

DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AND BUSINESS SERVICES
WORKERS' COMPENSATION DIVISION



**Claim Closure and Reconsideration
Oregon Administrative Rules
Chapter 436, Division 030**

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[Bracketed 8 point text is deleted]; **bold/underlined text is added**

Effective January 1, 2006

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**EXHIBIT "A"
OREGON ADMINISTRATIVE RULES
CHAPTER 436, DIVISION 030**

436-030-0001 Authority for Rules

These rules are promulgated under the director's authority contained in ORS 656.726(4) and ORS 656.268.

Stat. Auth.: ORS 656.268, ORS 656.726, 1995 OR Laws Chapter 332, and 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313
Stats. Implemented: ORS 656.268, ORS 656.726, 1995 OR Laws Chapter 332, and 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313
Hist: Filed 2/6/75 as WCB Admin. Order 5-1975, eff. 2/26/75; Amended 6/30/78 as WCD Admin. Order 8-1978, eff. 7/10/78
 Amended 3/20/80 as WCD Admin. Order 4-1980, eff. 4/1/80; Renumbered from OAR 436-65-000, May 1985
 Amended 12/17/87 as WCD Admin. Order 13-1987, eff. 1/1/88; Amended 11/13/00 as WCD Admin. Order 00-058, eff. 01/01/01

436-030-0002 Purpose of Rules

The purpose of these rules is to provide standards, conditions, procedures, and reporting requirements for:

- (1) Requests for closure by the worker;
- (2) Claim closure under ORS 656.268(1);
- (3) Determining medically stationary status;
- (4) Determining temporary disability benefits;
- (5) Awards of permanent partial disability;
- (6) Review and determination of the disabling or nondisabling status of a claim;
- (7) Determining permanent total disability awards;
- (8) Review for reduction of permanent total disability awards;
- (9) Review of prior permanent partial disability awards consistent with OAR 436-030-0003; and
- (10) Reconsideration of notices of closure.

Stat. Auth.: ORS 656.268, ORS 656.726, 1995 OR Laws Chapter 332, and 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313
Stats. Implemented: ORS 656.206, ORS 656.210, ORS 656.212, ORS 656.262, ORS 656.268, ORS 273, ORS 277, ORS 656.325, 1995 OR Laws Chapter 332, and 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313
Hist: Filed 3/20/80 as WCD Admin. Order 4-1980, eff. 4/1/80; Renumbered from OAR 436-65-002, May 1985
 Amended 12/17/87 as WCD Admin. Order 13-1987, eff. 1/1/88; Amended 6/18/90 as WCD Admin. Order 7-1990, eff. 7/1/90, (temp)
 Amended 12/10/90 as WCD Admin. Order 33-1990, eff. 12/26/90; Amended 11/18/94 as WCD Admin. Order 94-059, eff. 1/1/95
 Amended 2/14/96 as WCD Admin. Order 96-052, eff. 2/17/96; Amended 11/13/00 as WCD Admin. Order 00-058, eff. 01/01/01
 Amended 2/17/04 as WCD Admin. Order 04-052, eff. 2/29/04; Amended 10/26/04 as WCD Admin. Order 04-062, eff. 1/1/05
 Amended 12/5/05 as WCD Admin. Order 05-073, eff. 1/1/06

436-030-0003 Applicability of Rules

(1) Except as provided in section (3) of this rule, these rules apply to all accepted claims for workers' compensation benefits and all requests for reconsideration received by the department on or after the effective date of these rules.

(2) All orders issued by the division to carry out the statute and these rules are considered an order of the director.

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(3) These rules take the place of the rules adopted on [February 29, 2004] **January 1, 2005**, by Workers' Compensation Division Administrative Order 04-0[52] **62**, and carry out ORS 656.005, 656.214, 656.262, 656.268, 656.273, 656.277, 656.278, and 656.325.

(a) For claims in which the worker became medically stationary prior to July 2, 1990 OAR 436-030-0020, 436-030-0030, and 436-030-0050 as adopted by WCD Administrative Order 13-1987 effective January 1, 1988 will apply.

(b) OAR 436-030-0055(3)(b), (3)(d) and (4)(a) apply to all claims with dates of injury on or after January 1, 2002.

Stat. Auth.: ORS 656.268 (ch. 429, OL 2003), ORS 656.726, 1995 OR Laws Chapter 332, and 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313
Stats. Implemented: ORS 656.206, ORS 656.210, ORS 656.212, ORS 656.262, ORS 656.268 (ch. 429, OL 2003), ORS 656.273, ORS 656.277, ORS 656.325, ORS 656.726, 1995 OR Laws Chapter 332, 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313; chapters 349, 350, 377, and 865, Oregon Laws 2001

Hist: Filed 6/30/78 as WCD Admin. Order 8-1978, eff. 7/10/78; Amended 3/20/80 as WCD Admin. Order 4-1980, eff. 4/1/80
Renumbered from OAR 436-65-030, May 1985; Amended 12/17/87 as WCD Admin. Order 13-1987, eff. 1/1/88
Amended 6/18/90 as WCD Admin. Order 7-1990, eff. 7/1/90, (temp.); Amended 12/10/90 as WCD Admin. Order 33-1990, eff. 12/26/90
Amended 8/20/91 as WCD Admin. Order 6-1991, eff. 9/01/91 (temp.); Amended 1/17/92 as WCD Admin. Order 5-1992, eff. 2/20/92
Amended 11/18/94 as WCD Admin. Order 94-059, eff. 1/1/95; Amended 2/14/96 as WCD Admin. Order 96-052, eff. 2/17/96
Amended 12/22/97 as WCD Admin. Order 97-065, eff. 1/15/98; Amended 11/13/00 as WCD Admin. Order 00-058, eff. 01/01/01
Amended 11/16/01 as WCD Admin. Order 01-060, eff. 1/1/02; Amended 1/15/02 as WCD Admin. Order 02-051, eff. 1/15/02 (Temp.)
Amended 4/5/02 as WCD Admin. Order 02-054, eff. 4/8/02; Amended 12/12/03 as WCD Admin. Order 03-063, eff. 1/1/04 (Temp.)
Amended 2/17/04 as WCD Admin. Order 04-052, eff. 2/29/04; Amended 10/26/04 as WCD Admin. Order 04-062, eff. 1/1/05
Amended 12/5/05 as WCD Admin. Order 05-073, eff. 01/01/06

436-030-0005 Definitions

Except where the context requires otherwise, the construction of these rules is governed by the definitions given in the Workers' Compensation Law and as follows:

(1) "Administrator" means the administrator of the Workers' Compensation Division, Department of Consumer and Business Services, or the administrator's delegate for the matter.

(2) "Authorized Nurse Practitioner" means a nurse practitioner authorized to provide compensable medical services under ORS 656.245 and OAR 436-010.

(3) "Day(s)" means calendar day(s) unless otherwise specified (e.g., "working day(s)").

(4) "Director" means the director of the Department of Consumer and Business Services, or the director's delegate for the matter.

(5) "Division" means the Workers' Compensation Division of the Department of Consumer and Business Services.

(6) "Instant Fatality" means a compensable claim for death benefits where the worker dies within 24 hours of the injury.

[(6)] **(7)** "Insurer" means the State Accident Insurance Fund, an insurer authorized under ORS Chapter 731 to transact workers' compensation insurance in Oregon, a self-insured employer, or a self-insured employer group.

[(7)] **(8)** "Mailed or Mailing Date," for the purposes of determining timeliness under these rules, means the date a document is postmarked. Requests submitted by electronic transmission (by facsimile or "fax") will be considered mailed as of the date printed on the banner automatically produced by the transmitting fax machine. Hand-delivered requests will be considered mailed as of the date stamped or punched in by the Workers' Compensation Division.

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Phone or in-person requests, where allowed under these rules, will be considered mailed as of the date of the request.

[(8)]**(9)** "Notice of Closure" means a notice to the worker issued by the insurer to

- (a) Close an accepted disabling claim, including fatal claims;
- (b) Correct, rescind, or rescind and reissue a Notice of Closure previously issued; or
- (c) Reduce permanent total disability to permanent partial disability.

[(9)]**(10)** "Notice of Refusal to Reclassify" means the insurer's written response, to a worker's request, which notifies the worker of the insurer's decision regarding the nondisabling status of a claim.

[(10)]**(11)** "Reconsideration" means review by the director of an insurer's Notice of Closure.

[(11)]**(12)** "Statutory closure date" means the date the claim satisfies the criteria for closure under ORS 656.268(1)(b) and (c).

[(12)]**(13)** "Statutory appeal period" means the time frame for appealing a Notice of Closure or Order on Reconsideration.

[(13)]**(14)** "Work disability", for purposes of determining permanent disability, means the separate factoring of impairment as modified by age, education, and adaptability to perform the job at which the worker was injured.

[(14)]**(15)** "Worksheet" means a summary of facts used to derive the awards stated in the Notice of Closure.

Stat. Auth.: ORS 656.268, ORS 656.726, 1995 OR Laws Chapter 332, and 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313
Stats. Implemented: ORS 656.005, ORS 656.268, ORS 656.726, 1995 OR Laws Chapter 332, and 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313
Hist: Filed 6/30/78 as WCD Admin. Order 8-1978, eff. 7/10/78; Amended 3/20/80 as WCD Admin. Order 4-1980, eff. 4/1/80
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 Amended 12/17/87 as WCD Admin. Order 13-1987, eff. 1/1/88; Amended 6/18/90 as WCD Admin. Order 7-1990, eff. 7/1/90, (temp.)
 Amended 12/10/90 as WCD Admin. Order 33-1990, eff. 12/26/90; Amended 11/18/94 as WCD Admin. Order 94-059, eff. 1/1/95
 Amended 2/14/96 as WCD Admin. Order 96-052, eff. 2/17/96; Amended 12/22/97 as WCD Admin. Order 97-065, eff. 1/15/98
 Amended 11/13/00 as WCD Admin. Order 00-058 eff. 01/01/01; Amended 12/12/03 as WCD Admin. Order 03-063, eff. 1/1/04 (Temp.)
 Amended 2/17/04 as WCD Admin. Order 04-052, eff. 2/29/04; Amended 10/26/04 as WCD Admin. Order 04-062, eff. 1/1/05
Amended 12/5/05 as WCD Admin. Order 05-073, eff. 01/01/06

436-030-0007 Administrative Review

(1) The following matters are subject to dispute resolution before the director:

(a) Notices of Closure issued by insurers are appealed to the director and processed in accordance with the reconsideration procedures described in OAR 436-030-0115 through OAR 436-030-0185, except Notices of Closure under section (2)(b) of this rule.

(b) The director may abate, withdraw, [and/]or amend the Order on Reconsideration until the Order is final by operation of law.

(c) Notices of Refusal to Reclassify issued by insurers are appealable by the worker to the director under ORS 656.273 and 656.277 and OAR 436-060-0018.

(2) The following matters are brought before the Hearings Division of the Workers' Compensation Board:

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(a) Director's Review orders and Orders on Reconsideration issued under OAR 436-060-0018 and these rules [are appealable to the Hearings Division of the Workers' Compensation Board] within the timeframes in OAR 436-060-0018 and 436-030-0145, respectively.

(b) Notices of Closure that rescind permanent total disability under ORS 656.206.

(b)(c) [A party may request a hearing before the Hearings Division of the Workers' Compensation Board on a] Any other action taken under these rules where a worker's right to compensation or the amount thereof is directly an issue under ORS Chapter 656.

