

treatment benefits and vocational rehabilitation under the Act.

**§ 725.4 Applicability of other parts in this title.**

(a) Part 718. Part 718 of this subchapter, which contains the criteria and standards to be applied in determining whether a miner is or was totally disabled due to pneumoconiosis, or whether a miner died due to pneumoconiosis, shall be applicable to the determination of claims under this part. Claims filed after March 31, 1980, are subject to part 718 as promulgated by the Secretary in accordance with section 402(f)(1) of the Act on February 29, 1980 (see § 725.2(c)). The criteria contained in subpart C of part 727 of this subchapter are applicable in determining claims filed prior to April 1, 1980, under this part, and such criteria shall be applicable at all times with respect to claims filed under this part and under section 11 of the Black Lung Benefits Reform Act of 1977.

(b) *Parts 715, 717, and 720.* Pertinent and significant provisions of Parts 715, 717, and 720 of this subchapter (formerly contained in 20 CFR, parts 500 to end, edition revised as of April 1, 1978), which established the procedures for the filing, processing, and payment of claims filed under section 415 of the Act, are included within this part as appropriate.

(c) *Part 726.* Part 726 of this subchapter, which sets forth the obligations imposed upon a coal operator to insure or self-insure its liability for the payment of benefits to certain eligible claimants, is applicable to this part as appropriate.

(d) *Part 727.* Part 727 of this subchapter, which governs the review, adjudication and payment of pending and denied claims under section 435 of the Act, is applicable with respect to such claims. The criteria contained in subpart C of part 727 for determining a claimant's eligibility for benefits are applicable under this part with respect to all claims filed before April 1, 1980, and to all claims filed under this part and under section 11 of the Black Lung Benefits Reform Act of 1977. Because the part 727 regulations affect an increasingly smaller number of claims, however, the Department has discon-

tinued publication of the criteria in the Code of Federal Regulations. The part 727 criteria may be found at 43 FR 36818, Aug. 18, 1978 or 20 CFR, parts 500 to end, edition revised as of April 1, 1999.

(e) *Part 410.* Part 410 of this title, which sets forth provisions relating to a claim for black lung benefits under part B of title IV of the Act, is inapplicable to this part except as is provided in this part, or in part 718 of this subchapter.

**§ 725.101 Definition and use of terms.**

(a) *Definitions.* For purposes of this subchapter, except where the content clearly indicates otherwise, the following definitions apply:

(1) The *Act* means the Federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Act, Public Law 91-173, 83 Stat. 742, 30 U.S.C. 801-960, as amended by the Black Lung Benefits Act of 1972, the Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977, the Black Lung Benefits Reform Act of 1977, the Black Lung Benefits Revenue Act of 1977, the Black Lung Benefits Revenue Act of 1981, and the Black Lung Benefits Amendments of 1981.

(2) The *Longshoremen's Act* or LHWCA means the Longshoremen's and Harbor Workers' Compensation Act of March 4, 1927, c. 509, 44 Stat. 1424, 33 U.S.C. 901-950, as amended from time to time.

(3) The *Social Security Act* means the Social Security Act, Act of August 14, 1935, c. 531, 49 Stat. 620, 42 U.S.C. 301-431, as amended from time to time.

(4) *Administrative law judge* means a person qualified under 5 U.S.C. 3105 to conduct hearings and adjudicate claims for benefits filed pursuant to section 415 and part C of the Act. Until March 1, 1979, it shall also mean an individual appointed to conduct such hearings and adjudicate such claims under Public Law 94-504.

(5) *Beneficiary* means a miner or any surviving spouse, divorced spouse, child, parent, brother or sister, who is entitled to benefits under either section 415 or part C of title IV of the Act.

(6) *Benefits* means all money or other benefits paid or payable under section 415 or part C of title IV of the Act on account of disability or death due to pneumoconiosis, including augmented benefits (see § 725.520(c)). The term also

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includes any expenses related to the medical examination and testing authorized by the district director pursuant to § 725.406.

(7) *Benefits Review Board* or *Board* means the Benefits Review Board, U.S. Department of Labor, an appellate tribunal appointed by the Secretary of Labor pursuant to the provisions of section 21(b)(1) of the LHWCA. See parts 801 and 802 of this title.

(8) *Black Lung Disability Trust Fund* or the *fund* means the Black Lung Disability Trust Fund established by the Black Lung Benefits Revenue Act of 1977, as amended by the Black Lung Benefits Revenue Act of 1981, for the payment of certain claims adjudicated under this part (see subpart G of this part).

