

§217. Employment rehabilitation

When as a result of injury the employee is unable to perform work for which the employee has previous training or experience, the employee is entitled to such employment rehabilitation services, including retraining and job placement, as reasonably necessary to restore the employee to suitable employment. [PL 1991, c. 885, Pt. A, §8 (NEW); PL 1991, c. 885, Pt. A, §§9-11 (AFF).]

1. Services. If employment rehabilitation services are not voluntarily offered and accepted, the board on its own motion or upon application of the employee, carrier or employer, after affording the parties an opportunity to be heard, may refer the employee to a board-approved facility for evaluation of the need for and kind of service, treatment or training necessary and appropriate to return the employee to suitable employment. The board's determination under this subsection is final. [PL 2013, c. 63, §6 (AMD).]

2. Plan ordered. Upon receipt of an evaluation report pursuant to subsection 1, if the board finds that the proposed plan complies with this Act and that the implementation of the proposed plan is likely to return the injured employee to suitable employment at a reasonable cost, it may order the implementation of the plan. Implementation costs of a plan ordered under this subsection must be paid from the Employment Rehabilitation Fund as provided in section 355, subsection 7. The board's determination under this subsection is final. [PL 1991, c. 885, Pt. A, §8 (NEW); PL 1991, c. 885, Pt. A, §§9-11 (AFF).]

3. Order of implementation costs recovery. If an injured employee returns to suitable employment after completing a rehabilitation plan ordered under subsection 2, the board shall order the employer who refused to agree to implement the plan to pay reimbursement to the Employment Rehabilitation Fund as provided in section 355, subsection 7. [PL 1991, c. 885, Pt. A, §8 (NEW); PL 1991, c. 885, Pt. A, §§9-11 (AFF).]

4. Additional payments. The board may order that any employee participating in employment rehabilitation receive additional payments for transportation or any extra and necessary expenses during the period and arising out of the employee's program of employment rehabilitation. [PL 1991, c. 885, Pt. A, §8 (NEW); PL 1991, c. 885, Pt. A, §§9-11 (AFF).]

5. Limitation. Employment rehabilitation training, treatment or service may not extend for a period of more than 52 weeks except in cases when, by special order, the board extends the period up to an additional 52 weeks. [PL 1991, c. 885, Pt. A, §8 (NEW); PL 1991, c. 885, Pt. A, §§9-11 (AFF).]

6. Loss of or reduction in benefits. If an employee unjustifiably refuses to accept rehabilitation pursuant to an order of the board, the board shall order a loss or reduction of compensation in an amount determined by the board for each week of the period of refusal, except for specific compensation payable under section 212, subsection 3. [PL 1991, c. 885, Pt. A, §8 (NEW); PL 1991, c. 885, Pt. A, §§9-11 (AFF).]

7. Hearing. If a dispute arises between the parties concerning application of any of the provisions of subsections 1 to 6, any of the parties may apply for a hearing before the board. [PL 1991, c. 885, Pt. A, §8 (NEW); PL 1991, c. 885, Pt. A, §§9-11 (AFF).]

8. Presumption.
[PL 2017, c. 53, §1 (RP).]

9. Reduction of benefits. If an employee is actively participating in a rehabilitation plan ordered pursuant to subsection 2, benefits may not be reduced except:

A. Under section 205, subsection 9, paragraph A, upon the employee's return to work with or an increase in pay from an employer who is paying the employee compensation under this Act; [PL 2017, c. 53, §2 (NEW).]

B. Under section 205, subsection 9, paragraph B, based on the amount of actual documented earnings paid to the employee; or [PL 2017, c. 53, §2 (NEW).]

C. When the employee reaches the durational limit of benefits paid under section 213. [PL 2017, c. 53, §2 (NEW).]

[PL 2017, c. 53, §2 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1991, c. 885, §A8 (NEW). PL 1991, c. 885, §§A9-11 (AFF). PL 2011, c. 647, §14 (AMD). PL 2013, c. 63, §6 (AMD). PL 2017, c. 53, §§1, 2 (AMD).

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