(3) Contested Case Hearings of Sanctions and Civil Penalties: Under ORS 656.740, any party aggrieved by a proposed order or proposed assessment of a civil penalty issued by the director under ORS 656.254, 656.735, 656.745 or 656.750 may request a hearing by the Hearings Division as follows:

(a) The party must send the request for hearing in writing to the director within 60 days after the mailing date of the proposed order or assessment. The request must specify the grounds upon which the proposed order or assessment is contested.

(b) The Workers' Compensation Division will forward the request and other pertinent information to the Hearings Division [of the Workers' Compensation Board].

(c) An Administrative Law Judge from the Hearings Division, acting on behalf of the director, will conduct the hearing in accordance with ORS 656.740 and ORS Chapter 183.

(4) Director's Administrative Review of other actions: Except as covered under sections (1) through (3) of this rule, any party seeking an action or decision by the director or aggrieved by an action taken by any other party under these rules, may request administrative review by the director as follows:

(a) The party must send the request in writing to the director within 90 days of the disputed action and must specify the grounds upon which the action is disputed.

(b) The director may require and allow such evidence as is deemed appropriate to complete the review.

(c) A director's order will be issued and will specify if the order is final or if it may be appealed.

(d) The director may, unless otherwise obligated by statute, at the director's discretion, waive any procedural rules as justice so requires.

Stat. Auth.: ORS 656.268, ORS 656.726, 1995 OR Laws Chapter 332, and 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313, (§9, ch. 170, OL 2003)
Stats. Implemented: ORS 656.268, ORS 656.277, ORS 656.726, 1995 OR Laws Chapter 332, 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313, and chapter 350, Oregon Laws 2001
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 Renumbered from OAR 436-65-998, May 1985; Amended 12/17/87 as WCD Admin. Order 13-1987, eff. 01/01/88
 Amended 6/18/90 as WCD Admin. Order 7-1990, eff. 7/1/90, (temp.); Renumbered from OAR 436-030-0020
 Amended 12/10/90 as WCD Admin. Order 33-1990, eff. 12/26/90; Amended 1/17/92 as WCD Admin. Order 5-1992, eff. 2/20/92
 Amended 11/18/94 as WCD Admin. Order 94-059, eff. 1/1/95; Amended 2/14/96 as WCD Admin. Order 96-052, eff. 2/17/96
 Amended 12/22/97 as WCD Admin. Order 97-065, eff. 1/15/98; Amended 11/13/00 as WCD Admin. Order 00-058, eff. 01/01/01
 Amended 11/16/01 as WCD Admin. Order 01-060, eff. 1/1/02; Amended 12/12/03 as WCD Admin. Order 03-063, eff. 1/1/04 (Temp.)
 Amended 2/17/04 as WCD Admin. Order 04-052, eff. 2/29/04; Amended 10/26/04 as WCD Admin. Order 04-062, eff. 1/1/05
Amended 12/5/05 as WCD Admin. Order 05-073, eff. 01/01/06

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436-030-0009 Appeals of Notices of Closure

[If the worker or insurer disagrees with a Notice of Closure and the worker was determined medically stationary after July 1, 1990, or the worker is not medically stationary and the claim is closed under ORS 656.268(1)(b) or (c), the worker or insurer must first request a reconsideration by the director under these rules. If the worker was determined medically stationary on or before July 1, 1990, WCD Admin. Order 13-1987 rules apply.]

(1) Except as provided in section (2) of this rule, a worker or insurer must first request reconsideration of a Notice of Closure when:

(a) The worker was determined medically stationary after July 1, 1990; or

(b) The worker is not determined medically stationary, and the claim is closed under ORS 656.268(1)(b) or (c).

(2) If a worker disagrees with a Notice of Closure rescinding permanent total disability benefits under ORS 656.206, the worker must request a hearing before the Hearings Division.

(3) If a worker was determined medically stationary on or before July 1, 1990, Workers' Compensation Division Administrative Order 13-1987 rules apply.

Stat. Auth.: ORS 656.268 (ch. 429, OL 2003), ORS 656.726, 1995 OR Laws Chapter 332, and 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313
Stats. Implemented: ORS 656.268 (ch. 429, OL 2003), ORS 656.726, 1995 OR Laws Chapter 332, and 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313
Hist: Renumbered from OAR 436-030-0020; Amended 12/10/90 as WCD Admin. Order 33-1990, eff. 12/26/90
Amended 1/17/92 as WCD Admin. Order 5-1992, eff. 2/20/92; Amended 11/18/94 as WCD Admin. Order 94-059, eff. 1/1/95
Amended 2/14/96 as WCD Admin. Order 96-052, eff. 2/17/96; Amended 11/13/00 as WCD Admin. Order 00-058, eff. 01/01/01
Amended 12/12/03 as WCD Admin. Order 03-063, eff. 1/1/04 (Temp.); Amended 2/17/04 as WCD Admin. Order 04-052, eff. 2/29/04
Amended 10/26/04 as WCD Admin. Order 04-062, eff. 1/1/05; **Amended 12/5/05 as WCD Admin. Order 05-073, eff. 01/01/06**

436-030-0015 Insurer Responsibility

(1) When an insurer issues a Notice of Closure (Form 440-1644, 1644c, 1644r), the insurer is responsible for:

(a) Providing the director, the parties, and the worker's attorney if the worker is represented, a copy of the Notice of Closure, a copy of the worksheet (Form 440-2807) upon which the Notice is based, a completed "Insurer Notice of Closure Summary" (Form 440-1503) and an Updated Notice of Acceptance at Closure that specifies which conditions are compensable, as prescribed in [section (2) of this rule] **OAR 436-030-0020**;

(b) Maintaining a copy of the worksheet and records upon which the Notice of Closure is based in its claim file for audit purposes under OAR 436-050; and

(c) Issuing the Updated Notice of Acceptance at Closure on the same date as the Notice of Closure.

(d) The Updated Notice of Acceptance at Closure must contain the following title, information, and language:

(A) Title: "Updated Notice of Acceptance at Closure";

(B) Information: A list of all compensable conditions that have been accepted, even if a condition was denied, ordered accepted by litigation, and is under appeal. Any conditions under appeal and those which were the basis for this claim opening must be specifically identified;

(C) Language, in bold print:

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“Notice to Worker: This notice restates and includes all prior acceptances. The conditions that were the basis of this claim opening are the only conditions considered at the time of claim closure. The insurer or self-insured employer is not required to pay any disability compensation for any condition specifically identified as under appeal, unless and until the condition is found to be compensable after all litigation is complete. Appeal of any denied conditions or objections to this notice will not delay claim closure. Any condition found compensable after the Notice of Closure is issued will require the insurer to reopen the claim for processing of that condition. If you believe a condition has been incorrectly omitted from this notice, or this notice is otherwise deficient, you must communicate the specific objection to the insurer in writing.”;

(e) In the case of an instant fatality, the Updated Notice of Acceptance may be combined with the Notice of Closure if the following is included:

(A) Title: “Updated Notice of Acceptance and Closure”;

(B) Information: Names of all known beneficiaries, the beneficiaries’ right to and the extent of fatal benefits due under ORS 656.204, and the medically stationary date.

(C) Language, in bold print:

“Notice to Worker’s Beneficiary or Estate: This notice restates any prior acceptances. The insurer is required to determine the appropriate benefits to be paid to any beneficiaries and begin those payments within 30 days of the mailing date of this notice.

If you disagree with the notice of acceptance, you may appeal the decision to the Workers’ Compensation Board, (insert current address for Workers’ Compensation Board) within 30 days of the mailing date.

If you disagree with the claim closure, you may appeal the decision to the Workers’ Compensation Division, Appellate Review Unit, (insert current address for Workers’ Compensation Division) within 60 days of the mailing date of this notice.

If you have questions about this notice, you may contact the Ombudsman for Injured Workers, the Workers’ Compensation Division, or consult with an attorney.”

[(e)](f) The insurer or self-insured employer is not required to pay any disability compensation for any condition under appeal and specifically identified as such, unless and until the condition is found to be compensable after all litigation is complete.

[(f)](g) In the event an omission or error requires a corrected Updated Notice of Acceptance at Closure, the word “CORRECTED” must appear in capital letters adjacent to the word “Updated”.

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[(g)](h) In the event that the "Initial Notice of Acceptance" is issued at the same time as the "Updated Notice of Acceptance at Closure," both titles must appear near the top of the document.

(2) Copies of Notices of Refusal to Close must be mailed to the director and the parties, and to the worker's attorney, if the worker is represented.

(3) In claims with a date of injury on or after January 1, 2005 where the worker has not returned to regular work and ORS 656.726(4)(f) does not apply, **or in claims with a date of injury on or after January 1, 2006 when the worker has not been released to regular work and ORS 656.726(4)(f) does not apply,** the insurer must consider:

(a) The worker's age at the time the notice is issued;

(b) Adaptability to return to employment;

(c) The worker's level of education; **and**

(d) The worker's work history, including an accurate description of the physical requirements of the worker's job held at the time of injury, for the period from five years before the date of injury to the mailing date of the notice of closure with dates or period of time spent at each position, tasks performed or level of specific vocational preparation (SVP), and physical requirements. **If the insurer cannot obtain five years of work history despite all reasonable efforts, the insurer must document its efforts and provide as much work history as it can obtain.**

(4) In claims where the date of injury is before January 1, 2005, the worker has not returned or been released to regular work, ORS 656.726(4)(f) does not apply, and the claim involves injury to, or disease of, unscheduled body parts, areas, or systems, the insurer must consider:

(a) The worker's age at time the notice is issued;

(b) Adaptability to return to employment;

(c) The worker's level of education; **and**

(d) The worker's work history, including an accurate description of the physical requirements of the worker's job held at the time of injury, for the period from five years before the date of injury to the mailing date of the notice of closure with dates or period of time spent at each position, tasks performed or level of specific vocational preparation (SVP), and physical requirements.

(5) The insurer must consider any other records or information pertinent to claim determination prior to issuing a notice of closure.

(6) The insurer must notify the worker and the worker's attorney, if the worker is represented, in writing, when the insurer receives information that the worker's claim qualifies for closure under these rules.

(a) The insurer must send the written notice within three working days from the date the insurer receives the information, unless the claim has already been closed.

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(b) The notice must advise the worker of his or her impending claim closure and that any time loss disability payments will end soon.

(7[c]) The insurer must, within 14 days of closing the claim, provide the worker's attorney the same documents relied upon for claim closure.

(8) The insurer must not issue a Notice of Closure on an accepted nondisabling claim. Notices of Closure issued by the insurer in violation of this rule are void and without legal effect. Medically stationary status in nondisabling claims may be documented by the attending physician's statement of medically stationary status.

(9) When a condition is accepted after a closure and the claim has been reopened under ORS 656.262, the insurer must issue a Notice of Closure, considering only the newly accepted condition.

(10) Denials issued under ORS 656.262(7)(b), must clearly identify the phrase "major contributing cause" in the text of the denial.

(11) When a claim is closed where a designation of paying agent order (ORS 656.307) has been issued and the responsibility issue is not final by operation of law, the insurer processing the claim at the time of closure must send copies of the closure notice to the worker, the worker's attorney if the worker is represented, the director, and all parties involved in the responsibility issue.