(9) *Chief Administrative Law Judge* means the Chief Administrative Law Judge of the Office of Administrative Law Judges, U.S. Department of Labor, 800 K Street, NW., suite 400, Washington, DC 20001-8002.

(10) *Claim* means a written assertion of entitlement to benefits under section 415 or part C of title IV of the Act, submitted in a form and manner authorized by the provisions of this subchapter.

(11) *Claimant* means an individual who files a claim for benefits under this part.

(12) *Coal mine* means an area of land and all structures, facilities, machinery, tools, equipment, shafts, slopes, tunnels, excavations and other property, real or personal, placed upon, under or above the surface of such land by any person, used in, or to be used in, or resulting from, the work of extracting in such area bituminous coal, lignite or anthracite from its natural deposits in the earth by any means or method, and in the work of preparing the coal so extracted, and includes custom coal preparation facilities.

(13) *Coal preparation* means the breaking, crushing, sizing, cleaning, washing, drying, mixing, storing and loading of bituminous coal, lignite or anthracite, and such other work of preparing coal as is usually done by the operator of a coal mine.

(14) *Department* means the United States Department of Labor.

(15) *Director* means the Director, OWCP, or his or her designee.

(16) *District Director* means a person appointed as provided in sections 39 and 40 of the LHWCA, or his or her designee, who is authorized to develop and adjudicate claims as provided in this subchapter (see § 725.350). The term District Director is substituted for the term Deputy Commissioner wherever that term appears in the regulations. This substitution is for administrative purposes only and in no way affects the power or authority of the position as established in the statute. Any action taken by a person under the authority of a district director will be considered the action of a deputy commissioner.

(17) *Division* or *DCMWC* means the Division of Coal Mine Workers' Compensation in the OWCP, United States Department of Labor.

(18) *Insurer* or *carrier* means any private company, corporation, mutual association, reciprocal or interinsurance exchange, or any other person or fund, including any State fund, authorized under the laws of a State to insure employers' liability under workers' compensation laws. The term also includes the Secretary of Labor in the exercise of his or her authority under section 433 of the Act.

(19) *Miner* or *coal miner* means any individual who works or has worked in or around a coal mine or coal preparation facility in the extraction or preparation of coal. The term also includes an individual who works or has worked in coal mine construction or transportation in or around a coal mine, to the extent such individual was exposed to coal mine dust as a result of such employment (see § 725.202). For purposes of this definition, the term does not include coke oven workers.

(20) *The Nation's coal mines* means all coal mines located in any State.

(21) *Office* or *OWCP* means the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs, United States Department of Labor.

(22) *Office of Administrative Law Judges* means the Office of Administrative Law Judges, U.S. Department of Labor.

(23) *Operator* means any owner, lessee, or other person who operates, controls or supervises a coal mine, including a prior or successor operator as defined in section 422 of the Act and certain transportation and construction employers (see subpart G of this part).

(24) *Person* means an individual, partnership, association, corporation, firm, subsidiary or parent of a corporation, or other organization or business entity.

(25) *Pneumoconiosis* means a chronic dust disease of the lung and its sequelae, including respiratory and pulmonary impairments, arising out of coal mine employment (see part 718 of this subchapter).

(26) *Responsible operator* means an operator which has been determined to be liable for the payment of benefits to a claimant for periods of eligibility after December 31, 1973, with respect to a claim filed under section 415 or part C of title IV of the Act or reviewed under section 435 of the Act.

(27) *Secretary* means the Secretary of Labor, United States Department of Labor, or a person, authorized by him or her to perform his or her functions under title IV of the Act.

(28) *State* includes any state of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, and prior to January 3, 1959, and August 21, 1959, respectively, the territories of Alaska and Hawaii.

(29) *Total disability* and *partial disability*, for purposes of this part, have the meaning given them as provided in part 718 of this subchapter.

(30) *Underground coal mine* means a coal mine in which the earth and other materials which lie above and around the natural deposit of coal (*i.e.*, overburden) are not removed in mining; including all land, structures, facilities, machinery, tools, equipment, shafts, slopes, tunnels, excavations and other property, real or personal, appurtenant thereto.

(31) A *workers' compensation law* means a law providing for payment of benefits to employees, and their dependents and survivors, for disability on account of injury, including occupational disease, or death, suffered in

connection with their employment. A payment funded wholly out of general revenues shall not be considered a payment under a workers' compensation law.

