

RCW 7.68.125 Erroneous or fraudulent payment—Erroneous failure to make payment—Repayment orders—Right to contest orders—Lien.

(1) (a) Whenever any payment of benefits under this chapter is made because of clerical error, mistake of identity, innocent misrepresentation by or on behalf of the recipient thereof mistakenly acted upon, or any other circumstance of a similar nature, all not induced by willful misrepresentation, the recipient thereof shall repay it and recoupment may be made from any future payments due to the recipient on any claim with the crime victims' compensation program. The department must make claim for such repayment or recoupment within one year of the making of any such payment or it will be deemed any claim therefor has been waived.

(b) Except as provided in subsections (3) and (4) of this section, the department may only assess an overpayment of benefits because of adjudicator error when the order upon which the overpayment is based is not yet final as provided in RCW 51.52.050 and 51.52.060. "Adjudicator error" includes the failure to consider information in the claim file, failure to secure adequate information, or an error in judgment.

(c) The director, pursuant to rules adopted in accordance with the procedures provided in the administrative procedure act, chapter 34.05 RCW, may exercise his or her discretion to waive, in whole or in part, the amount of any such timely claim where the recovery would be against equity and good conscience.

(2) Whenever the department fails to pay benefits because of clerical error, mistake of identity, or innocent misrepresentation, all not induced by recipient willful misrepresentation, the recipient may request an adjustment of benefits to be paid from the crime victims' compensation programs subject to the following:

(a) The recipient must request an adjustment in benefits within one year from the date of the incorrect payment or it will be deemed any claim therefore has been waived.

(b) The recipient may not seek an adjustment of benefits because of adjudicator error. Adjustments due to adjudicator error are addressed by the filing of a written request for reconsideration with the department or an appeal with the department within ninety days from the date the order is communicated as provided in RCW 51.52.050. "Adjudicator error" includes the failure to consider information in the claim file, failure to secure adequate information, or an error in judgment.

(3) Whenever any payment of benefits under this chapter has been made pursuant to an adjudication by the department or by order of any court and timely appeal therefrom has been made where the final decision is that any such payment was made pursuant to an erroneous adjudication, the recipient thereof shall repay it and recoupment may be made from any future payments due to the recipient on any claim.

(a) The director, pursuant to rules adopted in accordance with the procedures provided in the administrative procedure act, chapter 34.05 RCW, may exercise discretion to waive, in whole or in part, the amount of any such payments where the recovery would be against equity and good conscience.

(b) The department shall first attempt recovery of overpayments for health services from any entity that provided health insurance to the victim to the extent that the health insurance entity would have provided health insurance benefits.

(4) (a) Whenever any payment of benefits under this chapter has been induced by willful misrepresentation the recipient thereof shall repay any such payment together with a penalty of fifty percent of the total of any such payments and the amount of such total sum may be recouped from any future payments due to the recipient on any claim with the crime victims' compensation program against whom the willful misrepresentation was committed and the amount of such penalty shall be placed in the crime victims' compensation fund. Such repayment or recoupment must be demanded or ordered within three years of the discovery of the willful misrepresentation.

(b) For purposes of this subsection (4), it is willful misrepresentation for a person to obtain payments or other benefits under this chapter in an amount greater than that to which the person otherwise would be entitled. Willful misrepresentation includes:

(i) Willful false statement; or

(ii) Willful misrepresentation, omission, or concealment of any material fact.

(c) For purposes of this subsection (4), "willful" means a conscious or deliberate false statement, misrepresentation, omission, or concealment of a material fact with the specific intent of obtaining, continuing, or increasing benefits under this chapter.

(d) For purposes of this subsection (4), failure to disclose a work-type activity must be willful in order for a misrepresentation to have occurred.