Stat. Auth.: ORS 656.268, ORS 656.726, 1995 OR Laws Chapter 332, and 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313

Stats. Implemented: ORS 656.268, ORS 656.331, ORS 656.726, 1995 OR Laws Chapter 332, 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313, and chapter 377, Oregon Laws 2001

Hist: Amended and Renumbered 11/18/94 from 436-030-0020 and 030 as WCD Admin. Order 94-059, eff. 1/1/95

Amended 2/14/96 as WCD Admin. Order 96-052, eff. 2/17/96; Amended 12/22/97 as WCD Admin. Order 97-065, eff. 1/15/98

Amended 11/13/00 as WCD Admin. Order 00-058, eff. 01/01/01; Amended 11/16/01 as WCD Admin. Order 01-060, eff. 1/1/02

Amended 2/17/04 as WCD Admin. Order 04-052, eff. 2/29/04; Amended 10/26/04 as WCD Admin. Order 04-062, eff. 1/1/05

Amended 12/5/05 as WCD Admin. Order 05-073, eff. 01/01/06

436-030-0017 Requests for Claim Closure by the Worker

(1) A worker may request closure from the insurer. The insurer must issue a Notice of Closure or Notice of Refusal to Close within 10 days of receipt of a written request.

(2) If an insurer issues a notice of refusal to close the claim, the notice must be identified in capital letters as a "NOTICE OF REFUSAL TO CLOSE" and must include the following information and appeal language:

- (a) Name of the worker;
- (b) Date of injury;
- (c) Insurer's claim number;
- (d) Mailing date of the notice;
- (e) The accepted and denied conditions;
- (f) Rationale for the insurer's decision; and
- (g) The following language, in bold print:

"If you disagree with this Notice of Refusal to Close your claim, you must file a letter of disagreement with the Workers' Compensation Board within sixty

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(60) days from the date of this notice. Your letter must state that you want a hearing, note your address and the date of your accident, if you know the date. You must mail your letter of disagreement to the Workers' Compensation Board, [INSURER: Insert current address of Workers' Compensation Board here]. If your claim qualifies and you request it, you may receive an expedited hearing (within 30 days). Your request cannot, by law, affect your employment. If you do not file your letter of disagreement within sixty (60) days from the date of this notice, your hearing will be denied as the appeal time has passed. You may be represented by an attorney if you so choose."

(3) If the worker disagrees with the Notice of Refusal to Close, the worker may request a hearing from the Workers' Compensation Board.

Stat. Auth.: ORS 656.268, ORS 656.726, 1995 OR Laws Chapter 332, and 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313

Stats. Implemented: ORS 656.268, ORS 656.319, ORS 656.726, ORS 656.745, 1995 OR Laws Chapter 332, 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313, and chapter 349, Oregon Laws 2001

Hist: Amended 11/18/94 as WCD Admin. Order 94-059, eff. 1/1/95; Amended 2/14/96 as WCD Admin. Order 96-052, eff. 2/17/96
Amended 12/22/97 as WCD Admin. Order 97-065, eff. 1/15/98; Amended 11/13/00 as WCD Admin. Order 00-058, eff. 01/01/01
Amended 11/16/01 as WCD Admin. Order 01-060, eff. 1/1/02; Amended 2/17/04 as WCD Admin. Order 04-052, eff. 2/29/04

436-030-0020 Requirements for Claim Closure

(1) Provided the worker is not enrolled and actively engaged in training, the insurer must issue a Notice of Closure on an accepted disabling claim within 14 days when:

(a) Medical information establishes there is sufficient information to determine the extent of permanent disability under ORS 656.245(2)(b)(B), and indicates the worker's compensable condition is medically stationary;

(b) The accepted injury/condition is no longer the major contributing cause of the worker's combined or consequential condition(s), a major contributing cause denial has been issued, and there is sufficient information to determine the extent of permanent disability;

(c) The worker fails to seek medical treatment for 30 days for reasons within the worker's control and the worker has been notified of pending actions in accordance with these rules; or

(d) The worker fails to attend a mandatory closing examination for reasons within the worker's control and the worker has been notified of pending action(s) in accordance with these rules.

(e) A worker receiving permanent total disability benefits has materially improved and is capable of regularly performing work at a gainful and suitable occupation.

(2) For purposes of determining the extent of disability, "sufficient information" requires the following:

(a) An authorized nurse practitioner's or attending physician's written statement that clearly indicates there is no permanent impairment, residuals, or limitations attributable to the accepted condition(s), and there is no reasonable expectation, based on evidence in the record, of loss of use or function, changes in the worker's physical abilities, or permanent impairment attributable to the accepted condition(s). If the physician or nurse practitioner indicates there is no impairment, but the record reveals otherwise, a closing examination and reports specified under (b) of this section are required; or

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(b) A closing medical examination and report when there is a reasonable expectation of loss of use or function, changes in the worker's physical abilities, or permanent impairment attributable to the accepted condition(s) based on evidence in the record or the physician's opinion. The closing medical examination report must describe in detail all measurements and findings regarding any permanent impairment, residuals, or limitations attributable to the accepted condition(s) under OAR 436-010-0280 and OAR 436-035; and, if there is not clear and convincing evidence that the worker has **been released to regular work (for dates of injury on or after January 1, 2006) or** returned to regular work at the job held at the time of injury and ORS 656.726(4)(f) does not apply, all of the following:

(A) An accurate description of the physical requirements of the worker's job held at the time of injury, which has been provided by certified mail to the worker and the worker's legal representative, if any, either before closing the claim or at the time the claim is closed;

(B) The worker's wage established consistent with OAR 436-060;

(C) The worker's date of birth;

(D) **Except as provided in OAR 436-030-0015(3)(d),**[T]the worker's work history for the period beginning five years before the date of injury to the mailing date of the Notice of Closure, including tasks performed or level of SVP, and physical demands; and

(E) The worker's level of formal education .

(3) When determining disability and issuing the Notice of Closure, the insurer must apply all statutes and rules consistent with their provisions, particularly as they relate to major contributing cause denials, worker's failure to seek treatment, worker's failure to attend a mandatory examination, medically stationary status, temporary disability, permanent partial and total disability, review of permanent partial and total disability.

(4) When issuing a Notice of Closure, the insurer must prepare a summary worksheet, "Notice of Closure Worksheet", Form 440-2807 (Form 2807), as described by bulletin of the director.

(5) The "Notice of Closure", Form 440-1644 (Form 1644), is effective the date it is mailed to the worker and to the worker's attorney if the worker is represented, regardless of the date on the Notice itself.

(6) The notice must be in the form and format prescribed by the director in these rules and include only the following:

(a) The worker's name, address, and claim identification information;

(b) The appropriate dollar value of any individual scheduled [and/]or unscheduled permanent disability based on the value per degree for injuries occurring before January 1, 2005 or, for injuries occurring on or after January 1, 2005, the appropriate dollar value of any "whole person" permanent disability, including impairment and work disability as determined appropriate under OAR 436-035;

(c) The body part(s) awarded disability, coded to the table of body part codes as prescribed by the director;

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(d) The percentage of loss of the specific body part(s), including either the number of degrees that loss represents as appropriate for injuries occurring before January 1, 2005, or the percentage of the whole person the worker's loss represents as appropriate for injuries occurring on or after January 1, 2005;

(e) If there is no permanent disability award for this Notice of Closure, a statement to that effect;

(f) The duration of temporary total and temporary partial disability compensation;

(g) The date the Notice of Closure was mailed;

(h) The medically stationary date or the date the claim statutorily qualifies for closure under OAR 436-030-0035 or 436-030-0034;

(i) The date the worker's aggravation rights end;

(j) The worker's appeal rights;

(k) The right of the worker to consult with the Ombudsman for Injured Workers;

(l) For claims with dates of injury before January 1, 2005, the rate in dollars per degree at which permanent disability, if any, will be paid based on date of injury as identified in Bulletin 111;

(m) For claims with dates of injury on or after January 1, 2005, the state's average weekly wage applicable to the worker's date of injury is to be shown on the Notice of Closure;

(n) The worker's return to work status; and

(o) A general statement that the insurer has the authority to recover an overpayment.

(7) The Notice of Closure (Form 440-1644) must be accompanied by the following:

(a) The brochure "Understanding Claim Closure and Your Rights";

(b) A copy of summary worksheet Form 2807 containing information and findings which result in the data appearing on the Notice of Closure;

(c) An accurate description of the physical requirements of the worker's job held at the time of injury unless **it is not required under section (2)(a) of this rule or it was** previously provided [pursuant to **under** section (2)(b)(A) of this rule;

(d) The Updated Notice of Acceptance at Closure which clearly identifies all accepted conditions in the claim and specifies those which have been denied and are on appeal [and/]or which were the basis for this opening of the claim; and

(e) A cover letter that:

(A) Specifically explains why the claim has been closed (e.g., expiration of a period of suspension without the worker resolving the problems identified, an attending physician stating the worker is medically stationary, worker failure to treat without attending physician authorization or establishing good cause for not treating, etc.);

(B) Lists and describes enclosed documents; and

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(C) Notifies the worker about the end of temporary disability benefits, if any, and the anticipated start of permanent disability benefits, if any.

(8) A copy of the Notice of Closure must be mailed to each of the following persons at the same time, with each copy clearly identifying the intended recipient:

- (a) The worker;
- (b) The employer;
- (c) The director; and
- (d) The worker's attorney, if the worker is represented.

(9) The worker's copy of the Notice of Closure must be mailed by both regular mail and certified mail return receipt requested.

(10) An insurer may use electronically produced Notice of Closure forms if consistent with the form and format prescribed by the director.

(11) Insurers may allow adjustments of benefits awarded to the worker under the documentation requirements of OAR 436-060-0170 for the following purposes:

- (a) To recover payments for permanent disability which were made prematurely;
- (b) To recover overpayments for temporary disability; and
- (c) To recover overpayments for other than temporary disability such as prepaid travel expenses where travel was not completed, prescription reimbursements, or other benefits payable under ORS 656.001 to 656.794.

(12) The insurer may allow overpayments made on a claim with the same insurer to be deducted from compensation to which the worker is entitled but has not yet been paid.

(13) If after claim closure, the worker became enrolled and actively engaged in an approved training program under OAR 436-120, a new Notice of Closure must be issued consistent with the following:

(a) In claims with dates of injury on or after January 1, 2005, the insurer must redetermine work disability when:

- (A) The worker has ended training; and either
- (B) The worker's condition is medically stationary; or
- (C) The claim otherwise qualifies for closure in accordance with these rules.

(b) For claims with dates of injury before January 1, 2005, permanent disability must be redetermined by the insurer when:

- (A) The worker has ended training; and either
- (B) The worker's condition is medically stationary; or
- (C) The claim otherwise qualifies for closure in accordance with these rules., except

(D) When the worker became medically stationary after June 7, 1995 for a scheduled disability. Then the scheduled disability must remain unchanged from the last award of

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compensation in that claim unless the condition did not remain medically stationary through training.

(c) For claims with dates of injury before January 1, 2005, if the worker has remained medically stationary throughout training and the closing examination is six months old or older, a current medical examination will be required for redetermination unless the worker's attending physician provides a written statement that there has been no change in the worker's accepted condition since the previous closing examination.

(14) When, after a claim is closed, the insurer changes or is ordered to change the worker's weekly wage upon which calculation of the work disability portion of a permanent disability award may be based, the insurer must notify the parties and the division of the change and the effect of the change on any permanent disability award. For purposes of this rule, the insurer must complete Form 440-1502 consistent with the instructions of the director and disperse it within 14 days of the change.

