AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY JUNE 29, 2009

AMENDED IN SENATE APRIL 27, 2009

AMENDED IN SENATE APRIL 20, 2009

SENATE BILL No. 313

Introduced by Senator DeSaulnier

February 25, 2009

An act to amend Sections 62.5 and 3722 of the Labor Code, relating to workers' compensation.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 313, as amended, DeSaulnier. Workers' compensation: penalty assessments.

Existing law requires every employer, except the state, to secure the payment of workers' compensation. Existing law requires the Director of Industrial Relations to issue and serve on any employer that has failed to secure the payment of workers' compensation a stop order prohibiting the use of employee labor. Under existing law, at the time the stop order is issued and served, the director is required to issue and serve a penalty assessment order requiring the uninsured employer to pay to the director, for deposit into the State Treasury to the credit of the continuously appropriated Uninsured Employers Benefits Trust Fund, the sum of $1,000 per employee employed at the time the order is issued and served. Existing law provides that in lieu of the aforementioned penalty assessment, at any time that the director determines that an employer has been uninsured for a period in excess of one week during the calendar year preceding the director's determination, the director may issue and serve a penalty assessment order that requires the uninsured employer to pay to the director, for deposit into the State Treasury to the credit of the Uninsured Employers Benefits Trust Fund, the greater of (1) twice the amount the employer would have paid in workers' compensation premiums during the period the employer was uninsured or (2) the sum of $1,000 per employee employed during the period the employer was uninsured.

This bill would increase the penalty assessment to $1,500. The bill would specifically provide that any additional moneys collected as a result of the increase in the penalty assessments pursuant to the bill shall be deposited in the State Treasury to the credit of the Uninsured Employers Benefits Trust Fund, but that the moneys be available only upon appropriation by the Legislature.

The bill would also clarify that the director ~~may~~ *is required to* issue and serve either of the above mentioned penalty assessments.

Existing law provides that if the employer is currently insured, or becomes insured during the period during which the above penalty is being determined, the amount an employer would have paid in workers' compensation premiums shall be calculated by prorating the current premium for the number of weeks the employer was uninsured.

Existing law provides that if the employer is uninsured at the time the above penalty is being determined, the amount an employer would have paid in workers' compensation premiums shall be calculated by applying the weekly premium per employee on file with the Insurance Commissioner to the number of weeks the employer was uninsured. Existing law provides that each employee of the uninsured employer shall be assumed to be assigned to the governing classification for that employer as determined by the director after consultation with the Insurance Commissioner. Existing law provides that if the employer contends that the assignment of the governing classification is incorrect, or that any employee should be assigned to a different classification, the employer has the burden to prove that the different classification should be utilized.

This bill would require that, if the employer is currently insured, or becomes insured during the period during which the above penalty is being determined, the amount an employer would have paid in workers' compensation premiums shall be calculated by prorating the current premium for the number of weeks the employer was uninsured within the 3-year period immediately prior to the date the above penalty assessment is issued.

This bill would also provide that if the employer is uninsured at the time the above penalty is being determined, the amount an employer would have paid in workers' compensation premiums shall be the product of the employer's payroll for all periods of time the employer was uninsured within the 3-year period immediately prior to the date the above penalty assessment is issued multiplied by a rate determined in accordance with ~~regulation~~ *regulation* that may be adopted by the Labor Commissioner or, if none has been adopted, the ~~average insurer rate per $100 of payroll as reported in the most recent summary published by the rating organization designated by the Insurance Commissioner~~ *proper classification code or codes from the Workers' Compensation Insurance Rating Bureau that apply to the employer, or, if out of business, from other information from the director regarding the employer's operations*. The bill would delete the provisions regarding the governing classification to which each employee of an uninsured employer shall be assumed to be assigned.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes. State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 62.5 of the Labor Code is amended to read:

62.5. (a) (1) The Workers' Compensation Administration Revolving Fund is hereby created as a special account in the State Treasury. Money in the fund may be expended by the department, upon appropriation by the Legislature, for all of the following purposes, and may not be used or borrowed for any other purpose:

(A) For the administration of the workers' compensation program set forth in this division and Division 4 (commencing with Section 3200), other than the activities financed pursuant to Section 3702.5.

(B) For the Return-to-Work Program set forth in Section 139.48.

(C) For the enforcement of the insurance coverage program established and maintained by the Labor Commissioner pursuant to Section 90.3.

(2) The fund shall consist of surcharges made pursuant to subdivision (e).

