiration for at least 5 seconds or until an obvious plateau in the volume-time curve has occurred; or

(4) Has an obstructed mouthpiece or a leak around the mouthpiece (obstruction due to tongue being placed in front of mouthpiece, false teeth falling in front of mouthpiece, etc.); or

(5) Has coughed or closed his glottis; or

(6) Has an unsatisfactory start of expiration, one characterized by excessive hesitation (or false starts), and therefore did not allow back extrapolation of time 0 (extrapolated volume on the volume-time tracing must be less than 10 percent of the FVC); or

(7) Has an excessive variability between the three satisfactory curves. The variation between the two largest  $FEV_1$ 's of the three satisfactory tracings should not exceed 7 percent of the largest  $FEV_1$  or 100 ml, whichever is greater.

(8) Predicted values are derived from Kory's Nomogram.

C. For ascertainment of the MVV, the subject must be instructed before beginning the test that he or she will be asked to breathe as deeply and as rapidly as possible for approximately 15 seconds. The test may be performed with the subject in either a sitting or standing position. Care shall be taken on repeat testing that the same position is used. The subject should breathe normally into the mouthpiece of the apparatus for 10 to 15 seconds to become accustomed to the system. The subject should then be instructed to breathe as deeply and as rapidly as possible and shall be continually encouraged during the remainder of the maneuver. The subject shall continue the maneuver for 12 seconds. The subject should be allowed to rest between maneuvers. At least three MVV's must be observed to determine if there was compliance with instructions. The effort must be judged unacceptable and cannot be considered in evaluating pulmonary functional impairment when the patient:

(1) Has not maintained consistent effort for at least 12 to 15 seconds; or

(2) Has coughed or closed his glottis; or

(3) Has an obstructed mouthpiece or a leak around the mouthpiece (obstruction due to tongue being placed in front of mouthpiece, false teeth falling in front of mouthpiece, etc.); or

(4) Has an excessive variability between the three satisfactory curves. The variation between the three satisfactory tracings must not exceed 10 percent and should approximate forty times the greatest FEV<sub>1</sub> volume.

D. A calibration check must be performed on the instrument each day before use, using a volume source of at least three liters, accurate to within +1 percent of full scale. The room air in the syringe must be introduced into the spirometer once with a flow rate of approximately 0.5 liters per second (six seconds emptying time with a 3-liter syringe) and once with a higher flow rate of approximately 3.0 liters per second (one second emptying time with a 3.0 liter syringe). The volume measured by the spirometer must be between 2.90 and 3.10 liters for both trials. Accuracy of the time measurement used in determining the FEV<sub>1</sub> must be checked using the manufacturer's stated procedure and must be within +3 percent of actual. The procedure described herein must be performed as well as any other procedures suggested by the manufacturer of the spirometer being used.

E. The first step in evaluating a spirogram for the FEV and FEV<sub>1</sub> shall be to determine whether or not the subject has performed the test properly or as described in B. (FEV) and the forced expiratory volume A. (1) above. From the three satisfactory tracings, the forced expiratory volume in one second (FEV<sub>1</sub>) must be measured and recorded. The largest observed FEV<sub>1</sub> must be used in the analysis, corrected to BTPS.

F. Only MVV maneuvers which demonstrate consistent effort for at least 12 seconds shall be considered acceptable. The largest accumulated volume for a 12-second period corrected to BTPS and multiplied by five shall be reported as the MVV.

#### 20.8.6 Arterial Blood Gas Studies

A. In order to ensure comparability of data obtained in arterial blood studies, the following guidelines should be observed:

(1) The puncture site should be infiltrated with a local anesthetic to minimize pain and arterial spasm.

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(2) The barrel of the syringe used to draw the blood sample should be wetted with heparin and the excess heparin must be expelled just prior to obtaining the blood sample.

(3) The subject should be allowed to rest for fifteen (15) minutes prior to beginning the study.

(4) Resting blood samples should be drawn with the subject in the sitting position.

(5) On occasions when the subject is unable to be exercised due to physical impairments; i.e., heart disease, artificial leg, etc., a resting sample of arterial blood may be drawn by direct puncture with a 20-25-gauge needle and a heparinized syringe.

(6) Blood samples must be discarded if contaminated by an air bubble.

(7) All blood samples should be analyzed immediately (less than ten minutes). If not, the sample should be iced in water. If the analysis is not performed within ten minutes, the metabolic activity of the cells in the blood will cause the  $pO_2$  to fall and the  $pCO_2$  to rise.

(8) If an exercise sample is to be obtained, a plastic catheter must be inserted into the radial or brachial artery for both the resting as well as the exercise sample.

(9) Exercise must be accomplished by having the subject pedal the bicycle ergometer at a rate of 50-60 revolutions per minute against a resistance of 75 Watts or 450 Kilopond Meters (Kpm) per minute for a period of five minutes. A treadmill may be used, and when used, exercise must be done at 2 mph and 10% grade. During the last twenty seconds of the fifth minute of exercise, the exercise sample must be drawn into a heparinized syringe and the pulse and respiration rates noted. If an added level of exercise is performed, this must be done at 120 Watts on the bicycle, or on the treadmill at 2.5 mph and 12% grade. Exercise testing beyond the level set forth herein shall be considered to be measurements of physical conditioning rather than of blood gas transfer abnormalities due to occupational pneumoconiosis. The EKG leads are then removed and the subject allowed to sit on a chair while the catheter is removed. Pressure must be held at the site of arterial cannulation for five minutes, and if there is no bleeding or hematoma present, a compression bandage must be placed on the radial artery. This bandage must be left in place for four hours. After about fifteen minutes of observation, the subject will be allowed to leave. The arterial blood sample should be drawn while exercise continues, not following cessation of exercise.