Stat. Auth.: ORS 656.268, ORS 656.726, 1995 OR Laws Chapter 332, and 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313
Stats. Implemented: ORS 656.210, ORS 656.212, ORS 656.214, ORS 656.268, ORS 656.270, ORS 656.726, ORS 656.745, 1995 OR Laws Chapter 332, and 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313
Hist:[Amended] Filed 3/20/80 as WCD Admin. Order 4-1980, eff. 4/1/80; Amended 12/30/81 as WCD Admin. Order 5-1981, eff. 1/1/82 Renumbered from OAR 436-65-006, May 1985; Amended 12/17/87 as WCD Admin. Order 13-1987, eff. 1/1/88 Amended 6/18/90 as WCD Admin. Order 7-1990, eff. 7/1/90, (temp.); Amended 12/10/90 as WCD Admin. Order 33-1990, eff. 12/26/90 Amended 1/17/92 as WCD Admin. Order 5-1992, eff. 2/20/92; Amended 11/18/94 as WCD Admin. Order 94-059, eff. 1/1/95 Amended 2/14/96 as WCD Admin. Order 96-052, eff. 2/17/96; Amended 12/22/97 as WCD Admin. Order 97-065, eff. 1/15/98 Amended 11/13/00 as WCD Admin. Order 00-058, eff. 01/01/01; Amended 2/17/04 as WCD Admin. Order 04-052, eff. 2/29/04 Amended 10/26/04 as WCD Admin. Order 04-062, eff. 1/1/05; Amended 12/5/05 as WCD Admin. Order 05-073, eff. 01/01/06

436-030-0023 Correcting and Rescinding Notices of Closure

(1) An insurer may rescind or correct its Notice of Closure prior to the expiration of the appeal period for that Notice and prior to or on the same day that the director receives a request for reconsideration of the Notice of Closure.

(2) The form, format, and completion of the Correcting and Rescinding Notices of Closure are the same as those of the Notice of Closure except that, to correct a Notice of Closure, a Form 440-1644c (Form 1644c) must be used and, to rescind a Notice of Closure, a Form 440-1644r (Form 1644r) must be used. **An insurer may rescind and reissue a Notice of Closure by using a Form 440-1644 (Form 1644) when such actions can be accomplished at the same time, the claim remains closed, and other provisions of these rules are met.**

(3) The "Date of closure (mailing date)" on the Correcting or Rescinding Notice of Closure must be the date the correction or rescission is mailed. The mailing date of the Notice of Closure being rescinded or corrected must be identified within the body of the Correcting or Rescinding Notice of Closure.

(4) The worker's copy of the Correcting and Rescinding Notices of Closure must be mailed by both regular mail and certified mail return receipt requested, consistent with OAR 436-030-0020(8) and (9).

(5) Rescinding Notices of Closure, Form 1644r, are used to rescind the Notice of Closure and return the claim to open status. Examples of appropriate uses of Rescinding Notices of Closure include, but are not limited to:

- (a) The worker was not medically stationary at the time the Notice of Closure was issued;
- (b) The closure was otherwise premature;

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(c) Grant PPD when the Notice of Closure being rescinded granted TTD only.

(6) The Rescinding Notice of Closure must:

(a) Advise the worker that the claim remains open and no aggravation rights end date has been established, if it is rescinding the first closure of the claim;

(b) Initiate a 60-day appeal period during which any request for reconsideration must be received by the director;

(c) Explain the reason for the action being taken; and

(d) Be distributed and mailed to the parties consistent with these rules.

(7) When a Notice of Closure granting only timeloss has been issued, if the insurer determines the worker's medically stationary status is unchanged and the worker is entitled to an award of permanent disability, the insurer must use a Notice of Closure, Form 1644, to rescind and reissue the closure. In such cases, the Notice of Closure must:

(a) Contain all required information consistent with these rules;

(b) Bear the heading "Rescind and Reissue";

(c) Explain the reason the action is being taken;

(d) Identify the permanent disability award being granted consistent with OAR 436-030 and 436-035;

(e) Establish a new 60-day appeal period;

(f) Set a new aggravation rights end date if the Notice of Closure being rescinded is the first closure of the claim; and

(g) Be distributed and mailed to the parties consistent with these rules.

(8) Correcting Notices of Closure, Form 1644c, are used to correct errors or omissions and do not change the closure status or the action taken by the Notice of Closure being corrected. Correcting Notices of Closure must not be used to grant permanent disability in claims where the Notice of Closure being corrected did not include an award of permanent disability. Examples of appropriate uses of Correcting Notices of Closure include, but are not limited to:

(a) Permanent disability award computation errors (dollars, degrees, percentages);

(b) An incorrect "mailing date";

(c) Return-to-work status errors or omissions;

(d) Incorrect or incomplete statement of temporary disability.

(9) A Correcting Notice of Closure must:

(a) Be issued when the director has instructed the insurer to do so because the Notice of Closure did not contain the information required by OAR 436-030-0020(4);

(b) Not be used to add a new condition to the claim closure, rate a new condition not considered in the Notice of Closure being corrected, or rescind a Notice of Closure;

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(c) State in the body of the correcting notice only the information being corrected on the Notice of Closure and the basis for the correction;

(d) Not change the appeal period for the Notice of Closure being corrected; and

(e) Initiate a new 60-day appeal period during which any request for reconsideration must be received, but only for those items being corrected.

Stat. Auth.: ORS 656.268, ORS 656.726, 1995 OR Laws Chapter 332, and 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313

Stats. Implemented: ORS 656.210, ORS 656.212, ORS 656.214, ORS 656.268, ORS 656.270, ORS 656.726, ORS 656.745, 1995 OR Laws Chapter 332, and 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313

Hist: Adopted 2/17/04 as WCD Admin. Order 04-052, eff. 2/29/04; Amended 10/26/04 as WCD Admin. Order 04-062, eff. 1/1/05

Amended 12/5/05 as WCD Admin. Order 05-073, eff. 01/01/06

436-030-0034 Claim Closure When the Worker is Not Medically Stationary

(1) The insurer must close a claim if a worker fails to seek treatment for more than 30 days without the instruction or approval of the attending physician or authorized nurse practitioner. In order to close a claim under this rule, the insurer must:

(a) After waiting the period of thirty days for the worker to treat, send the worker written notification of the following by certified mail:

(A) It is the worker's responsibility to seek medical treatment in a timely manner,

(B) Informing the worker of the consequences for failing to seek treatment in a timely manner, including but not limited to claim closure and possible loss or reduction of a disability award, if any,

(C) That the claim will be closed unless the worker establishes within 14 days that:

(i) Treatment has resumed by attending an existing appointment or scheduling a new appointment, or

(ii) The reasons for not treating were outside the worker's control.

(b) Wait the 14 day period given in the notification letter to allow the worker to provide evidence that the absence of treatment was either authorized by the physician or beyond the worker's control.

(c) Determine whether claim closure is appropriate based on the information provided by the worker or absence thereof.

(d) Rate any permanent disability apparent in the record (e.g., irreversible findings) at the time claim closure is appropriate, regardless of receiving a response from the worker.

(2) The date the claim qualifies for closure, when a worker fails to seek treatment for a period in excess of 30 days, is the latest (most chronologically recent) of the following which occurs prior to the closure:

(a) 30 days from the last treatment provided or authorized by the attending physician or authorized nurse practitioner;

(b) The date the worker failed to attend a follow-up visit that was recommended by the attending physician or authorized nurse practitioner for reasons within the worker's control;

(c) The date the worker returns to or is released to regular work if it is after the last examination date; or

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(d) If the worker responds within the 14 day period established by the notification letter and the worker's response fails to establish that the worker has resumed treatment or that the reasons for not treating were outside the worker's control, the date of the worker's response.

(3) A claim must be closed when the worker is not medically stationary, and the worker fails to attend a mandatory closing examination for reasons within the worker's control, and the insurer has notified the worker, by certified letter, at least 10 days prior to the mandatory examination, that claim closure will result for failure to attend a mandatory closing examination. The notification letter must inform the worker of the worker's responsibility to attend the mandatory closing examination and of the consequences for failing to do so, including but not limited to claim closure and the possible loss or reduction of a disability award.

(a) Workers have 7 days from the date of exam to demonstrate good cause for failing to attend, before any further action is taken by the insurer toward claim closure.

(b) Where the worker fails to attend a mandatory closing examination for reasons within the worker's control, the date the claim qualifies for closure is the date of the failed mandatory closing examination.

(c) Where a closing exam has been scheduled between a worker and attending physician directly, insurers may close under (1) of this section.

(4) A claim may be closed when the worker is not medically stationary and a major contributing cause denial has been issued on an accepted combined condition.

(a) The major contributing cause denial must inform the worker that claim closure may result from the issuance of the denial and provide all other information required by these rules.

(b) When a major contributing cause denial has been issued following the acceptance of a combined condition, the date the claim qualifies for closure is the date the insurer receives sufficient information to determine the extent of any permanent disability under OAR 436-035-0007(5) and 436-030-0020(2) or the date of the denial, whichever is later.

(5) When any two of the above occur concurrently, the earliest date the claim qualifies for closure is used to close the claim and noted on the notice.

(6) The attending physician or authorized nurse practitioner must be copied on all notification and denial letters applicable to this rule.

(7) When the director has issued a suspension order, under OAR 436-060-0095 [and] or OAR 436-060-0105, the date the claim qualifies for closure is the date of the suspension order.

(8) When a worker fails to seek treatment with an authorized attending physician as defined by ORS 656.005 or authorized nurse practitioner as defined in ORS 656.245, the claim must be closed under section (1) of this rule. Section (2) of this rule must be used to determine the effective date of the closure. All notification letters issued under this section of the rule must clearly identify that the reason for the impending closure is because of the worker's failure to treat with an authorized attending physician or nurse practitioner.

Stat. Auth.: ORS 656.262, ORS 656.268, ORS 656.726, 1995 OR Laws Chapter 332, and 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313

Stats. Implemented: ORS 656.268, ORS 656.726, 1995 OR Laws Chapter 332, and 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313

Hist: Filed 2/14/96 as WCD Admin. Order 96-052, eff. 2/17/96; Amended 12/22/97 as WCD Admin. Order 97-065, eff. 1/15/98

Amended 11/13/00 as WCD Admin. Order 00-058, eff. 01/01/01; Amended 12/12/03 as WCD Admin. Order 03-063, eff. 1/1/04 (Temp.)

Amended 2/17/04 as WCD Admin. Order 04-052, eff. 2/29/04; Amended 10/26/04 as WCD Admin. Order 04-062, eff. 1/1/05

Amended 12/5/05 as WCD Admin. Order 05-073, eff. 01/01/06

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436-030-0035 Determining Medically Stationary Status

(1) A worker's compensable condition is medically stationary when the attending physician, authorized nurse practitioner, or a preponderance of medical opinion declares the worker either "medically stationary," "medically stable," or uses other language meaning the same thing.

(2) When there is a conflict in the medical opinions as to whether or not a worker's compensable condition is medically stationary, more weight is given to medical opinions that are based on the most accurate history, on the most objective findings, on sound medical principles, and clear and concise reasoning.

(3) Where there is not a preponderance of medical opinion stating a worker's compensable condition is or is not medically stationary, deference will generally be given to the opinion of the attending physician. However, in cases where expert analysis is important, deference is given to the opinion of the physician with the greatest expertise in, and understanding of, the worker's condition.

(4) When there is a conflict as to the date upon which a worker's compensable condition became medically stationary, the following conditions govern the determination of the medically stationary date. The date a worker is medically stationary is the earliest date that a preponderance is established under sections (1) and (2) of this rule. The date of the examination, not the date of the report, controls the medically stationary date.

