
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO CONTINUED TEMPORARY TOTAL DISABILITY BENEFITS TO
INJURED EMPLOYEES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that improper termination
2 of ongoing temporary total disability benefits is a source of
3 much disruption and vexation to injured workers and those
4 medical and vocational providers who seek to restore them to
5 gainful employment. The legislature finds that premature
6 termination of such benefits causes both economic and
7 psychological hardship to the injured worker and interferes with
8 attempts to help them attain full medical and vocational
9 recovery. However, the adverse consequences of the cessation of
10 compensation may be cured simply by requiring prior review of
11 the termination action by the director of labor and industrial
12 relations.

13 The purpose of this Act is to revise the procedure for
14 terminating temporary total disability benefits to reduce the
15 adverse consequences for injured workers when these benefits are
16 improperly terminated.



1 SECTION 2. Section 386-31, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
2 amended by amending subsection (b) to read as follows:

3 "(b) Temporary total disability. Where a work injury
4 causes total disability not determined to be permanent in
5 character, the employer, for the duration of the disability, but
6 not including the first three calendar days thereof, shall pay
7 the injured employee a weekly benefit at the rate of sixty-six
8 and two-thirds per cent of the employee's average weekly wages,
9 subject to the limitations on weekly benefit rates prescribed in
10 subsection (a), or if the employee's average weekly wages are
11 less than the minimum weekly benefit rate prescribed in
12 subsection (a), at the rate of one hundred per cent of the
13 employee's average weekly wages.

14 If an employee is unable to complete a regular daily work
15 shift due to a work injury, the employee shall be deemed totally
16 disabled for work for that day.

17 The employer shall pay temporary total disability benefits
18 promptly as they accrue to the person entitled [~~thereto~~] to the
19 benefits without waiting for a decision from the director,
20 unless this right is controverted by the employer in the
21 employer's initial report of industrial injury. The first
22 payment of benefits shall become due and shall be paid no later



1 than on the tenth day after the employer has been notified of
2 the occurrence of the total disability, and thereafter the
3 benefits due shall be paid weekly except as otherwise authorized
4 pursuant to section 386-53.

5 The payment of these benefits shall [~~only~~] be terminated
6 only upon order of the director or if the employee's treating
7 physician determines that the employee is able to resume work
8 and the employer has made a bona fide offer of work within the
9 employee's medical restrictions. When the employer is of the
10 opinion that temporary total disability benefits should be
11 terminated [~~because the injured employee is able to resume~~
12 ~~work,~~] the employer shall notify the employee and the director
13 in writing of an intent to terminate the benefits at least two
14 weeks prior to the date when the last payment is to be made.
15 The notice shall give the reason for stopping payment and shall
16 inform the employee that the employee may make a written request
17 to the director for a hearing if the employee disagrees with the
18 employer. Upon receipt of the request from the employee, the
19 director shall conduct a hearing as expeditiously as possible
20 and render a prompt decision as specified in section 386-86[~~-~~]
21 indicating if temporary total disability benefits should have
22 been discontinued and if so designate the date after which



1 temporary total disability benefits should have been
2 discontinued. The employer may request in writing to the
3 director that the director issue a credit for the amount of
4 temporary total disability benefits paid by the employer after
5 the date which the director had determined should have been the
6 last date of payment. If the employee is unable to perform
7 light work, if offered, temporary total disability benefits
8 shall not be discontinued based solely on the inability to
9 perform or continue to perform light work.

10 An employer or insurance carrier [~~who~~] that fails to comply
11 with this section shall pay not more than \$2,500 into the
12 special compensation fund upon the order of the director, in
13 addition to other penalties prescribed in section 386-92.

14 (1) If the director determines, based upon a review of
15 medical records and reports and other relevant
16 documentary evidence, that an injured employee's
17 medical condition may be stabilized and the employee
18 is unable to return to the employee's regular job, the
19 director shall issue a preliminary decision regarding
20 the claimant's entitlement and limitation to benefits
21 and rights under Hawaii's workers' compensation laws.

22 The preliminary decision shall be sent to the affected



1 employee and the employee's designated representative
2 and the employer and the employer's designated
3 representative and shall state that any party
4 disagreeing with the director's preliminary findings
5 of medical stabilization and work limitations may
6 request a hearing within twenty days of the date of
7 the decision. The director shall be available to
8 answer any questions during the twenty-day period from
9 the injured employee and affected employer. If
10 neither party requests a hearing challenging the
11 director's finding the determination shall be deemed
12 accepted and binding upon the parties. In any case
13 where a hearing is held on the preliminary findings,
14 any person aggrieved by the director's decision and
15 order may appeal under section 386-87.

16 A preliminary decision of the director shall
17 inform the injured employee and the employer of the
18 following responsibilities, benefits, and limitations
19 on vocational rehabilitation benefits that are
20 designed to facilitate the injured employee's early
21 return to suitable gainful employment:



- 1 (A) That the injured employee may invoke the
2 employee's rights under section 378-2, 378-32, or
3 386-142, or all of them, in the event of unlawful
4 discrimination or other unlawful employment
5 practice by the employer; and
- 6 (B) That after termination of temporary total
7 disability benefits, an injured employee who
8 resumes work may be entitled to permanent partial
9 disability benefits, which if awarded, shall be
10 paid regardless of the earnings or employment
11 status of the disabled employee at the time.
- 12 (2) If the rehabilitation unit determines that an injured
13 employee is not a feasible candidate for
14 rehabilitation and that the employee is unable to
15 resume the employee's regular job, it shall promptly
16 certify the same to the director. Soon thereafter,
17 the director shall conduct a hearing to determine
18 whether the injured employee remains temporarily
19 totally disabled, or whether the employee is
20 permanently partially disabled, or permanently totally
21 disabled."



1 SECTION 3. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
2 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

3 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on January 1, 2008.



Report Title:

Workers' Compensation; Temporary Total Disability Benefits

Description:

Clarifies that temporary total disability benefits shall be terminated only upon order of the Director of Labor and Industrial Relations or if the employee's treating physician determines that the employee is able to resume work and the employer has made a bona fide offer of work within the employee's medical restrictions. Allows the employer to request that the Director issue a credit for the amount of temporary total disability benefits paid by the employer after the date which the Director had determined should have been the last date of payment. (HB854 HD1)