(32) *Year* means a period of one calendar year (365 days, or 366 days if one of the days is February 29), or partial periods totaling one year, during which the miner worked in or around a coal mine or mines for at least 125 "working days." A "working day" means any day or part of a day for which a miner received pay for work as a miner, but shall not include any day for which the miner received pay while on an approved absence, such as vacation or sick leave. In determining whether a miner worked for one year, any day for which the miner received pay while on an approved absence, such as vacation or sick leave, may be counted as part of the calendar year and as partial periods totaling one year.

(i) If the evidence establishes that the miner worked in or around coal mines at least 125 working days during a calendar year or partial periods totaling one year, then the miner has worked one year in coal mine employment for all purposes under the Act. If a miner worked fewer than 125 working days in a year, he or she has worked a fractional year based on the ratio of the actual number of days worked to 125. Proof that the miner worked more than 125 working days in a calendar year or partial periods totaling a year, shall not establish more than one year.

(ii) To the extent the evidence permits, the beginning and ending dates of all periods of coal mine employment shall be ascertained. The dates and length of employment may be established by any credible evidence including (but not limited to) company records, pension records, earnings statements, coworker affidavits, and sworn testimony. If the evidence establishes that the miner's employment lasted for a calendar year or partial periods totaling a 365-day period amounting to one year, it shall be presumed, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, that the miner spent at least 125 working days in such employment.

(iii) If the evidence is insufficient to establish the beginning and ending

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dates of the miner's coal mine employment, or the miner's employment lasted less than a calendar year, then the adjudication officer may use the following formula: divide the miner's yearly income from work as a miner by the coal mine industry's average daily earnings for that year, as reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). A copy of the BLS table shall be made a part of the record if the adjudication officer uses this method to establish the length of the miner's work history.

(iv) No periods of coal mine employment occurring outside the United States shall be considered in computing the miner's work history.

(b) *Statutory terms.* The definitions contained in this section shall not be construed in derogation of terms of the Act.

(c) *Dependents and survivors.* Dependents and survivors are those persons described in subpart B of this part.

[65 FR 80054, Dec. 20, 2000, as amended at 77 FR 37286, June 21, 2012]

### § 725.102 Disclosure of program information.

(a) All reports, records, or other documents filed with the OWCP with respect to claims are the records of the OWCP. The Director or his or her designee shall be the official custodian of those records maintained by the OWCP at its national office. The District Director shall be the official custodian of those records maintained at a district office.

(b) The official custodian of any record sought to be inspected shall permit or deny inspection in accordance with the Department of Labor's regulations pertaining thereto (see 29 CFR Part 70). The original record in any such case shall not be removed from the Office of the custodian for such inspection. The custodian may, in his or her discretion, deny inspection of any record or part thereof which is of a character specified in 5 U.S.C. 552(b) if in his or her opinion such inspection may result in damage, harm, or harassment to the beneficiary or to any other person. For special provisions concerning release of information regarding injured employees undergoing vocational rehabilitation, see § 702.508 of this chapter.

(c) Any person may request copies of records he or she has been permitted to inspect. Such requests shall be addressed to the official custodian of the records sought to be copied. The official custodian shall provide the requested copies under the terms and conditions specified in the Department of Labor's regulations relating thereto (see 29 CFR Part 70).

(d) Any party to a claim (§ 725.360) or his or her duly authorized representative shall be permitted upon request to inspect the file which has been compiled in connection with such claim. Any party to a claim or representative of such party shall upon request be provided with a copy of any or all material contained in such claim file. A request for information by a party or representative made under this paragraph shall be answered within a reasonable time after receipt by the Office. Internal documents prepared by the district director which do not constitute evidence of a fact which must be established in connection with a claim shall not be routinely provided or presented for inspection in accordance with a request made under this paragraph.

### § 725.103 Burden of proof.

Except as otherwise provided in this part and part 718, the burden of proving a fact alleged in connection with any provision shall rest with the party making such allegation.

## Subpart B—Persons Entitled to Benefits, Conditions, and Duration of Entitlement

### § 725.201 Who is entitled to benefits; contents of this subpart.

(a) Section 415 and part C of the Act provide for the payment of periodic benefits in accordance with this part to:

(1) A miner (see § 725.202) who is determined to be totally disabled due to pneumoconiosis; or

(2) The surviving spouse or surviving divorced spouse or, where neither exists, the child of a deceased miner, where the deceased miner:

(i) Was receiving benefits under section 415 or part C of title IV of the Act as a result of a claim filed prior to January 1, 1982; or