(5) The insurer must request the attending physician's concurrence or comments when the attending physician arranges, or refers the worker for a closing examination with another physician to determine the extent of impairment or when the insurer refers a worker for an insurer medical examination. A concurrence with another physician's report is an agreement in every particular, including the medically stationary impression and date, unless the physician expressly states to the contrary and explains the reasons for disagreement. Concurrence cannot be presumed in the absence of the attending physician's response.

(6) A worker is medically stationary on the date of the examination when so specified by a physician. When a specific date is not indicated, a worker is presumed medically stationary on the date of the last examination, prior to the date of the medically stationary opinion. Physician projected medically stationary dates cannot be used to establish a medically stationary date.

(7) If the worker is incarcerated or confined in some other manner and unable to freely seek medical treatment, the insurer must arrange for medical examinations to be completed at the facility where the worker is located or at some other location accessible to the worker.

(8) If a worker dies and the attending physician has not established a medically stationary date, for purposes of claim closure, the medically stationary date is the date of death.

Stat. Auth.: ORS 656.268, ORS 656.726, 1995 OR Laws Chapter 332, and 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313

Stats. Implemented: ORS 656.268, ORS 656.726, 1995 OR Laws Chapter 332, and 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313

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Amended 2/14/96 as WCD Admin. Order 96-052, eff. 2/17/96; Amended 12/22/97 as WCD Admin. Order 97-065, eff. 1/15/98
Amended 11/13/00 as WCD Admin. Order 00-058, eff. 01/01/01; Amended 12/12/03 as WCD Admin. Order 03-063, eff. 1/1/04 (Temp.)
Amended 2/17/04 as WCD Admin. Order 04-052, eff. 2/29/04; Amended 10/26/04 as WCD Admin. Order 04-062, eff. 1/1/05

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436-030-0036 Determining Temporary Disability

(1) Temporary disability must be determined under ORS Chapter 656, OAR 436-060 and this rule, less time worked. Beginning and ending dates of each authorized period of temporary total disability and temporary partial disability must be noted on the Notice of Closure, as well as the statements "Less time worked" and "Temporary disability was determined in accordance with the law."

(2) Except as provided in section (3) of this rule and ORS 656.268(9), a worker is not entitled to any award for temporary disability for any period of time in which the worker is medically stationary.

(3) Awards of temporary disability must include the day the worker is medically stationary or the date the claim otherwise qualifies for closure, unless temporary disability is not authorized for another reason at that time.

Stat. Auth.: ORS 656.268, ORS 656.726, 1995 OR Laws Chapter 332, and 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313

Stats. Implemented: ORS 656.005, ORS 656.160, ORS 656.210, ORS 656.212, ORS 656.236, ORS 656.245, ORS 656.262, ORS 656.268, ORS 656.726, 1995 OR Laws Chapter 332, and 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313

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Amended 1/17/92 as WCD Admin. Order 5-1992, eff. 2/20/92; Amended 11/18/94 as WCD Admin. Order 94-059, eff. 1/1/95
Amended 2/14/96 as WCD Admin. Order 96-052, eff. 2/17/96; Amended 12/22/97 as WCD Admin. Order 97-065, eff. 1/15/98
Amended 11/13/00 as WCD Admin. Order 00-058, eff. 01/01/01; Amended 2/17/04 as WCD Admin. Order 04-052, eff. 2/29/04
Amended 10/26/04 as WCD Admin. Order 04-062, eff. 1/1/05

436-030-0038 Permanent Partial Disability

The standards developed under ORS 656.726(4) and contained in OAR 436-035 must be applied when evaluating a worker's permanent partial disability.

Stat. Auth.: ORS 656.268, ORS 656.726, 1995 OR Laws Chapter 332, and 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313

Stats. Implemented: ORS 656.214, ORS 656.268, ORS 656.726, 1995 OR Laws Chapter 332, and 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313

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Amended 12/22/97 as WCD Admin. Order 97-065, eff. 1/15/98; Amended 11/13/00 as WCD Admin. Order 00-058, eff. 01/01/01
Amended 2/17/04 as WCD Admin. Order 04-052, eff. 2/29/04

436-030-0055 Determining Permanent Total Disability

(1) A worker is permanently and totally disabled if permanently incapacitated from regularly performing work in a suitable and gainful occupation. For the purpose of this rule and OAR 436-030-0065:

(a) "Incapacitated from regularly performing work" means that the worker does not have the necessary physical and mental capacity and the work skills to perform [work on a regular basis] the essential functions of the job. Employment in a sheltered workshop is not considered regular employment unless this was the worker's job at the time of injury.

(b) "Suitable occupation" means those occupations that exist in a theoretically normal labor market, within a reasonable geographic distance, for which a worker has the training or experience, and abilities to realistically perform the job duties, with or without rehabilitation.

(c) "Gainful occupation" means those types of general occupations that provide wages that: [pay wages equivalent to, or greater than, the state mandated hourly minimum wage. Those types of general occupations that pay on a commission or piece-work basis, as opposed to a wage or salary basis, may not be "gainful employment" depending upon the facts of the individual situation]

(A) Meet the requirements in ORS 656.206(11)(a) for workers with a date of injury prior to January 1, 2006; or

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(B) Meet the requirements in ORS 656.206(11)(b) for workers with a date of injury on or after January 1, 2006.

(d) "Work skills" means those skills acquired through experience or training that are necessary to gain and adequately perform skilled, semi-skilled or unskilled occupations. Unskilled types of general occupations require no specific skills that would be acquired through experience or training to be able to gain and adequately perform the unskilled occupation. Every worker has the necessary work skills to gain and adequately perform unskilled types of general occupations with a reasonable period of orientation.

(e) A "reasonable geographic distance" means either of the following unless the worker is medically precluded from commuting:

- (A) The area within a 50-mile radius of the worker's place of residence at the time of:
- (i) The original injury;
 - (ii) The worker's last gainful employment;
 - (iii) Insurer's determination; or
 - (iv) Reconsideration by the director.

(B) The area in which a reasonable and prudent uninjured and unemployed person, possessing the same physical capacities, mental capacities, work skills, and financial obligations as the worker does at the time of his rating of disability, would go to seek work.

(f) "Types of general occupations" means groups of jobs which actually exist in a normal labor market, and share similar vocational purpose, skills, duties, physical circumstances, goals, and mental aptitudes. It does not refer to any specific job or place of employment for which a job or job opening may exist in the future.

(g) "Normal labor market" means a labor market that is undistorted by such factors as local business booms and slumps or extremes of the normal cycle of economic activity, or technology trends in the long-term labor market.

(h) "Withdrawn from the workforce" means a worker who is not employed, is not willing to be employed, or although willing to be employed is not making reasonable efforts to find employment, unless such efforts would be futile. The receipt of retirement benefits does not establish a worker has withdrawn from the workforce.

(2) All disability which existed before the injury must be included in determining permanent total disability.

(3) In order for a worker to be determined permanently and totally disabled, a worker must:

- (a) Prove permanent and total disability;
- (b) Be willing to seek regular and gainful employment;
- (c) Make reasonable effort to find work at a suitable and gainful occupation or actively participate in a vocational assistance program, unless medical or vocational findings, including the residuals of the compensable injury, make such efforts futile; and

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(d) Not have withdrawn from the workforce during the period for which benefits are being sought.

(4) A worker retaining some residual functional capacity and not medically permanently and totally disabled must prove:

(a) The worker has not withdrawn from the workforce for the period for which benefits are being sought;

(b) Inability to regularly perform work at a gainful and suitable occupation; and

(c) The futility of seeking work if the worker has not made reasonable work search efforts by competent written vocational testimony. Competent written vocational testimony is that which is available at the time of closure or reconsideration and comes from the opinions of persons fully certified by the State of Oregon to render vocational services.

(5) Notices of Closure and Orders on Reconsideration which grant permanent total disability must notify the worker that:

(a) The claim must be reexamined by the insurer at least once every two years, and may be reviewed more often if the insurer chooses.

(b) The insurer may require the worker to provide a sworn statement of the worker's gross annual income for the preceding year. The worker must make the statement on a form provided by the insurer in accordance with the requirements under section (6) of this rule.

(6) If asked to provide a statement under subsection (5)(b) of this rule, the worker is allowed 30 days to respond. Such statements are subject to the following:

(a) If the worker fails to provide the requested statement, the director may suspend the worker's permanent total disability benefits. Benefits must be resumed when the statement is provided. Benefits not paid for the period the statement was withheld must be recoverable for no more than one year from the date of suspension.

(b) If the worker provides a report which is false, incomplete, or inaccurate, the insurer must investigate. The investigation may result in suspension of permanent total disability benefits.

Stat. Auth.: ORS 656.268, ORS 656.726, 1995 OR Laws Chapter 332, and 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313

Stats. Implemented: ORS 656.005, ORS 656.206, ORS 656.268, ORS 656.726, 1995 OR Laws Chapter 332, 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313, and chapter 865, Oregon Laws 2001

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Amended 12/22/97 as WCD Admin. Order 97-065, eff. 1/15/98; Amended 11/13/00 as WCD Admin. Order 00-058, eff. 01/01/01
Amended 11/16/01 as WCD Admin. Order 01-060, eff. 1/1/02; Amended 2/17/04 as WCD Admin. Order 04-052, eff. 2/29/04
Amended 10/26/04 as WCD Admin. Order 04-062, eff. 1/1/05; **Amended 12/5/05 as WCD Admin. Order 05-073, eff. 01/01/06**

436-030-0065 Review of Permanent Total Disability Awards

(1) The insurer must reexamine each permanent total disability claim at least once every two years or when requested to do so by the director to determine if the worker **has materially improved, either medically or vocationally, and** is capable of regularly performing **work at a suitable and gainful occupation**. The insurer must notify the worker and the worker's attorney if the worker is represented whenever the insurer intends to reexamine the worker's permanent total disability status. Workers who fail to cooperate with the reexamination may have benefits suspended under OAR 436-060-0095.

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(2) A worker receiving permanent total disability benefits must submit to a vocational evaluation, if requested by the director, insurer, or self-insured employer under ORS 656.206(8).

[2)](3) Any decision by the insurer to reduce permanent total disability must be communicated in writing to the worker, and to the worker's attorney if the worker is represented, and accompanied by documentation supporting the insurer's decision. That documentation must include: medical reports, including sufficient information necessary to determine the extent of permanent partial disability, vocational and[or] investigation reports (including visual records, if available) which demonstrate the worker's ability to regularly perform a suitable and gainful occupation, and all other applicable evidence.

[3)](4) An award of permanent total disability for scheduled injuries before July 1, 1975, must be considered for reduction only when the insurer has evidence that the medical condition has improved.

[4)](5) Except for section [3)](4) of this rule, an award of permanent total disability may be reduced only when the insurer has a preponderance of evidence that the worker **has materially improved, either medically or vocationally, and** is regularly **performing** work[ing] at a suitable and gainful occupation or is currently capable of doing so. Preexisting disability must be included in redetermination of the worker's permanent total disability status.

[5)](6) When the insurer reduces a permanent total disability claim, the insurer must, based upon sufficient information to determine the extent of permanent partial disability, issue a Notice of Closure which reduces the permanent total disability and awards permanent partial disability, if any.

[6)](7) Any party to the claim who does not agree with the Notice of Closure may, within the statutory period, appeal the order under OAR 436-030-0007(1)(a). Appeal is to the Hearings Division for workers that were:

(a) [m]Medically stationary on or before July 1, 1990; **or**

(b) Receiving permanent total disability benefits and a Notice of Closure dated on or after January 1, 2006 rescinded those benefits.

