

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2026 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

House Bill 4589

By Delegates Holstein, Chiarelli, Worrell, Heckert,

Willis, Eldridge, Dean, Bridges, and Drennan

[Introduced January 20, 2026; referred to the
Committee on Health and Human Resources then the
Judiciary]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §23-4-15 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating to
2 clarifying that the time limitations provided for filing occupational pneumoconiosis claims
3 do not apply or otherwise limit the ability of a claimant to obtain an evaluation from the
4 Occupational Pneumoconiosis Board.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 4. DISABILITY AND DEATH BENEFITS.

§23-4-15. Application for benefits.

1 (a) To entitle any employee or dependent of a deceased employee to compensation under
2 this chapter, other than for occupational pneumoconiosis or other occupational disease, the
3 application for compensation shall be made on the form or forms prescribed by the Insurance
4 Commissioner, and filed with the Insurance Commissioner, private carrier or self-insured
5 employer, whichever is applicable, within six months from and after the injury or death, as the case
6 may be, and unless filed within the six months period, the right to compensation under this chapter
7 is forever barred, such time limitation being hereby declared to be a condition of the right and
8 hence jurisdictional, and all proofs of dependency in fatal cases ~~must~~ shall also be filed with the
9 commission within six months from and after the death. In case the employee is mentally or
10 physically incapable of filing the application, it may be filed by his or her attorney or by a member of
11 his or her family.

12 (b) To entitle any employee to compensation for occupational pneumoconiosis under the
13 provisions of this subsection, the application for compensation shall be made on the form or forms
14 prescribed by the Insurance Commissioner, and filed with the Insurance Commissioner, private
15 carrier or self-insured employer, whichever is applicable, within three years from and after the last
16 day of the last continuous period of 60 days or more during which the employee was exposed to
17 the hazards of occupational pneumoconiosis or within three years from and after a diagnosed
18 impairment due to occupational pneumoconiosis was made known to the employee by a physician
19 and unless filed within the three-year period, the right to compensation under this chapter is

20 forever barred, such time limitation being hereby declared to be a condition of the right and ~~hence~~
21 therefore jurisdictional, or, in the case of death, the application shall be filed by the dependent of
22 the employee within two years from and after the employee's death, and such time limitation is a
23 condition of the right and ~~hence~~ therefore jurisdictional: Provided, That nothing in this section may
24 limit the time within which a claimant may obtain an evaluation from the Occupational
25 Pneumoconiosis Board nor limit the applicability of §23-4-8c of this code.

26 (c) To entitle any employee to compensation for occupational disease other than
27 occupational pneumoconiosis under the provisions of this section, the application for
28 compensation shall be made on the form or forms prescribed by the Insurance Commissioner, and
29 filed with the Insurance Commissioner, private carrier or self-insured employer, whichever is
30 applicable, within three years from and after the day on which the employee was last exposed to
31 the particular occupational hazard involved or within three years from and after the employee's
32 occupational disease was made known to him or her by a physician or which he or she should
33 reasonably have known, whichever last occurs, and unless filed within the three-year period, the
34 right to compensation under this chapter shall be forever barred, ~~such~~ the time limitation being
35 hereby declared to be a condition of the right and therefore jurisdictional, or, in case of death, the
36 application shall be filed as aforesaid by the dependent of the employee within one year from and
37 after the employee's death, and such time limitation is a condition of the right and hence
38 jurisdictional.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to clarify that the time limitations provided for filing occupational pneumoconiosis claims in this section does not apply to or otherwise limit the ability of a claimant to obtain an evaluation from the Occupational Pneumoconiosis Board.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.