

§ 725.309

20 CFR Ch. VI (4-1-10 Edition)

filing has been enlarged for good cause shown.

(c) There shall be a rebuttable presumption that every claim for benefits is timely filed. However, except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, the time limits in this section are mandatory and may not be waived or tolled except upon a showing of extraordinary circumstances.

§ 725.309 Additional claims; effect of a prior denial of benefits.

(a) A claimant whose claim for benefits was previously approved under part B of title IV of the Act may file a claim for benefits under this part as provided in §§ 725.308(b) and 725.702.

(b) If a claimant files a claim under this part while another claim filed by the claimant under this part is still pending, the later claim shall be merged with the earlier claim for all purposes. For purposes of this section, a claim shall be considered pending if it has not yet been finally denied.

(c) If a claimant files a claim under this part within one year after the effective date of a final order denying a claim previously filed by the claimant under this part (see § 725.502(a)(2)), the later claim shall be considered a request for modification of the prior denial and shall be processed and adjudicated under § 725.310.

(d) If a claimant files a claim under this part more than one year after the effective date of a final order denying a claim previously filed by the claimant under this part (see § 725.502(a)(2)), the later claim shall be considered a subsequent claim for benefits. A subsequent claim shall be processed and adjudicated in accordance with the provisions of subparts E and F of this part, except that the claim shall be denied unless the claimant demonstrates that one of the applicable conditions of entitlement (see §§ 725.202(d) (miner), 725.212 (spouse), 725.218 (child), and 725.222 (parent, brother, or sister)) has changed since the date upon which the order denying the prior claim became final. The applicability of this paragraph may be waived by the operator or fund, as appropriate. The following additional rules shall apply to the adjudication of a subsequent claim:

(1) Any evidence submitted in connection with any prior claim shall be made a part of the record in the subsequent claim, provided that it was not excluded in the adjudication of the prior claim.

(2) For purposes of this section, the applicable conditions of entitlement shall be limited to those conditions upon which the prior denial was based. For example, if the claim was denied solely on the basis that the individual was not a miner, the subsequent claim must be denied unless the individual worked as a miner following the prior denial. Similarly, if the claim was denied because the miner did not meet one or more of the eligibility criteria contained in part 718 of this subchapter, the subsequent claim must be denied unless the miner meets at least one of the criteria that he or she did not meet previously.

(3) If the applicable condition(s) of entitlement relate to the miner's physical condition, the subsequent claim may be approved only if new evidence submitted in connection with the subsequent claim establishes at least one applicable condition of entitlement. A subsequent claim filed by a surviving spouse, child, parent, brother, or sister shall be denied unless the applicable conditions of entitlement in such claim include at least one condition unrelated to the miner's physical condition at the time of his death.

(4) If the claimant demonstrates a change in one of the applicable conditions of entitlement, no findings made in connection with the prior claim, except those based on a party's failure to contest an issue (see § 725.463), shall be binding on any party in the adjudication of the subsequent claim. However, any stipulation made by any party in connection with the prior claim shall be binding on that party in the adjudication of the subsequent claim.

(5) In any case in which a subsequent claim is awarded, no benefits may be paid for any period prior to the date upon which the order denying the prior claim became final.

(e) Notwithstanding any other provision of this part or part 727 of this subchapter (see § 725.4(d)), a person may exercise the right of review provided in paragraph (c) of § 727.103 at the same

time such person is pursuing an appeal of a previously denied part B claim under the law as it existed prior to March 1, 1978. If the part B claim is ultimately approved as a result of the appeal, the claimant must immediately notify the Secretary of Labor and, where appropriate, the coal mine operator, and all duplicate payments made under part C shall be considered an overpayment and arrangements shall be made to insure the repayment of such overpayments to the fund or an operator, as appropriate.

(f) In any case involving more than one claim filed by the same claimant, under no circumstances are duplicate benefits payable for concurrent periods of eligibility. Any duplicate benefits paid shall be subject to collection or offset under subpart H of this part.

§ 725.310 Modification of awards and denials.

(a) Upon his or her own initiative, or upon the request of any party on grounds of a change in conditions or because of a mistake in a determination of fact, the district director may, at any time before one year from the date of the last payment of benefits, or at any time before one year after the denial of a claim, reconsider the terms of an award or denial of benefits.

(b) Modification proceedings shall be conducted in accordance with the provisions of this part as appropriate, except that the claimant and the operator, or group of operators or the fund, as appropriate, shall each be entitled to submit no more than one additional chest X-ray interpretation, one additional pulmonary function test, one additional arterial blood gas study, and one additional medical report in support of its affirmative case along with such rebuttal evidence and additional statements as are authorized by paragraphs (a)(2)(ii) and (a)(3)(ii) of § 725.414. Modification proceedings shall not be initiated before an administrative law judge or the Benefits Review Board.

(c) At the conclusion of modification proceedings before the district director, the district director may issue a proposed decision and order (§ 725.418) or, if appropriate, deny the claim by reason of abandonment (§ 725.409). In any case in which the district director

has initiated modification proceedings on his own initiative to alter the terms of an award or denial of benefits issued by an administrative law judge, the district director shall, at the conclusion of modification proceedings, forward the claim for a hearing (§ 725.421). In any case forwarded for a hearing, the administrative law judge assigned to hear such case shall consider whether any additional evidence submitted by the parties demonstrates a change in condition and, regardless of whether the parties have submitted new evidence, whether the evidence of record demonstrates a mistake in a determination of fact.

(d) An order issued following the conclusion of modification proceedings may terminate, continue, reinstate, increase or decrease benefit payments or award benefits. Such order shall not affect any benefits previously paid, except that an order increasing the amount of benefits payable based on a finding of a mistake in a determination of fact may be made effective on the date from which benefits were determined payable by the terms of an earlier award. In the case of an award which is decreased, no payment made in excess of the decreased rate prior to the date upon which the party requested reconsideration under paragraph (a) of this section shall be subject to collection or offset under subpart H of this part, provided the claimant is without fault as defined by § 725.543. In the case of an award which is decreased following the initiation of modification by the district director, no payment made in excess of the decreased rate prior to the date upon which the district director initiated modification proceedings under paragraph (a) shall be subject to collection or offset under subpart H of this part, provided the claimant is without fault as defined by § 725.543. In the case of an award which has become final and is thereafter terminated, no payment made prior to the date upon which the party requested reconsideration under paragraph (a) shall be subject to collection or offset under subpart H of this part. In the case of an award which has become final and is thereafter terminated following the initiation of modification by the district director, no