(8) A worker who incurs a compensable injury while receiving permanent total disability benefits is entitled to additional benefits for the new condition, but benefits are limited to medical and impairment benefits under ORS 656.206(9).

Stat. Auth.: ORS 656.268, ORS 656.726, 1995 OR Laws Chapter 332, and 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313

Stats. Implemented: ORS 656.206, ORS 656.214, ORS 656.268, ORS 656.283, ORS 656.319, ORS 656.325, ORS 656.331, ORS 656.726, 1995 OR Laws Chapter 332, and 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313

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Amended 2/14/96 as WCD Admin. Order 96-052, eff. 2/17/96; Amended 12/22/97 as WCD Admin. Order 97-065, eff. 1/15/98
Amended 11/13/00 as WCD Admin. Order 00-058, eff. 01/01/01; Amended 2/17/04 as WCD Admin. Order 04-052, eff. 2/29/04

Amended 12/5/05 as WCD Admin. Order 05-073, eff. 01/01/06

436-030-0066 Review of Prior Permanent Partial Disability Awards

(1) For claims having a date of injury prior to January 1, 2005 which involve unscheduled body parts, areas, or systems as defined by OAR 436-035-0005, and all claims with dates of injury on or after January 1, 2005, an award of permanent partial disability is subject to periodic

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examination and adjustment under ORS 656.268 and 656.325 and in accordance with the following conditions:

- (a) Requests for review and adjustment must be made in writing to the Workers' Compensation Division.
- (b) The party requesting review of permanent disability must send a copy of the request to all involved parties at the time the request is made. The worker may submit any information in rebuttal.
- (c) All pertinent medical, vocational, and other applicable evidence must be submitted with the request, including sufficient information to determine the extent of permanent partial disability. The request must state the basis for the request and provide supporting evidence. If the director finds that the worker has failed to accept treatment as provided in this rule, the director will make any necessary adjustments allowed under OAR 436-035.
- (d) The basis for the request for adjustment in the permanent disability award must be asserted to be failure of the worker to make a reasonable effort to reduce the disability.

Stat. Auth.: ORS 656.268, ORS 656.726, 1995 OR Laws Chapter 332, and 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313

Stats. Implemented: ORS 656.325, ORS 656.331, ORS 656.268, ORS 656.726, 1995 OR Laws Chapter 332, and 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313

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436-030-0115 Reconsideration of Notices of Closure

(1) A worker or insurer may request reconsideration of a Notice of Closure by mailing or delivering the request to the director within the statutory appeal period as defined in OAR 436-030-0005[(6)] and 436-030-0145(1). The reconsideration proceeding begins as described in OAR 436-030-0145(2).

(2) For the purpose of these rules, "reconsideration proceeding" means the procedure established to reconsider a Notice of Closure and does not include personal appearances by any of the parties to the claim or their representatives, unless requested by the director. All information to correct or clarify the record and any medical evidence regarding the worker's condition as of the time of claim closure that should have been but was not submitted by the attending physician or authorized nurse practitioner at the time of claim closure and all supporting documentation must be presented during the reconsideration proceeding. When the reconsideration proceeding is postponed because the worker's condition is not medically stationary under OAR 436-030-0165(10), medical evidence submitted may address the worker's condition after claim closure as long as the evidence satisfies the conditions of OAR 436-030-0145(3).

(3) All parties have an opportunity to submit documents to the record regarding the worker's status at the time of claim closure. Other factual information and written argument may be submitted for incorporation into the record under ORS 656.268(6) within the time frames outlined in OAR 436-030-0145. Such information may include, but is not limited to, responses to the documentation and written arguments, written statements, and sworn affidavits from the parties.

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(4) The worker may submit a deposition to the reconsideration record subject to ORS 656.268(6) and the following:

(a) The deposition must be limited to the testimony and cross-examination of a worker about the worker's condition at the time of claim closure.

(b) The deposition must be arranged by the worker and held during the reconsideration proceeding time frame unless a good cause reason is established. If a good cause reason is established, the time frame for holding the deposition may be extended but must not extend beyond 30 days from the date of the Order on Reconsideration. The deposition must be held at a time and place that permits the insurer or self-insured employer the opportunity to cross-examine the worker.

(c) The insurer or self-insured employer must, within 30 days of receiving a bill for the deposition, pay the fee of the court reporter and the costs for the original transcript and its copies. An original transcript of the deposition must be sent to the department and each party must be sent a copy of the transcript.

(d) If the transcript is not completed and presented to the department prior to the deadline for issuing an Order on Reconsideration, the Order on Reconsideration may not be postponed to receive a deposition under this rule and the order will be issued based on the evidence in the record. However, the transcript may be received as evidence at a hearing for an appeal of the Order on Reconsideration.

(5) Only one reconsideration proceeding may be completed on each Notice of Closure and the director will do a complete review of that notice. Once the reconsideration proceeding is initiated, any additional issues must be raised and further evidence submitted within the time frames allowed for processing the reconsideration request. When the director requires additional information to complete the record, the reconsideration proceeding may be postponed under ORS 656.268(6).

Stat. Auth.: ORS 656.726, 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313, and section 12 (6)(a)(A), chapter 865, Oregon Laws 2001
Stats. Implemented: ORS 656.268, 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313, and section 12 (6)(a)(A), chapter 865, Oregon Laws 2001
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 Amended 8/20/91 as WCD Admin. Order 6-1991, eff. 9/01/91 (temp.); Amended 1/17/92 as WCD Admin. Order 5-1992, eff. 2/20/92
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Amended 12/5/05 as WCD Admin. Order 05-073, eff. 01/01/06

436-030-0125 Reconsideration Form and Format

(1) A request for reconsideration may be in the form and format the director provides by bulletin. A reconsideration request should include at least the following:

- (a) Worker's name;
- (b) Date of injury;
- (c) Date of the closure being appealed;
- (d) Any specific issues regarding the Notice of Closure;
- (e) The name of the worker's attorney;

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- (f) The name of the insurer's attorney;
- (g) Any special language needs;
- (h) Whether there is disagreement with the specific impairment findings used to determine permanent disability at the time of claim closure;
- (i) Any information and documentation deemed necessary to correct or clarify any part of the claim record believed to be erroneous; and
- (j) Any medical evidence that should have been but was not submitted at the time of the claim closure including clarification or correction of the medical record based on the examination(s) at, before, or pertaining to claim closure.

Stat. Auth.: ORS 656.726, and 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313

Stats. Implemented: ORS 656.268, and 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313

Hist: Filed 6/18/90 as WCD Admin. Order 7-1990, eff. 7/1/90, (temp.); Amended 12/10/90 as WCD Admin. Order 33-1990, eff. 12/26/90
Amended 8/20/91 as WCD Admin. Order 6-1991, eff. 9/01/91 (temp.); Amended 1/17/92 as WCD Admin. Order 5-1992, eff. 2/20/92
Amended and renumbered from OAR 436-030-0050, 11/18/94 as WCD Admin. Order 94-059, eff. 1/1/95
Amended 2/14/96 as WCD Admin. Order 96-052, eff. 2/17/96; Amended 12/22/97 as WCD Admin. Order 97-065, eff. 1/15/98
Amended 11/13/00 as WCD Admin. Order 00-058, eff. 01/01/01; Amended 12/12/03 as WCD Admin. Order 03-063, eff. 1/1/04 (Temp.)
Amended 2/17/04 as WCD Admin. Order 04-052, eff. 2/29/04

436-030-0135 Reconsideration Procedure

- (1) If the director assists the worker in completing the request for reconsideration, the director will notify the worker that the proceeding may result in an increase, decrease, or no change in entitlement to benefits.
- (2) Upon starting the reconsideration proceeding, the director will send the parties a letter of acknowledgement which includes:
 - (a) The proceeding's start date;
 - (b) The timelines for submitting additional information to be included in the record;
 - (c) A certification that the letter has been mailed to the listed parties; and
 - (d) The last date an Order on Reconsideration can be issued or the proceeding postponed, and the status of the request if the director fails to issue an Order on Reconsideration or postponement under the time limits specified in ORS 656.268.
- (3) Within 14 days from the start date of the reconsideration proceeding, the insurer must provide the director and the worker or the worker's attorney all documents pertaining to the claim which include, but are not limited to the complete medical record and all official actions and notices on the claim.
- (4) The request for reconsideration and all other information submitted to the director by any party during the reconsideration process must be copied to all interested parties. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in the information not being included as part of the record on reconsideration. The director may assist a worker in meeting this requirement.
- (5) The director will issue an order rescinding a Notice of Closure when the director finds, upon reconsideration:
 - (a) The claim was closed prematurely because the worker's accepted condition(s) was not medically stationary and the claim did not qualify for closure under ORS 656.268(1)(a); or

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(b) The claim was not closed according to the requirements of these rules and ORS 656.268(1)(b) or (c).

(6) When a worker has requested and cashed a lump sum payment, under ORS 656.230, of an award granted by a Notice of Closure, the director will not consider the adequacy of that award in a reconsideration proceeding.

(7) When a new condition is accepted after a prior claim closure, and the newly accepted condition is subsequently closed, the director and the parties may mutually agree to consolidate requests for review of the closures into one reconsideration proceeding, provided the director has jurisdiction and neither of the closures have become final by operation of law.

(8) The reconsideration order will address issues raised by the parties and will address compensation as follows:

(a) Compensation reduced in a reconsideration order will be "in lieu of" any compensation awarded by the Notice of Closure.

(b) Additional compensation awarded in a reconsideration order will be "in addition to" any compensation awarded by the Notice of Closure. The reconsideration order may award total compensation due less any compensation previously ordered.

(c) Any compensation affirmed in a reconsideration order will be so stated.

(d) The dollar rate per degree of disability will be listed if appropriate based on the date of injury or an explanation of the computation method used, including wage, percent of loss of the whole person, and other pertinent factors.

(9) A copy of the reconsideration order will be sent to the worker, employer(s), insurer(s), worker's attorney if the worker is represented, and the insurer's attorney(s), if the insurer is represented.

(10) When a party discovers after the reconsideration order has been issued and before the order on reconsideration has become final by operation of law, that additional documents were not provided by the opposing party in accordance with this rule, the Order on Reconsideration may be abated and withdrawn to give the party an opportunity to respond to the new information.

Stat. Auth.: ORS 656.726, and 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313

Stats. Implemented: ORS 656.268(6), and 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313

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Amended 2/17/04 as WCD Admin. Order 04-052, eff. 2/29/04; Amended 10/26/04 as WCD Admin. Order 04-062, eff. 1/1/05

436-030-0145 Reconsideration Time Frames and Postponements

(1) Statutory time frames for appealing a Notice of Closure are:

(a) For claims with a medically stationary date prior to June 7, 1995, the appeal period is 180 days from the claim closure. The time required to complete the reconsideration proceeding pursuant to this rule must not be included in the 180 days from the mailing date of the Notice of Closure to request a hearing.

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(A) The 180-day time limit will be tolled upon receipt of the request for reconsideration from the mailing date of the request for reconsideration until the reconsideration request is either dismissed or an Order on Reconsideration is issued.

(B) The 180-day time limit will not be tolled when a request for reconsideration is withdrawn under OAR 436-030-0185.

(b) For claims with a medically stationary date, or date the claim statutorily qualifies for closure, on or after June 7, 1995, a request for reconsideration must be mailed within 60 days of the mailing date of the Notice of Closure. A request for hearing must be made within 30 days of the mailing date of the Order on Reconsideration.

(c) For claims closed on or after January 1, 2004, the insurer's request for reconsideration is limited to the findings used to rate impairment and must be mailed within seven days of the mailing date of the Notice of Closure.

