

WAC 296-14-955 Attorney's fees. (1) The department of labor and industries (hereinafter department) shall fix a reasonable attorney fee to be paid by the worker, crime victim, or beneficiary for services rendered with the department if written application therefor is made by the attorney, worker, crime victim, or beneficiary, as provided in RCW 51.52.120.

(a) Fees will be set only for services rendered prior to the notice of appeal;

(b) On closed claims, fees will only be set if written application is received by the department within one year from the claim closure date as indicated on the department order.

(c) If such application for fixing of a fee is made by the attorney, it shall set forth therein the monetary amount which the attorney considers reasonable for all services rendered with the department, the reason such fee is considered to be reasonable, and a detailed breakdown of the time spent by the attorney in representing the injured worker.

(d) In all instances, the department shall afford to all parties affected a minimum of ten days in which to submit comment and material information which may be helpful to the department in setting a fair and reasonable fee.

(e) The department will provide copies of information sent to the department to the attorney, worker, crime victim, or beneficiary upon request.

(f) Informal contact may be made with the parties to determine the feasibility of reaching an agreement on the amount of the fees.

(g) Additional information necessary to reach a decision may be requested by the department.

(2) *Fee fixing criteria.* All attorney fees fixed by the department where application therefor has been made shall be established in accordance with the following general principles:

(a) Only one fee shall be fixed for legal services in any one claim regardless of the number of attorneys representing the worker, crime victim, or beneficiary, except that in cases of multiple beneficiaries represented by one or multiple attorneys the department has the discretion to set more than one attorney fee if so requested.

(b) The department shall defer fixing a fee until such time as information, which it deems sufficient upon which to base a fee, is available.

(c) A fee shall be fixed only in those cases where the attorney's services are instrumental in securing additional benefits to the worker, crime victim, or beneficiary.

(d) Where increased compensation is obtained, the fee may be fixed without regard to any medical benefits secured.

(e) In setting all fees, the following factors shall be carefully considered and weighed:

(i) Nature of the claim.

(ii) Novelty and complexity of the issues presented or other unusual circumstances.

(iii) Time and labor expended.

(iv) Skill and diligence in resolving the claim.

(v) Extent and nature of the relief.

(vi) The prevalent practice of charging contingency fees in the department.

(vii) The worker's or crime victim's circumstance and the remedial social purposes of the Industrial Insurance Act and of the Crime

Victims Compensation Act, which are intended to provide sure and adequate relief to injured workers and crime victims and their families.

(3) The manager of the claims consultant division of the department is the director's designee to process all petitions to set attorney's fees and to issue orders setting those fees for services rendered by attorneys in securing industrial insurance benefits. The supervisor of the crime victims section of the department is the director's designee to process all petitions to set attorney's fees and to issue orders setting those fees for services rendered by attorneys in securing crime victims benefits.

[Statutory Authority: Chapters 51.04, 51.08, 51.12, 51.24, and 51.32 RCW. WSR 06-04-025, § 296-14-955, filed 1/24/06, effective 2/24/06.]