

5611

Sponsor(s): Senators Keiser, Franklin, Shin and Kohl-Welles

Brief Description: Securing hearing loss benefits.

SB 5611 - DIGEST

Provides that, for occupationally related noise-induced hearing loss claims filed on or after the effective date of this act, and such claims existing on the effective date of this act if no final adjudication of the rate of compensation has been made, the rate of compensation shall be established as the earlier of:

- (1) The date by which the worker received both a written notification from the same physician who provided the worker notice under RCW 51.28.055 that the worker has occupationally related noise-induced hearing loss and the associated audiogram; or
- (2) The date the claim was filed.

Provides that the hearing aids provided or replaced under this act must be appropriate to the injured worker's condition. Evaluation of a hearing aid's appropriateness must consider whether the worker would benefit from upgrading the hearing aid in light of technologies available, the efficacy of the technology, and the cost. If the injured worker chooses a hearing aid that is more costly than one considered appropriate after expert review, the worker is responsible for the difference in cost.