(2) The reconsideration proceeding begins upon:

(a) The director's receipt of the worker's request for reconsideration, if the insurer has not previously requested reconsideration consistent with subsection (1)(c) of this rule; or

(b) The 61st day after the closure of the claim, if the insurer has requested reconsideration consistent with subsection (1)(c) of this rule; unless the director receives, within the appeal time frames in section (1) of this rule, a request for reconsideration or a statement by the worker instructing the director to start the reconsideration proceeding.

(3) Fourteen days after the date the reconsideration proceeding begins, the reconsideration request and all other appropriate information submitted by the parties will become part of the record used in the reconsideration proceeding.

(a) Evidence received or issues raised subsequent to the 14 day deadline will be considered in the reconsideration proceeding to the extent practicable.

(b) Upon review of the record the director may request, in accordance with ORS 656.268(6), any additional information deemed necessary for the reconsideration and set appropriate time frames for response.

(c) Except as provided in section (5) and (6) of this rule, the director will either mail an Order on Reconsideration within 18 working days from the date the reconsideration proceeding begins or notify the parties that the reconsideration proceeding is postponed for not more than 60 additional days in accordance with the provisions of ORS 656.268(6).

(4) Medical arbiter panel requests must be received by the department within the 14 day time frame beginning on the date the reconsideration proceeding starts.

(5) When the director provides notice the worker failed to attend the medical arbiter examination without good cause or failed to cooperate with the arbiter examination and suspends benefits under ORS 656.268(7), the reconsideration proceeding will be postponed for up to 60 additional days from the date the director determines and provides notice, to allow completion of the arbiter process.

(6) When the reconsideration proceeding has been stayed, the director will notify the parties that it has been stayed for one of the following reasons:

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(a) To determine whether temporary rules amending “the standards” are required to properly rate the worker’s impairment, under ORS 656.726(4)(f);

(b) The parties consent to deferring the reconsideration proceeding, under ORS 656.268(7)(i)(B), when the medical arbiter examination is not medically appropriate because the worker’s medical condition is not stationary; or

(c) When a Claim Disposition Agreement (CDA) is filed with the Workers’ Compensation Board, the reconsideration proceeding is stayed until the CDA is either approved by a final order of the Board or the Board sets aside the disposition.

(7) If the director fails to mail an Order on Reconsideration or a Notice of Postponement under the time frames specified in ORS 656.268, the reconsideration request is automatically deemed denied. The parties may immediately thereafter proceed as though the director had issued an Order on Reconsideration affirming the Notice of Closure. Under section (1) of this rule, the counting of the 180-day time limit for requesting a hearing under former ORS 656.268(6)(b) will resume on the date after the director should have issued an Order on Reconsideration.

(8) Notwithstanding any other provision regarding the reconsideration proceeding, the director may extend nonstatutory time frames to allow the parties sufficient time to present evidence and address their issues and concerns.

Stat. Auth.: ORS 656.726, and 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313

Stats. Implemented: ORS 656.268 (ch. 429, OL 2003), 656.726, and 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313

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436-030-0155 Reconsideration Record

(1) The record for the reconsideration proceeding includes all documents and other material relied upon in issuing the Order on Reconsideration as well as any additional material submitted by the parties, but not considered in the reconsideration proceeding.

(a) The record is maintained in the Workers’ Compensation Division’s claim file and consists of all documents and material received and date stamped by the director prior to the issuance of the Order on Reconsideration, unless the document(s) is an exact duplicate of what is in the file then the director is not required to retain the duplicate document(s).

(b) The insurer or self-insured employer must not send billing information and duplicate documents to the department, unless specifically requested by the director.

(2) Except as noted in this section, the medical record submitted by the director for arbiter review will consist of all medical documents and medical material produced by the claim under reconsideration, provided the information is allowable under ORS 656.268.

(a) The director may not submit non-medical information, nursing notes, or physical therapy treatment notes to the arbiter unless:

(A) A party requests the director to submit those specific materials to the arbiter;

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(B) The party identifies and provides the director with specific dates of those materials requested to be submitted; and

(C) The materials otherwise meet the requirements of this rule.

(b) All medical documents and other medical materials not submitted by the director to the medical arbiter will be stamped in the lower right hand corner "not sent to arbiter".

(3) When any surveillance video[tape] obtained prior to closure has been submitted to physician(s) involved in the evaluation or treatment of the worker, it must be provided for arbiter review.

(a) Surveillance video provided for arbiter review must have been reviewed prior to claim closure by a physician involved in the evaluation or treatment of the worker.

(b) All written materials previously forwarded to physician(s) along with the surveillance video[tape], such as investigator field notes, summary or narrative reports, and cover letters, must also be submitted.

(c) Surveillance video[tape] must be labeled according to the date(s) and total time of the recording(s).

(4) When reconsideration is requested, the insurer is required to provide the director and the other parties with a copy of all documents contained in the record at claim closure. For cases involving a medical service provider who must meet criteria other than those of an attending physician or who practices under contract with a managed care organization, the insurer must provide documentation of the medical service provider's authority to act as an attending physician. Any information the director adds to the record, such as the medical arbiter report, will be copied to all parties. Responses of the parties to the medical arbiter report will be included in the record if received prior to completion of the reconsideration proceeding.

(5) Since all parties will have a complete copy of the record at reconsideration prior to the issuance of a reconsideration order, additional certified copies of the record will be made at a charge to the requesting party.

(6) When a hearing is scheduled following the appeal of a reconsideration order and the parties or the administrative law judge requests the director to provide the record at reconsideration, either the original claim file or a certified copy of the claim file will be delivered to the Hearings Division two days prior to the hearing. The original claim file must be returned to the director within two days after the hearing.

Stat. Auth.: ORS 656.726, and 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313

Stats. Implemented: ORS 656.268(6), and 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313

Hist: Filed 6/30/78 as WCD Admin. Order 8-1978, eff. 7/10/78; Amended 3/20/80 as WCD Admin. Order 4-1980, eff. 4/1/80

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Amended 11/13/00 as WCD Admin. Order 00-058, eff. 01/01/01; Amended 2/17/04 as WCD Admin. Order 04-052, eff. 2/29/04

Amended 10/26/04 as WCD Admin. Order 04-062, eff. 1/1/05; **Amended 12/5/05 as WCD Admin. Order 05-073, eff. 01/01/06**

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436-030-0165 Medical Arbiter Examination Process

(1) When a worker or insurer requests reconsideration and disagrees with the impairment findings used in rating the worker's disability at the time of claim closure, the director will refer the claim to a medical arbiter or panel of arbiters.

(a) When the director determines that sufficient medical information is not available to rate disability the director may refer the claim to a medical arbiter or panel of arbiters.

(b) The director will notify the parties within 18 working days from the date the reconsideration proceeding begins that a medical arbiter review will be scheduled.

(2) The director will select a medical arbiter physician or a panel of physicians in accordance with ORS 656.268(7)(d).

(a) Any party that objects to a physician on the basis that the physician is not qualified under ORS 656.005(12)(b) must notify the director prior to the examination of the specific objection. If the director determines that the physician is not qualified to be a medical arbiter on the specific case, an examination will be scheduled with a different physician. All costs related to the completion of the medical arbiter process in this rule must be paid by the insurer.

(b) When the worker resides outside the state of Oregon, a medical arbiter examination may be scheduled out-of-state with a physician who is licensed within that state to provide medical services in the same manner as required by ORS 656.268(7).

(c) Arbiters or panel members will not include any medical service providers whose examination or treatment is the subject of the review.

(3) When the director has determined a claim qualifies for medical arbiter deselection, a list of appropriate physicians will be faxed or sent by overnight mail to the parties.

(a) Each party may eliminate one physician from the list by crossing out the physician's name.

(b) The parties may agree to one physician from the list by responding in writing. The parties must also deselect one physician from the list in case the agreed upon physician is unavailable.

(c) All responses must be signed and received by the director within three business days. No further opportunity will be given for the parties to provide input regarding the arbiter deselection process once the three business day period has expired. No further attempts at deselection will be made when continuing the arbiter deselection process is not practical.

(4) The director will notify the parties of the time and place of the medical arbiter examination. This notice will also inform the worker that failure to attend the medical arbiter examination or to cooperate with the medical arbiter will result in suspension of all disability benefits effective on the date of the examination unless the worker establishes a "good cause" reason for missing the examination or for not cooperating with the arbiter. The appointment letter will instruct the worker to call the director within 24 hours after failing to attend the examination to provide any "good cause" reason for missing the exam.

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(a) Notice of the examination will be considered adequate notice if the appointment letter is mailed to the last known address of the worker and to the worker's attorney if the worker is represented.

(b) For the purposes of this rule, non-cooperation includes, but is not limited to, refusal to complete any reasonable action necessary to evaluate the worker's impairment. However, it does not include circumstances such as a worker's inability to carry out any part of the examination due to excessive pain or when the physician reports the findings as medically invalid.

(c) Failure of the worker to respond within the time frames outlined in statute for completion of the reconsideration proceeding may be considered a failure to establish "good cause."

(5) If a worker misses the medical arbiter examination, the director will determine whether or not there was a "good cause" reason for missing the examination.

(6) Upon determination that there was not a "good cause" reason for missing the examination, or that the worker failed to cooperate with the arbiter, the director will:

(a) Issue a notice to the worker that disability benefits are suspended and that the reconsideration proceeding is postponed up to an additional 60 days, and

(b) Reschedule an examination for the worker to complete the medical arbiter review within the additional 60-day postponement period.

(7) As addressed in the Order on Reconsideration, the suspension will be lifted if any of the following occurred during the additional 60-day postponement period:

(a) The worker established a "good cause" reason for missing or failing to cooperate with the examination;

(b) The request for reconsideration was withdrawn by the worker; or

(c) The worker attended and cooperated with a rescheduled arbiter examination.

(8) If none of the events which end the suspension under section (7) of this rule occurred prior to the expiration of the 60-day additional postponement, the director will complete the reconsideration proceeding under ORS 656.268(7) and the Order on Reconsideration will order the suspension of benefits to remain in effect.

(9) The medical arbiter or panel of medical arbiters must perform a record review or examine the worker as requested by the director and perform such tests as may be reasonable and necessary to establish the worker's impairment. The director will provide notice of the examination of the worker to all parties.

(a) The parties must submit any issues they wish the medical arbiter or panel of medical arbiters to address within 14 days after the date the reconsideration proceeding begins. The parties must not submit issues directly to the medical arbiter or panel of medical arbiters. The director will only submit issues appropriate to the reconsideration proceeding to the medical arbiter or panel of medical arbiters.

(b) The report of the medical arbiter or panel of medical arbiters must address all questions raised by the director.

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(c) The director will instruct the medical arbiter to provide copies of the arbiter report to the director, the worker or the worker's attorney, and the insurer(s) within five working days after completion of the arbiter review. The cost of providing copies of such additional reports must be reimbursed according to OAR 436-009-0070 and must be paid by the insurer.

(10) When the worker's medical condition is not stationary on reconsideration which may result in difficulties in obtaining findings of impairment by the arbiter, the director will, where appropriate, send a letter to the parties requesting consent to defer the reconsideration proceeding.

(a) If the parties agree to the deferral, the reconsideration proceeding will be deferred until the medical record reflects the worker's condition has stabilized sufficiently to allow for examination to obtain the impairment findings. The parties must notify the director when it is appropriate to schedule the medical arbiter examination and provide the necessary medical records when requested. Interim medical information that may be helpful to the director and the medical arbiter in assessing and describing the impairment due to the compensable condition(s) may be submitted at the time the parties notify the director that the medical arbiter exam can be scheduled. The director will determine whether the interim medical information is consistent with the provisions of ORS 656.268(6) and (7).

