

4123.29 Duties of administrator.

(A) The administrator of workers' compensation, subject to the approval of the bureau of workers' compensation board of directors, shall do all of the following:

(1) Classify occupations or industries with respect to their degree of hazard and determine the risks of the different classes according to the categories the national council on compensation insurance establishes that are applicable to employers in this state;

(2)(a) Fix the rates of premium of the risks of the classes based upon the total payroll in each of the classes of occupation or industry sufficiently large to provide a fund for the compensation provided for in this chapter and to maintain a state insurance fund from year to year. The administrator shall set the rates at a level that assures the solvency of the fund. Where the payroll cannot be obtained or, in the opinion of the administrator, is not an adequate measure for determining the premium to be paid for the degree of hazard, the administrator may determine the rates of premium upon such other basis, consistent with insurance principles, as is equitable in view of the degree of hazard, and whenever in this chapter reference is made to payroll or expenditure of wages with reference to fixing premiums, the reference shall be construed to have been made also to such other basis for fixing the rates of premium as the administrator may determine under this section.

(b) If an employer elects to obtain other-states' coverage pursuant to section 4123.292 of the Revised Code through either the administrator, if the administrator elects to offer such coverage, or an other-states' insurer, calculate the employer's premium for the state insurance fund in the same manner as otherwise required under division (A) of this section and section 4123.34 of the Revised Code, except that when the administrator determines the expenditure of wages, payroll, or both upon which to base the employer's premium, the administrator shall use only the expenditure of wages, payroll, or both attributable to the labor performed and services provided by that employer's employees when those employees performed labor and provided services in this state only and to which the other-states' coverage does not apply.

(c) The administrator in setting or revising rates shall furnish to employers an adequate explanation of the basis for the rates set.

(3) Develop and make available to employers who are paying premiums to the state insurance fund alternative premium plans. Alternative premium plans shall include retrospective rating plans. The administrator may make available plans under which an advanced deposit may be applied against a specified deductible amount per claim.

(4)(a) Offer to insure the obligations of employers under this chapter under a plan that groups, for rating purposes, employers, and pools the risk of the employers within the group provided that the employers meet all of the following conditions:

(i) All of the employers within the group are members of an organization that has been in existence for at least two years prior to the date of application for group coverage;

(ii) The organization was formed for purposes other than that of obtaining group workers' compensation under this division;

(iii) The employers' business in the organization is substantially similar such that the risks which are grouped are substantially homogeneous;

(iv) The group of employers consists of at least one hundred members or the aggregate workers' compensation premiums of the members, as determined by the administrator, are expected to exceed one hundred fifty thousand dollars during the coverage period;

(v) The formation and operation of the group program in the organization will substantially improve accident prevention and claims handling for the employers in the group;

(vi) Each employer seeking to enroll in a group for workers' compensation coverage has an industrial insurance account in good standing with the bureau of workers' compensation such that at the time the agreement is processed no outstanding premiums, penalties, or assessments are due from any of the employers.

(b) If an organization sponsors more than one employer group to participate in group plans established under this section, that organization may submit a single application that supplies all of the information necessary for each group of employers that the organization wishes to sponsor.

(c) In providing employer group plans under division (A)(4) of this section, the administrator shall consider an employer group as a single employing entity for purposes of group rating. No employer may be a member of more than one group for the purpose of obtaining workers' compensation coverage under this division.

(d) At the time the administrator revises premium rates pursuant to this section and section 4123.34 of the Revised Code, if the premium rate of an employer who participates in a group plan established under this section changes from the rate established for the previous year, the administrator, in addition to sending the invoice with the rate revision to that employer, shall send a copy of that invoice to the third-party administrator that administers the group plan for that employer's group.

(e) In providing employer group plans under division (A)(4) of this section, the administrator shall establish a program designed to mitigate the impact of a significant claim that would come into the experience of a private, state fund group-rated employer for the first time and be a contributing factor in that employer being excluded from a group-rated plan. The administrator shall establish eligibility criteria and requirements that such

employers must satisfy in order to participate in this program. For purposes of this program, the administrator shall establish a discount on premium rates applicable to employers who qualify for the program.

(f) In no event shall division (A)(4) of this section be construed as granting to an employer status as a self-insuring employer.

(g) The administrator shall develop classifications of occupations or industries that are sufficiently distinct so as not to group employers in classifications that unfairly represent the risks of employment with the employer.

(5) Generally promote employer participation in the state insurance fund through the regular dissemination of information to all classes of employers describing the advantages and benefits of opting to make premium payments to the fund. To that end, the administrator shall regularly make employers aware of the various workers' compensation premium packages developed and offered pursuant to this section.

(6) Make available to every employer who is paying premiums to the state insurance fund a program whereby the employer or the employer's agent pays to the claimant or on behalf of the claimant the first fifteen thousand dollars of a compensable workers' compensation medical-only claim filed by that claimant that is related to the same injury or occupational disease. No formal application is required; however, an employer must elect to participate by telephoning the bureau after July 1, 1995. Once an employer has elected to participate in the program, the employer will be responsible for all bills in all medical-only claims with a date of injury the same or later than the election date, unless the employer notifies the bureau within fourteen days of receipt of the notification of a claim being filed that it does not wish to pay the bills in that claim, or the employer notifies the bureau that the fifteen thousand dollar maximum has been paid, or the employer notifies the bureau of the last day of service on which it will be responsible for the bills in a particular medical-only claim. If an employer elects to enter the program, the administrator shall not reimburse the employer for such amounts paid and shall not charge the first fifteen thousand dollars of any medical-only claim paid by an employer to the employer's experience or otherwise use it in merit rating or determining the risks of any employer for the purpose of payment of premiums under this chapter. A certified health care provider shall extend to an employer who participates in this program the same rates for services rendered to an employee of that employer as the provider bills the administrator for the same type of medical claim processed by the bureau and shall not charge, assess, or otherwise attempt to collect from an employee any amount for covered services or supplies that is in excess of that rate. If an employer elects to enter the program and the employer fails to pay a bill for a medical-only claim included in the program, the employer shall be liable for that bill and the employee for whom the employer failed to pay the bill shall not be liable for that bill. The administrator shall adopt rules to implement and administer division (A)(6) of this section. Upon written request from the bureau, the employer shall provide documentation to the bureau of all medical-only bills that they are paying directly. Such requests from the bureau may not be made more frequently than on a semiannual basis. Failure to provide such documentation to the bureau within thirty days of receipt of the request may result in the employer's forfeiture of participation in the program for such injury. The provisions of this section

shall not apply to claims in which an employer with knowledge of a claimed compensable injury or occupational disease, has paid wages in lieu of compensation or total disability.

(B) The administrator, with the advice and consent of the board, by rule, may do both of the following:

(1) Grant an employer who makes the employer's semiannual premium payment at least one month prior to the last day on which the payment may be made without penalty, a discount as the administrator fixes from time to time;

(2) Levy a minimum annual administrative charge upon risks where semiannual premium reports develop a charge less than the administrator considers adequate to offset administrative costs of processing.

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