

WAC 220-101-050 Fish and wildlife enforcement officer relief from active duty procedure.

(1) This section governs the actions required for granting relief from active duty and payment of relief from active duty benefits under RCW 77.12.264. Compliance with the procedural steps of this section is mandatory, and failure to comply with these procedures will result in a denial of benefits if payment has not begun, or a termination of payments if payments have begun.

(2) A request for relief from active duty must be filed in writing with the director, and may be filed by either the officer or the officer's representative. For purposes of this section, the officer is the "claimant."

(3) Upon receipt of the relief from active duty request, the director's office will notify the department's personnel office (the personnel office). The personnel office will review the claimant's personnel file to ascertain employment status. The personnel office will determine if a labor and industries on duty injury claim was filed and the status of that claim. If a claim was filed but was disallowed, the department will notify the claimant that the department will not further process a request for relief from active duty until all appeal efforts on the labor and industries on duty injury claim are completed.

(4) The personnel office will respond to the claimant's request for relief from active duty and provide an information request and medical release form to be completed by the claimant and returned to the personnel office. The claimant is required to provide all information and documentation requested by the department specific to the claim. If any requested information is missing, the department will send a second request to the claimant.

(5) Upon receipt of the medical release form and required documentation, the department's labor and industries claims manager, the department's reasonable accommodation program manager, and the senior human resources consultant assigned to the enforcement program will review the information provided by the claimant. From that review, the personnel manager, or designee, will identify one or more licensed medical specialist(s) as appropriate to the independent medical examination. The medical specialist will provide to the personnel manager a current medical analysis with careful consideration of the essential mental, physical and sensory functions of a fish and wildlife officer. The department will pay for the independent medical examination, and will give due consideration for the location of the claimant's current residence. If the claimant fails to attend any scheduled medical examination or fails to comply with department directions, the request for relief from active duty may be denied.

(6) Within sixty days after the receipt of the results of the independent medical examination, the department will arrange for a panel to review the request for relief from active duty. This panel may consist of one or more licensed, qualified medical professionals, representatives of the department of labor and industries or the department of retirement systems, the department's personnel manager or designee, the assistant director for the enforcement program or designee and, at the claimant's expense, a licensed, qualified medical professional of the claimant's choosing. The department will bear the cost of convening this panel with the exception of any costs associated with the medical professional chosen by the claimant. The panel will provide a written recommendation to the director of the department. The director will make a final decision to either grant or not grant relief from

active duty. The director's written decision will be provided to the claimant.

(7) If relief from active duty is granted, the department may require periodic reviews of the claimant's medical condition. Such review may include an independent medical examination. Notice of a scheduled examination will be provided via certified mail to the claimant at least thirty days prior to the scheduled exam. It is the claimant's responsibility to provide the department with the claimant's current address at all times that relief from active duty benefits are being paid. If the certified letter is returned, the claimant fails to attend any scheduled medical examination, or the claimant fails at any point to comply with department directions, the relief from active duty benefits may be discontinued. If a medical examination shows that the claimant is able to perform the essential functions of a fish and wildlife officer position, the claimant will be returned to active service and the relief from active duty benefits will be discontinued.

(8) If the relief from active duty request is denied or the benefits are discontinued for any reason, the claimant may file a written appeal with the director. An appeal must include a copy of any written communication from the department regarding the discontinuance, and must describe in detail the reason the relief from active duty benefits should again be provided. In making a decision on whether to renew payment of relief from active duty benefits, the director may review any information related to the on duty injury claim and may require an independent medical examination. The director's decision is final.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 77.04.012, 77.04.013, 77.04.020, 77.04.055, and 77.12.047. WSR 17-05-112 (Order 17-04), recodified as § 220-101-050, filed 2/15/17, effective 3/18/17. Statutory Authority: RCW 77.12.047. WSR 04-01-056 (Order 03-302), § 220-20-110, filed 12/11/03, effective 1/11/04.]