
Commerce & Labor Committee

HB 1797

Brief Description: Regarding industrial insurance hearing loss claims.

Sponsors: Representatives Chandler, Holmquist, Condotta, Crouse, Schoesler, Ahern, Sehlin, Bailey and Woods.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Modifies the statute of limitation applicable to hearing loss claims due to occupational noise exposure.

Hearing Date: 2/18/03

Staff: Jill Reinmuth (786-7134).

Background:

Under the Industrial Insurance Act (Act), workers who, in the course of employment, are injured or suffer disability from an occupational disease receive certain benefits. Claims for industrial injuries and occupational diseases must be filed within specific timeframes. For an industrial injury, the claim must be filed within one year after the day the injury occurred. For an occupational disease, the claim must be filed within two years of the date the worker is advised by a physician, in writing, of the existence of the disease and the right to file a claim for benefits. The physician must file the notice with the Department, and the Department must send copies of the notice to the worker and any self-insurer.

Summary of Bill:

The statute of limitation applicable to hearing loss claims due to occupational noise exposure is modified. The claim must be filed within two years of the date of the worker's last injurious exposure to occupational noise in covered employment, or the effective date of the act, whichever is later. If the claim is untimely, the worker may receive medical aid benefits (e.g., hearing aids), but not permanent partial disability awards and other types of compensation.

Rules Authority: The bill authorizes the Department of Labor and Industries to adopt rules to implement the law setting time limits for filing claims for occupational disease.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 11, 2003.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.