(10) EKG monitoring with a single lead should take place during exercise to determine the heart rate. It should be noted that this is not an EKG Stress Test.

(11) The report should indicate the place, date and time of the study, altitude of the testing site and barometric pressure at the testing site on the day of the testing, name and claim number of the subject, name of any assisting personnel, name and signature of the supervising physician, duration and type of exercise (if performed), pulse rate at the time the blood sample was drawn, and whether analysis equipment was calibrated before each test.

B. It is recognized that arterial blood gas studies done in laboratories throughout this state are obtained at different altitudes. Only by "standardizing" for altitude can an equitable assessment be made of impairment when values of arterial oxygen are being measured at remarkably different altitudes. Therefore, the results reported from laboratories should include the name of the laboratory and the date and time of the testing, altitude of the laboratory and barometric pressure at the laboratory on the day the samples were collected. The O.P. Board will evaluate the arterial blood gas values by converting those values to the average altitude of Charleston, West Virginia. For this purpose, it shall be sufficient to add 1 mmHg to each arterial oxygen tension for each 300 feet or fraction thereof that the testing laboratory is located above the average altitude of Charleston, because the relationship of barometric pressure (Altitude) and alveolar oxygen is approximately linear up to 4,000 feet as long as the subject breathes room air.

\*As an example, Bluefield is located approximately 2,600 feet above sea level. Charleston is approximately 600 feet above sea level. Thus, arterial oxygen values obtained in Bluefield should have 6.67 mmHg added to them before applying the table to them to obtain "percent impairment". The calculations are as follows:

\* "Bluefield (2,600'<sup>feet</sup>) minus Charleston (600'<sup>feet</sup>) equals 2,000'<sup>feet</sup>  
differential  
2,000'<sup>feet</sup> divided by 300'<sup>feet</sup> altitude equals 6.67  
6.67 multiplied by 1 mmHg per 300'<sup>feet</sup> altitude equals 6.67  
mmHg"

20.8.7 Table For Impairment of Pulmonary Function

A. The following table will be used as an indicator of impairment of pulmonary function if any of the acceptable values appear in the percentage of impairment column:

% IMPAIRMENT	0	10	15	20	25	30	40	50	60	TOTAL
FVC % PRED.	80	75	70	67	64	61	58	55	52	50
FEV <sub>1.0</sub> % PRED.	75	73	70	67	64	61	58	55	52	50
FEV <sub>1.0</sub> /FVC	75	73	70	67	64	61	56	51	48	45
MVV <sup>1</sup> % PRED.	80	75	70	67	64	61	58	55	52	50
<u>PaCO<sub>2</sub></u>	<u>PaO<sub>2</sub> Values Equal to or Less Than</u>									
30 or below	85	81	78	75	73	70	68	67	66	65
31	84	80	77	74	72	69	67	66	65	64
32	83	79	76	73	71	68	66	65	64	63
33	82	78	75	72	70	67	65	64	63	62
34	81	77	74	71	69	66	64	63	62	61
35	80	76	73	70	68	65	63	62	61	60
36	79	75	72	69	67	64	62	61	60	59
37	78	74	71	68	66	63	61	60	59	58
38	77	73	70	67	65	62	60	59	58	57
39	76	72	69	66	64	61	59	58	57	56
40 or above	75	71	68	65	63	60	58	57	56	55

B. Exercise pO<sub>2</sub> values that rise above the resting pO<sub>2</sub> values will indicate a lesser degree of impairment of pulmonary function, and if they are less than the resting values will indicate a greater degree of impairment of pulmonary function.

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Leg. Rule, 23-1  
Series I, Sec. 20

C. The results of any medically acceptable tests or procedures reported by a physician which are not addressed in this table but which tend to demonstrate the presence or absence of pneumoconiosis or sequela of pneumoconiosis or the presence or absence of a respiratory pulmonary impairment may be submitted and given appropriate consideration (Airway Resistance, Ear Oximetry, DLCO and A-a gradient, etc.). It is also important that the O.P. Board use all clinical history and physical findings that would enhance or detract from any percentage of impairment in the above table.



KEN HECHLER  
Secretary of State

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Deputy Secretary of State

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(Plus all the volunteer  
help we can get)

# STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA

## SECRETARY OF STATE

Charleston 25305

March 11, 1986

### IMPORTANT NOTICE

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TO: Bill Mitchell

FROM: RICH O. HARTMAN, DIRECTOR

RE: LEGISLATIVE RULE Medical Standards for Coal- Workers  
as Amended by the 1986 Legislature

THE 1986 LEGISLATURE HAS AUTHORIZED YOUR AGENCY TO FINAL FILE AND ADOPT THE ABOVE LEGISLATIVE RULE. THIS AUTHORIZATION IS IN S.B. 434 SECTION \_\_\_\_\_ PASSED ON \_\_\_\_\_, 1986, EFFECTIVE FROM PASSAGE. YOU HAVE 60 DAYS FROM THAT DATE TO FINAL FILE THE ABOVE RULE WITH THIS OFFICE. NO RULE WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER THAT DATE. YOU MAY ESTABLISH ANY EFFECTIVE DATE FOR YOUR RULE RANGING FROM THE SAME DATE YOU FINAL FILE TO 90 DAYS FROM THE DATE YOU FINAL FILE. REMEMBER TO RE-TYPE YOUR RULE IN ITS ENTIRETY FOLLOWING THE PROPER FORMAT. PLEASE CALL IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS.

Bill, I do not have the changes they made to this rule and the final Enrolled Bill is not up yet. You may want to wait till it is up before you final file this rule.