(b) If deferral is not appropriate, at the director's discretion either a medical arbiter examination or a medical arbiter record review may be obtained, or the director may issue an Order on Reconsideration based on the record available at claim closure and other evidence submitted in accordance with ORS 656.268(6).

(11) All costs related to record review, examinations, tests, and reports of the medical arbiter must be paid under OAR 436-009-0015, 436-009-0040, and 436-009-0070.

(12) When requested by the Hearings Division, the director may schedule a medical arbiter examination for a worker who has appealed a Notice of Closure rescinding permanent total disability benefits under ORS 656.206.

Stat. Auth.: ORS 656.726, 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313

Stats. Implemented: ORS 656.268, 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313, and chapter 349, Oregon Laws 2001

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Amended 8/23/95 as WCD Admin. Order 95-059, eff. 8/23/95 (temp); Amended 2/14/96 as WCD Admin. Order 96-052, eff. 2/17/96

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Amended 2/17/04 as WCD Admin. Order 04-052, eff. 2/29/04; Amended 10/26/04 as WCD Admin. Order 04-062, eff. 1/1/05

Amended 12/5/05 as WCD Admin. Order 05-073, eff. 01/01/06

436-030-0175 Fees and Penalties within the Reconsideration Proceeding

(1) An insurer failing to provide information or documentation as set forth in OAR 436-030-0135, 436-030-0145, 436-030-0155 and 436-030-0165 may be assessed civil penalties under OAR 436-030-0580. Failure to comply with the requirements set forth in OAR 436-030-0135, 436-030-0145, 436-030-0155, and 436-030-0165 may also be grounds for extending the reconsideration proceeding under ORS 656.268(6).

(2) If upon reconsideration of a Notice of Closure there is an increase of 25 percent or more in the amount of permanent disability compensation from that awarded by the Notice of Closure, and the worker is found to be at least 20 percent permanently disabled, the insurer will

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be ordered to pay the worker a penalty equal to 25 percent of the increased amount of permanent disability compensation. **Penalties will not be assessed** [i]if an increase in compensation results from **one of the following**:

(a) [t]The promulgation of a temporary emergency rule[, penalties will not be assessed.];

(b) New information is obtained through a medical arbiter examination, [F]for claims with medically stationary dates or statutory closure dates on or after June 7, 1995[, if the increase in compensation results from new information obtained through a medical arbiter examination, the penalty will not be assessed.]; **or**

(c) For claims closed on or after January 1, 2006, information that the insurer or self-insured employer demonstrates they could not reasonably have known at the time of claim closure.

(3) For the purpose of section (2) of this rule, a worker who receives a total sum of 64 degrees of scheduled or unscheduled disability or a combination thereof, will be found to be at least 20 percent disabled.

For example: A worker who receives 20 percent disability of a great toe (3.6 degrees) is not considered 20 percent permanently disabled because the great toe is only a portion of the whole person. A worker who is 100 percent permanently disabled is entitled to 320 degrees of disability. A worker who receives 64 degrees (20 percent of 320 degrees), whether scheduled, unscheduled or a combination thereof, will be considered the equivalent of at least 20 percent permanently disabled for the purposes of this rule.

(4) Attorney fees may only be authorized when a Request for Reconsideration is submitted by an attorney representing a worker or the attorney provides documentation of representation, and a valid signed retainer agreement has been filed with the director. The reconsideration order will order the insurer to pay the attorney 10 percent out of any additional compensation awarded but not more than the maximum attorney fee allowed in OAR 438-015-0040(1) and (2) and OAR 438-015-0045, effective February 1, 1999. "Additional compensation" includes an increase in a permanent or temporary disability award.

Stat. Auth.: ORS 656.726

Stats. Implemented: ORS 656.268

Hist: Filed 6/18/90 as WCD Admin. Order 7-1990, eff. 7/1/90, (temp.); Amended 12/10/90 as WCD Admin. Order 33-1990, eff. 12/26/90 Amended 8/20/91 as WCD Admin. Order 6-1991, eff. 9/01/91 (temp.); Amended 1/17/92 as WCD Admin. Order 5-1992, eff. 2/20/92 Amended and renumbered from OAR 436-030-0050, 11/18/94 as WCD Admin. Order 94-059, eff. 1/1/95 Amended 8/23/95 as WCD Admin. Order 95-059, eff. 8/23/95 (temp); Amended 2/14/96 as WCD Admin. Order 96-052, eff. 2/17/96 Amended 12/22/97 as WCD Admin. Order 97-065, eff. 1/15/98; Amended 4/28/99 as WCD Admin. Order 99-054, eff. 4/28/99 Amended 11/13/00 as WCD Admin. Order 00-058, eff. 01/01/01; Amended 2/17/04 as WCD Admin. Order 04-052, eff. 2/29/04 Amended 10/26/04 as WCD Admin. Order 04-062, eff. 1/1/05; **Amended 12/5/05 as WCD Admin. Order 05-073, eff. 01/01/05**

436-030-0185 Reconsideration: Settlements and Withdrawals

(1) Contested matters arising out of a claim closure may be resolved by mutual agreement of the parties at any time after the claim has been closed under ORS 656.268 but before that claim closure has become final by operation of law. If the parties have reached such an agreement prior to the completion of the reconsideration proceeding, the parties must submit the stipulation agreement to the director for approval as part of the reconsideration proceeding. The stipulation submitted for review at the reconsideration proceeding must:

(a) Address only issues that pertain to a claim closure and cannot include any issues of compensability;

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(b) List the body part(s) for which any award is made and recite all disability awarded in both degrees and percent of loss as appropriate based on date of injury when permanent partial disability is part of the stipulated agreement. In the event there is any inconsistency between the stated degrees and percent of loss awarded in any stipulated agreement for claims with dates of injury prior to January 1, 2005, the stated percent of loss will control.

(2) The director will review the stipulation and issue an order approving or denying the stipulation within 18 working days from the director's receipt of the stipulation. Stipulations approved by the director [are] **can not be appealed** [able].

(3) When the stipulated agreement does not expressly resolve all issues relating to the claim closure, the Order on Reconsideration will include the stipulation, as well as a substantial determination of all remaining issues. In these claims, the 18 working day time frame may be postponed in the same manner as any reconsideration proceeding.

(4) If the stipulation is not approved, the reconsideration proceeding will be postponed to allow the parties to:

(a) Address the disapproval, [and/]or

(b) Request that the director issue an Order on Reconsideration addressing the substantive issues.

(5) When the parties desire to enter into a stipulated agreement to resolve disputed issues relating to the claim closure but are unable to reach an agreement, the parties may request the assistance of the director to mediate an agreement.

(6) When the parties desire to enter into a stipulated agreement that addresses all matters being reconsidered as well as issues not before the reconsideration proceeding, and the parties do not want a reconsideration on the merits of the claim closure, they may advise the director of their resolution and request the director enter an Order on Reconsideration affirming the Notice of Closure. The request for an affirming order must be made prior to the date an Order on Reconsideration is issued and in accordance with the following procedure.

(a) A written request for an affirming reconsideration order must:

(A) Be made by certified mail;

(B) Be signed by both parties or their representatives;

(C) State that the parties waive their right to an arbiter review and that all matters subject to the mandatory reconsideration process have been resolved; and

(D) Be accompanied by a copy of the proposed stipulated agreement.

(b) After the affirming Order on Reconsideration has been issued, the parties will submit their stipulation to a referee of the Hearings Division, Workers' Compensation Board, for approval in accordance with the provisions of ORS 656.289 and the Board's rules of practice and procedure.

(c) An Order on Reconsideration issued under this rule is final and is subject to review under ORS 656.283.

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(d) This provision does not apply to Claims Disposition Agreements filed under ORS 656.236.

(7) A worker requesting a reconsideration may withdraw the request for reconsideration without agreement of the other parties only if:

(a) No additional information has been submitted by the other parties;

(b) No medical arbiter exam has occurred, and

(c) The insurer has not requested reconsideration under OAR 436-030-0145.

(8) Notwithstanding (7) above, if additional information has been submitted by the other party(ies), a medical arbiter exam has occurred or the insurer has requested reconsideration, the reconsideration request will not be dismissed unless all parties agree to the withdrawal.

(9) If the insurer has requested reconsideration, either the worker or the insurer may initiate the withdrawal request but both must agree to the withdrawal.

(10) The director will issue an order dismissing the reconsideration under section (7), (8), and (9) of this rule, when appropriate.

Stat. Auth.: ORS 656.726, and 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313

Stats. Implemented: ORS 656.268(6), and 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313

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Amended 10/26/04 as WCD Admin. Order 04-062, eff. 1/1/05; **Amended 12/5/05 as WCD Admin. Order 05-073, eff. 01/01/06**

436-030-0575 Audits

(1) Notices of Closure issued by insurers and supporting documentation including, but not limited to, the worksheet upon which the Notice of Closure is based, will be subject to periodic audit by the director. Supporting documentation and records must be maintained in accordance with OAR 436-050.

(2) The director reserves the right to visit the worksite to determine compliance with these rules.

(3) The insurer or self-insured employer is required to provide the director, within seven days of the director's request, any data the director identifies as necessary to determine the impact of legislative changes on permanent partial disability awards.

Stat. Auth.: ORS 656.268, ORS 656.726, and 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313

Stats. Implemented: ORS 656.268, ORS 656.455, ORS 656.726, ORS 656.750, and 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313

Hist: Filed 11/18/94 as WCD Admin. Order 94-059, eff. 1/1/95; Amended 11/13/00 as WCD Admin. Order 00-058, eff. 01/01/01
Amended 2/17/04 as WCD Admin. Order 04-052, eff. 2/29/04; **Amended 12/5/05 as WCD Admin. Order 05-073, eff. 01/01/06**

436-030-0580 Penalties and Sanctions

(1) Under ORS 656.745, the director or designee may assess a civil penalty against an employer or insurer who fails to comply with the **statutes**, rules, [and] **or** orders of the director regarding reports or other requirements necessary to carry out the purposes of the Workers' Compensation Law.

(2) An insurer or medical service provider failing to meet the requirements set forth in these rules may be assessed a civil penalty.

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(3) Under OAR 436-010-0340, the director may impose sanctions for any medical service provider where the insurer can provide sufficient documentation to substantiate lack of cooperation. The medical service provider will be sent a warning letter about the reporting requirements and possible penalties. Failure by the medical service provider to submit the requested information within the specified period may result in civil penalties.

(4) Sufficient documentation to substantiate lack of cooperation by the medical service provider includes:

- (a) Copies of letters to the medical service provider;
- (b) Memos to the claim file of follow-up phone calls [and/]or the lack of response;
- (c) Letters from the medical service provider indicating a lack of cooperation; or
- (d) Medical reports received by the insurer, after adequate instruction by the insurer or the director, which do not supply the requested information or which supply information that is not consistent with the Disability Rating Standards in OAR 436-035.

(5) In arriving at the amount of penalty, the director or designee may assess a penalty of up to \$2,000 for each violation or \$10,000 in the aggregate for all violations in any three-month period.

Stat. Auth.: ORS 656.268, ORS 656.726, 1995 OR Laws Chapter 332, and 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313

Stats. Implemented: ORS 656.268, ORS 656.726, ORS 656.745, 1995 OR Laws Chapter 332, and 1999 OR Laws Chapter 313

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