(b) (1) The Uninsured Employers Benefits Trust Fund is hereby created as a special trust fund account in the State Treasury, of which the director is trustee, and its sources of funds are as provided in subdivision (e). Notwithstanding Section 13340 of the

Government Code, the fund is continuously appropriated for the payment of nonadministrative expenses of the workers' compensation program for workers injured while employed by uninsured employers in accordance with Article 2 (commencing with Section 3710) of Chapter 4 of Part 1 of Division 4, and shall not be used for any other purpose. All moneys collected shall be retained in the trust fund until paid as benefits to workers injured while employed by uninsured employers. Nonadministrative expenses include audits and reports of services prepared pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 3716.1. The surcharge amount for this fund shall be stated separately.

(2) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, all references to the Uninsured Employers Fund shall mean the Uninsured Employers Benefits Trust Fund.

(3) Notwithstanding paragraph (1), in the event that budgetary restrictions or impasse prevent the timely payment of administrative expenses from the Workers' Compensation Administration Revolving Fund, those expenses shall be advanced from the Uninsured Employers Benefits Trust Fund. Expense advances made pursuant to this paragraph shall be reimbursed in full to the Uninsured Employers Benefits Trust Fund upon enactment of the annual Budget Act.

(4) Any moneys from penalties collected pursuant to Section 3722 as a result of the insurance coverage program established under Section 90.3 shall be deposited in the State Treasury to the credit of the Workers' Compensation Administration Revolving Fund created under Section 62.5, to cover expenses incurred by the director under the insurance coverage program. The amount of any penalties in excess of payment of administrative expenses incurred by the director for the insurance coverage program established under Section 90.3 shall be deposited in the State Treasury to the credit of the Uninsured Employers Benefits Trust Fund for nonadministrative expenses, as prescribed in paragraph (1), and notwithstanding paragraph (1), shall only be available upon appropriation by the Legislature.

(5) Any additional moneys collected from penalties pursuant to Section 3722 as a result of the increase of those penalties pursuant to the amendments to Section 3722 made by the act that added this paragraph shall be deposited in the State Treasury to the credit of the Uninsured Employers Benefits Trust Fund for

nonadministrative expenses, as prescribed in paragraph (1), and notwithstanding paragraph (1), shall be available only upon appropriation by the Legislature.

(c) (1) The Subsequent Injuries Benefits Trust Fund is hereby created as a special trust fund account in the State Treasury, of which the director is trustee, and its sources of funds are as provided in subdivision (e). Notwithstanding Section 13340 of the Government Code, the fund is continuously appropriated for the nonadministrative expenses of the workers' compensation program for workers who have suffered serious injury and who are suffering from previous and serious permanent disabilities or physical impairments, in accordance with Article 5 (commencing with Section 4751) of Chapter 2 of Part 2 of Division 4, and Section 4 of Article XIV of the California Constitution, and shall not be used for any other purpose. All moneys collected shall be retained in the trust fund until paid as benefits to workers who have suffered serious injury and who are suffering from previous and serious permanent disabilities or physical impairments. Nonadministrative expenses include audits and reports of services pursuant to subdivision (c) of Section 4755. The surcharge amount for this fund shall be stated separately.

(2) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, all references to the Subsequent Injuries Fund shall mean the Subsequent Injuries Benefits Trust Fund.

(3) Notwithstanding paragraph (1), in the event that budgetary restrictions or impasse prevent the timely payment of administrative expenses from the Workers' Compensation Administration Revolving Fund, those expenses shall be advanced from the Subsequent Injuries Benefits Trust Fund. Expense advances made pursuant to this paragraph shall be reimbursed in full to the Subsequent Injuries Benefits Trust Fund upon enactment of the annual Budget Act.

(d) The Occupational Safety and Health Fund is hereby created as a special account in the State Treasury. Moneys in the account may be expended by the department, upon appropriation by the Legislature, for support of the Division of Occupational Safety and Health, the Occupational Safety and Health Standards Board, and the Occupational Safety and Health Appeals Board, and the activities these entities perform as set forth in this division, and Division 5 (commencing with Section 6300).

(e) (1) Separate surcharges shall be levied by the director upon all employers, as defined in Section 3300, for purposes of deposit in the Workers' Compensation Administration Revolving Fund, the Uninsured Employers Benefits Trust Fund, the Subsequent Injuries Benefits Trust Fund, and the Occupational Safety and Health Fund. The total amount of the surcharges shall be allocated between self-insured employers and insured employers in proportion to payroll respectively paid in the most recent year for which payroll information is available. The director shall adopt reasonable regulations governing the manner of collection of the surcharges. The regulations shall require the surcharges to be paid by self-insurers to be expressed as a percentage of indemnity paid during the most recent year for which information is available, and the surcharges to be paid by insured employers to be expressed as a percentage of premium. In no event shall the surcharges paid by insured employers be considered a premium for computation of a gross premium tax or agents' commission. In no event shall the total amount of the surcharges paid by insured and self-insured employers exceed the amounts reasonably necessary to carry out the purposes of this section.