(e) For purposes of this subsection (4), a material fact is one which would result in additional, increased, or continued benefits, including but not limited to facts about physical restrictions, or work-type activities which either result in wages or income or would be reasonably expected to do so. Wages or income include the receipt of any goods or services. For a work-type activity to be reasonably expected to result in wages or income, a pattern of repeated activity must exist. For those activities that would reasonably be expected to result in wages or produce income, but for which actual wage or income information cannot be reasonably determined, the department shall impute wages.

(5) The victim, beneficiary, or other person affected thereby shall have the right to contest an order assessing an overpayment pursuant to this section in the same manner and to the same extent as provided under RCW 51.52.050 and 51.52.060. In the event such an order becomes final under chapter 51.52 RCW and notwithstanding the provisions of subsections (1) through (4) of this section, the director or director's designee may file with the clerk in any county within the state a warrant in the amount of the sum representing the unpaid overpayment and/or penalty plus interest accruing from the date the order became final. The clerk of the county in which the warrant is filed shall immediately designate a superior court cause number for such warrant and the clerk shall cause to be entered in the judgment docket under the superior court cause number assigned to the warrant, the name of the victim, beneficiary, or other person mentioned in the warrant, the amount of the unpaid overpayment and/or penalty plus interest accrued, and the date the warrant was filed. The amount of the warrant as docketed shall become a lien upon the title to and interest in all real and personal property of the victim, beneficiary, or other person against whom the warrant is issued, the same as a judgment in a civil case docketed in the office of such clerk. The sheriff shall then proceed in the same manner and with like effect as prescribed by law with respect to execution or other process issued

against rights or property upon judgment in the superior court. Such warrant so docketed shall be sufficient to support the issuance of writs of garnishment in favor of the department in the manner provided by law in the case of judgment, wholly or partially unsatisfied. The clerk of the court shall be entitled to a filing fee under RCW 36.18.012(10), which shall be added to the amount of the warrant. A copy of such warrant shall be mailed to the victim, beneficiary, or other person within three days of filing with the clerk.

The director or director's designee may issue to any person, firm, corporation, municipal corporation, political subdivision of the state, public corporation, or agency of the state, a notice to withhold and deliver property of any kind if there is reason to believe that there is in the possession of such person, firm, corporation, municipal corporation, political subdivision of the state, public corporation, or agency of the state, property that is due, owing, or belonging to any victim, beneficiary, or other person upon whom a warrant has been served for payments due the department. The notice and order to withhold and deliver shall be served by certified mail accompanied by an affidavit of service by mailing or served by the sheriff of the county, or by the sheriff's deputy, or by any authorized representative of the director or director's designee, or by electronic means or other methods authorized by law. Any person, firm, corporation, municipal corporation, political subdivision of the state, public corporation, or agency of the state upon whom service has been made shall answer the notice within twenty days exclusive of the day of service, under oath and in writing, and shall make true answers to the matters inquired or in the notice and order to withhold and deliver. In the event there is in the possession of the party named and served with such notice and order, any property that may be subject to the claim of the department, such property shall be delivered forthwith to the director or the director's authorized representative upon demand. If the party served and named in the notice and order fails to answer the notice and order within the time prescribed in this section, the court may, after the time to answer such order has expired, render judgment by default against the party named in the notice for the full amount, plus costs, claimed by the director or the director's designee in the notice. In the event that a notice to withhold and deliver is served upon an employer and the property found to be subject thereto is wages, the employer may assert in the answer all exemptions provided for by chapter 6.27 RCW to which the wage earner may be entitled.

This subsection shall only apply to orders assessing an overpayment which are issued on or after July 28, 1991. This subsection shall apply retroactively to all orders assessing an overpayment resulting from willful misrepresentation, civil or criminal.

(6) Orders assessing an overpayment which are issued on or after July 28, 1991, shall include a conspicuous notice of the collection methods available to the department. [2011 c 346 s 701; 1995 c 33 s 2; 1975 1st ex.s. c 176 s 8.]

Intent—Retroactive application—Effective date—2011 c 346: See notes following RCW 7.68.020.