

RCW 43.43.285 Special death benefit—Course of employment—Occupational disease or infection—Annual adjustment.

(1) A two hundred fourteen thousand dollar death benefit shall be paid to the member's estate, or such person or persons, trust or organization as the member shall have nominated by written designation duly executed and filed with the department. If there be no such designated person or persons still living at the time of the member's death, such member's death benefit shall be paid to the member's surviving spouse or domestic partner as if in fact such spouse or domestic partner had been nominated by written designation, or if there be no such surviving spouse or domestic partner, then to such member's legal representatives.

(2) (a) The benefit under this section shall be paid only where death occurs as a result of (i) injuries sustained in the course of employment; or (ii) an occupational disease or infection that arises naturally and proximately out of employment covered under this chapter. The determination of eligibility for the benefit shall be made consistent with Title 51 RCW by the department of labor and industries. The department of labor and industries shall notify the department of retirement systems by order under RCW 51.52.050.

(b) The retirement allowance paid to the spouse or domestic partner and dependent children of a member who is killed in the course of employment, as set forth in RCW 41.05.011(5), shall include reimbursement for any payments of premium rates to the Washington state health care authority under RCW 41.05.080.

(3) (a) Beginning July 1, 2010, and every year thereafter, the department shall determine the following information:

(i) The index for the 2008 calendar year, to be known as "index A";

(ii) The index for the calendar year prior to the date of determination, to be known as "index B"; and

(iii) The ratio obtained when index B is divided by index A.

(b) The value of the ratio obtained shall be the annual adjustment to the original death benefit and shall be applied beginning every July 1st. In no event, however, shall the annual adjustment:

(i) Produce a benefit which is lower than two hundred fourteen thousand dollars;

(ii) Exceed three percent in the initial annual adjustment; or

(iii) Differ from the previous year's annual adjustment by more than three percent.

(c) For the purposes of this section, "index" means, for any calendar year, that year's average consumer price index — Seattle, Washington area for urban wage earners and clerical workers, all items, compiled by the bureau of labor statistics, United States department of labor.

(4) In addition to the survivor benefit payable under RCW 43.43.270 or 43.43.271, if the surviving spouse or domestic partner of a member whose death occurs as a result of (a) injuries sustained in the course of employment; or (b) an occupational disease or infection that arises naturally and proximately out of employment covered under this chapter is not eligible to receive industrial insurance payments pursuant to RCW 51.32.050 due to remarriage, the surviving spouse or domestic partner shall receive an amount equal to the benefit they would receive pursuant to RCW 51.32.050 but for the remarriage. This subsection applies to surviving spouses whose benefits under RCW

51.32.050 were suspended or terminated due to remarriage prior to July 24, 2015. The monthly payments to any surviving spouse or domestic partner who received a lump sum payment pursuant to RCW 51.32.050 shall be actuarially reduced to reflect the amount of the lump sum payment. [2015 c 78 § 2; 2010 c 261 § 7; 2009 c 522 § 7. Prior: 2007 c 488 § 1; 2007 c 487 § 9; 1996 c 226 § 2.]

Application—2010 c 261: See note following RCW 41.26.048.

Short title—2007 c 488: "This act shall be known as "The Steve Frink's and Jim Saunder's Law" in honor of Steve Frink and Jim Saunders, Washington state patrol officers who were killed in the line of duty." [2007 c 488 § 5.]

Effective date—1996 c 226: See note following RCW 41.26.048.