

RCW 74.04.790 Supplementary program—Reimbursement for employees being victims of assault. (1) For purposes of this section only, "assault" means an unauthorized touching of a child protective, child welfare, or adult protective services worker employed by the department of children, youth, and families or the department of social and health services resulting in physical injury to the employee.

(2) In recognition of the hazardous nature of employment in child protective, child welfare, and adult protective services, the legislature hereby provides a supplementary program to reimburse employees of the department, for some of their costs attributable to their being the victims of assault while in the course of discharging their assigned duties. This program shall be limited to the reimbursement provided in this section.

(3) An employee is only entitled to receive the reimbursement provided in this section if the secretary of children, youth, and families, or the secretary's designee, or the secretary of social and health services, or the secretary's designee, finds that each of the following has occurred:

(a) A person has assaulted the employee while the employee was in the course of performing his or her official duties and, as a result thereof, the employee has sustained demonstrated physical injuries which have required the employee to miss days of work;

(b) The assault cannot be attributable to any extent to the employee's negligence, misconduct, or failure to comply with any rules or conditions of employment; and

(c) The department of labor and industries has approved the employee's workers' compensation application pursuant to chapter 51.32 RCW.

(4) The reimbursement authorized under this section shall be as follows:

(a) The employee's accumulated sick leave days shall not be reduced for the workdays missed;

(b) For each workday missed for which the employee is not eligible to receive compensation under chapter 51.32 RCW, the employee shall receive full pay; and

(c) In respect to workdays missed for which the employee will receive or has received compensation under chapter 51.32 RCW, the employee shall be reimbursed in an amount which, when added to that compensation, will result in the employee receiving full pay for the workdays missed.

(5) Reimbursement under this section may not last longer than three hundred sixty-five consecutive days after the date of the injury.

(6) The employee shall not be entitled to the reimbursement provided in subsection (4) of this section for any workday for which the secretary, or the secretary's designee, finds that the employee has not diligently pursued his or her compensation remedies under chapter 51.32 RCW.

(7) The reimbursement shall only be made for absences which the secretary, or the secretary's designee, believes are justified.

(8) While the employee is receiving reimbursement under this section, he or she shall continue to be classified as a state employee and the reimbursement amount shall be considered as salary or wages.

(9) All reimbursement payments required to be made to employees under this section shall be made by the department. The payments shall

be considered as a salary or wage expense and shall be paid by the department in the same manner and from the same appropriations as other salary and wage expenses of the department.

(10) Should the legislature revoke the reimbursement authorized under this section or repeal this section, no affected employee is entitled thereafter to receive the reimbursement as a matter of contractual right. [2019 c 470 § 15; 2006 c 95 § 2.]

Findings—Intent—2006 c 95: "The legislature finds that employees of the department of social and health services who provide child protective, child welfare, and adult protective services are sometimes faced with highly volatile, hostile, and/or threatening situations during the course of performing their official duties. The legislature finds that the work group convened by the department of social and health services pursuant to chapter 389, Laws of 2005, has made various recommendations regarding policies and protocols to address the safety of workers. The legislature intends to implement the work group's recommendations for statutory changes in recognition of the sometimes hazardous nature of employment in child protective, child welfare, and adult protective services." [2006 c 95 § 1.]