(2) The regulations adopted pursuant to paragraph (1) shall be exempt from the rulemaking provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act (Chapter 3.5 (commencing with Section 11340) of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code).

SEC. 2. Section 3722 of the Labor Code is amended to read:

3722. (a) At the time the stop order is issued and served pursuant to Section 3710.1, the director shall also issue and serve a penalty assessment order requiring the uninsured employer to pay to the director, for deposit in the State Treasury to the credit of the Uninsured Employers Fund, the sum of one thousand five hundred dollars ($1,500) per employee employed at the time the order is issued and served, as an additional penalty for being uninsured at that time or issue and serve a penalty assessment order pursuant to subdivision (b).

(b) At any time that the director determines that an employer has been uninsured for a period in excess of one week during the calendar year preceding the determination, the director ~~may~~ *shall* issue and serve a penalty assessment order requiring the uninsured employer to pay to the director, for deposit in the State Treasury to the credit of the Uninsured Employers Fund, the greater of (1) twice the amount the employer would have paid in workers' compensation premiums during the period the employer was uninsured, determined according to subdivision (c), or (2) the sum of one thousand five hundred dollars ($1,500) per employee employed during the period the employer was uninsured. A penalty assessment issued and served by the director pursuant to this subdivision shall be in lieu of, and not in addition to, any other penalty issued and served by the director pursuant to subdivision (a).

(c) If the employer is currently insured, or becomes insured during the period during which the penalty under subdivision (b) is being determined, the amount an employer would have paid in workers' compensation premiums shall be calculated by prorating the current premium for the number of weeks the employer was uninsured within the three-year period immediately prior to the date the penalty assessment is issued. If the employer is uninsured at the time the penalty under subdivision (b) is being determined, the amount an employer would have paid in workers' compensation premiums shall be the product of the employer's payroll for all periods of time the employer was uninsured within the three-year period immediately prior to the date the penalty assessment is issued multiplied by a rate determined in accordance with ~~regulation~~ *regulations* that may be adopted by the Labor Commissioner or, if none has been adopted~~, the average insurer rate per one hundred dollars ($100) of payroll as reported in the most recent summary published by the rating organization designated pursuant to Section 11734 of the Insurance Code.~~ *the proper classification code or codes from the Workers' Compensation Insurance Rating Bureau that apply to the employer, or if the employer is out of business, from other information from the director regarding the employer's operations.*

(d) If upon the filing of a claim for compensation under this division the Workers' Compensation Appeals Board finds that any employer has not secured the payment of compensation as required by this division and finds the claim either noncompensable or compensable, the appeals board shall mail a copy of their findings to the uninsured employer and the director, together with a direction to the uninsured employer to file a verified statement pursuant to subdivision (e).

After the time for any appeal has expired and the adjudication of the claim has become final, the uninsured employer shall be assessed and pay as a penalty either of the following:

(1) In noncompensable cases, two thousand dollars ($2,000) per each employee employed at the time of the claimed injury.

(2) In compensable cases, ten thousand dollars ($10,000) per each employee employed on the date of the injury.

(e) In order to establish the number of employees the uninsured employer had on the date of the claimed injury in noncompensable cases and on the date of injury in compensable cases, the employer shall submit to the director within 10 days after service of findings, awards, and orders of the Workers' Compensation Appeals Board a verified statement of the number of employees in his or her employ on the date of injury. If the employer fails to submit to the director this verified statement or if the director disputes the accuracy of the number of employees reported by the employer, the director shall use any information regarding the number of employees as the director may have or otherwise obtains.

(f) Except for penalties assessed under subdivision (b), the maximum amount of penalties which may be assessed pursuant to this section is one hundred thousand dollars ($100,000). Payment shall be transmitted to the director for deposit in the State Treasury to the credit of the Uninsured Employers Fund.

(g) (1) The Workers' Compensation Appeals Board may provide for a summary hearing on the sole issue of compensation coverage to effect the provisions of this section.

(2) In the event a claim is settled by the director pursuant to subdivision (e) of Section 3715 by means of a compromise and release or stipulations with request for award, the appeals board may also provide for a summary hearing on the issue of compensability.

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