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MICHIGAN WORKERS' COMPENSATION LEGAL TRENDS

January 2025

CHANGES IN THE NEW YEAR

Welcome to the latest edition of the Michigan Workers' Compensation Legal Trends brought to you by the attorneys at Bleakley, Cypher, Parent, Warren & Quinn, P.C. This issue will highlight changes to the Workers' Compensation Board of Magistrates, mileage rate, and maximum weekly wage.

Board of Magistrates

As anticipated, this January brought significant change to the Board of Magistrates. Two long-time members, John Housefield and Keith Castora, retired from their positions effective January 26, 2025. Magistrate Housefield presided over cases at the Okemos agency and Magistrate Castora was located in Detroit. In addition to these openings, Magistrate Richard Ehrlich unfortunately passed away soon after being reappointed to his position at the Pontiac agency. These vacancies have been filled by John Chowning, Kevin Davis, and Jane Hofmeyer.

New Magistrate: John Chowning

Magistrate John Chowning will be splitting his time between Saginaw and Gaylord, with two weeks per month at each agency. His term began January 27, 2025 and will expire on January 26, 2029.

Magistrate Chowning holds a Bachelor of Science in political science from Michigan State University and a Juris Doctorate from Wayne State University. Prior to his appointment to the bench, he was a career plaintiff's attorney in the workers' compensation arena. Magistrate Chowning was a partner at the law firm Chowning and Edgar.

New Magistrate: Kevin Davis

Magistrate Kevin Davis will preside over cases at the Detroit agency, taking over Magistrate Castora's docket. His term commenced January 27, 2025 and is set to expire on January 26, 2029.

Magistrate Davis received a Juris Doctorate from the University of Detroit and a Bachelor of Science in medical technology from Eastern Michigan University. He is a former defense attorney and previously worked as in house counsel for an insurance carrier, and then in private practice.

New Magistrate: Jane Hofmeyer

Magistrate Jane Hoffmeyer was appointed to fill the vacancy left after Magistrate Ehrlich's passing. She has assumed his term, which ends on January 26, 2029. Magistrate Hoffmeyer will preside over cases at the Kalamazoo and Okemos agencies.

Magistrate Hofmeyer earned her Juris Doctorate from Thomas Cooley Law School and has a Bachelor of Arts in history from The College of Wooster. Prior to her appointment, she represented employers' interests related to workers compensation claims.

Returning Magistrates

Multiple magistrates were reappointed to serve an additional four-year term, ending on January 26, 2029. Magistrates Lisa Woons, David Williams, Lenny Segel, and Kevin Kales will all return to their positions.

Although most magistrates will continue to hear cases at their current agency, there are a few notable changes. Magistrate Michael Cantor will be reassigned full-time to the Pontiac agency. To fill the gap caused by this shift, Magistrate James Smith will preside full-time at the Saginaw agency.

New Mileage Rate

The Department of Technology, Management and Budget has advised that the mileage rate has increased slightly from \$0.67 to **\$0.70 per mile, effective January 1, 2025.**

New Maximum Rate

The Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives has reported the state average weekly wage is \$1,292.23, up from \$1,259.91. In accordance with Section 418.355(2) of the Workers' Disability Compensation Act, the 2025 maximum weekly wage loss/indemnity benefit, based on 90% of that state average weekly wage, is **\$1,164.00**. The discontinued fringe benefit ceiling has increased to **\$861.49**.

BLEAKLEY, CYPHER, PARENT, WARREN & QUINN ANNUAL SEMINAR

**AS A REMINDER, OUR ANNUAL SEMINAR WILL BE ON FRIDAY MARCH 14, 2025.
PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDERS. INVITATIONS WILL BE COMING SHORTLY**

This Newsletter is meant to highlight developments in the workers' compensation arena and to elaborate on general concepts. If you would like to discuss in more detail this issue or any other issue please do not hesitate to contact any of the attorneys at Bleakley, Cypher, Parent, Warren & Quinn, P.C., directly.

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