

176.521 SETTLEMENT OF CLAIMS.

Subdivision 1. **Validity.** An agreement between an employee or an employee's dependent and the employer or insurer to settle any claim, which is not upon appeal before the court of appeals, for compensation under this chapter is valid where it has been executed in writing and signed by the parties and intervenors in the matter, and, where one or more of the parties is not represented by an attorney, the commissioner or a compensation judge has approved the settlement and made an award thereon. If the matter is upon appeal before the Court of Appeals or district court, the court of appeals or district court is the approving body. An agreement to settle any claim is not valid if a guardian or conservator is required under section 176.092 and an employee or dependent has no guardian or conservator.

Subd. 2. **Approval.** Settlements shall be approved only if the terms conform with this chapter.

The commissioner, a compensation judge, the court of appeals, and the district court shall exercise discretion in approving or disapproving a proposed settlement.

The parties to the agreement of settlement have the burden of proving that the settlement is reasonable, fair, and in conformity with this chapter. A settlement agreement where both the employee or the employee's dependent and the employer or insurer are represented by an attorney shall be conclusively presumed to be reasonable, fair, and in conformity with this chapter except when the settlement purports to be a full, final, and complete settlement of an employee's right to medical compensation under this chapter or rehabilitation under section 176.102. A settlement which purports to do so must be approved by the commissioner, a compensation judge, or court of appeals.

The conclusive presumption in this subdivision is not available in cases involving an employee or dependent with a guardian or conservator.

The conclusive presumption in this subdivision applies to a settlement agreement entered into on or after January 15, 1982, whether the injury to which the settlement applies occurred prior to or on or after January 15, 1982.

Subd. 2a. **Settlements not subject to approval.** When a settled case is not subject to approval, upon receipt of the stipulation for settlement, the commissioner, a compensation judge, or the court of appeals shall immediately sign the award and file it with the commissioner. Payment pursuant to the award shall be made within 14 days after it is filed with the commissioner. The commissioner may correct mathematical or clerical errors at any time.

Subd. 3. **Setting aside award upon settlement.** Notwithstanding the provisions of subdivision 1, 2, or 2a, or any provision in the agreement of settlement to the contrary, upon the filing of a petition by any party to the settlement, the court of appeals may set aside an award made upon a settlement, pursuant to this chapter. In appropriate cases, the court of appeals may refer the matter to the chief administrative law judge for assignment to a compensation judge for hearing.

History: 1953 c 755 s 69; 1973 c 388 s 127,128; 1975 c 271 s 6; 1975 c 359 s 23; 1976 c 134 s 78; 1979 c 271 s 1; Ex1979 c 3 s 60; 1981 c 346 s 134,135; 3Sp1981 c 2 art 1 s 24-26; 1983 c 290 s 156-158; 1984 c 640 s 32; 1986 c 444; 1986 c 461 s 33; 1987 c 332 s 98; 1993 c 194 s 7,8