

No. **2021-6947**

Confidential Information Redacted
Texas Labor Code §§402.083 and 402.092

**Official Order
of the
Texas Commissioner of Workers' Compensation**

Date: 7/28/2021

Subject Considered:

Trumbull Insurance Company
P.O. Box 26300
Austin, Texas 78755-0300

Consent Order
DWC Enforcement File No. 25827

General remarks and official action taken:

This is a consent order with Trumbull Insurance Company (Trumbull Insurance). The commissioner of the Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation (DWC) considers whether DWC should take disciplinary action against Trumbull Insurance.

Waiver

Trumbull Insurance acknowledges that the Texas Labor Code and other applicable laws provide certain rights. Trumbull Insurance waives all of these rights, and any other procedural rights that apply, in consideration of the entry of this consent order.

Findings of Fact

1. Trumbull Insurance holds a certificate of authority issued by the Texas Department of Insurance to transact the business of insurance pursuant to TEX. INS. CODE §§ 801.051-801.053 and is licensed to write multiple lines of insurance in Texas, including workers' compensation/employers' liability insurance.

2. Trumbull Insurance was classified as "average" tier in the 2016 and 2018 Performance Based Oversight (PBO) assessments. Trumbull Insurance was not selected to be tiered in the 2007, 2009, 2010, 2012, or 2014 PBO assessments.

Failure to Pay Temporary Income Benefits in Accordance with a Designated Doctor Report

3. On [REDACTED] Trumbull Insurance received a report from a designated doctor (DD) in connection with a DD examination.
4. The DD determined the injured employee's disability from [REDACTED] to [REDACTED] was a direct result of a compensable work-related injury. The DD further opined the injured employee was capable of sedentary work for the same period.
5. Trumbull Insurance was required to pay accrued temporary income benefits (TIBs) no later than five days after receiving the DD's report. The deadline to pay TIBs was [REDACTED]. The carrier disputed benefits on [REDACTED].
6. On [REDACTED] a Contested Case Hearing Decision & Order (CCH D&O) opinion was issued, holding the injured employee had disability from [REDACTED] to the date of the hearing, and ordering Trumbull Insurance to pay TIBs.
7. Trumbull Insurance issued payment of TIBs on [REDACTED]. However, the [REDACTED] dispute of benefits was 23 days late from the date benefits were due based on the opinion of the DD report, which was [REDACTED].
8. The CCH D&O became final on [REDACTED]. Trumbull Insurance issued the interest payment on [REDACTED] which was four days late.

Assessment of Sanction

1. Failure to provide income benefits in a timely and cost-effective manner is harmful to injured employees and the Texas workers' compensation system.
2. In assessing the sanction for this case, DWC fully considered the following factors in TEX. LAB. CODE § 415.021(c) and 28 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 180.26(e):

- the seriousness of the violation, including the nature, circumstances, consequences, extent, and gravity of the prohibited act;
 - the history and extent of previous administrative violations;
 - the violator's demonstration of good faith, including actions it took to rectify the consequences of the prohibited act;
 - the penalty necessary to deter future violations;
 - whether the administrative violation had a negative impact on the delivery of benefits to an injured employee;
 - the history of compliance with electronic data interchange requirements;
 - to the extent reasonable, the economic benefit resulting from the prohibited act; and
 - other matters that justice may require, including, but not limited to:
 - PBO assessments;
 - prompt and earnest actions to prevent future violations;
 - self-report of the violation;
 - the size of the company or practice;
 - the effect of a sanction on the availability of health care; and
 - evidence of heightened awareness of the legal duty to comply with the Texas Workers' Compensation Act and DWC rules.
3. DWC found the following factors in TEX. LAB. CODE § 415.021(c) and 28 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 180.26(e) to be aggravating: the seriousness of the violation, including the nature, circumstances, consequences, extent, and gravity of the prohibited act; the history and extent of previous administrative violations; the penalty necessary to deter future violations; and whether the administrative violation had a negative impact on the delivery of benefits to an injured employee.
4. DWC found the following factors in TEX. LAB. CODE § 415.021(c) and 28 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 180.26(e) to be mitigating: promptness and earnestness in responding to DWC; third-party interference in Trumbull Insurance's attempt to pay benefits in accordance with the DD report; Trumbull Insurance has established training, via outside counsel, regarding payment of TIBs in accordance with DD reports.
5. Trumbull Insurance acknowledges it communicated with DWC about the relevant statutes and rules it violated; the facts establish that the administrative violation occurred; and the proposed sanction is appropriate, including the factors DWC considered under TEX. LAB. CODE § 415.021(c) and 28 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 180.26(e).

6. Trumbull Insurance acknowledges that, in assessing the sanction, DWC considered the factors in TEX. LAB. CODE § 415.021(c) and 28 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 180.26(e).

Conclusions of Law

1. The commissioner has jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to TEX. LAB. CODE §§ 402.001, 402.00114, 402.00116, 402.00128, and 414.002.
2. The commissioner has the authority to dispose of this case informally pursuant to TEX. GOV'T CODE § 2001.056, TEX. LAB. CODE §§ 401.021 and 402.00128(b)(7), and 28 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 180.26(h).
3. Trumbull Insurance has knowingly and voluntarily waived all procedural rights to which it may have been entitled regarding the entry of this order, including, but not limited to, issuance and service of notice of intent to institute disciplinary action, notice of hearing, a public hearing, a proposal for decision, a rehearing by the commissioner, and judicial review.
4. Pursuant to TEX. LAB. CODE § 415.021, the commissioner may assess an administrative penalty against a person who commits an administrative violation.
5. Pursuant to TEX. LAB. CODE § 415.002(a)(20), an insurance carrier or its representative commits an administrative violation each time it violates a DWC rule.
6. Pursuant to TEX. LAB. CODE § 415.002(a)(22), an insurance carrier or its representative commits an administrative violation each time it fails to comply with a provision of the Texas Workers' Compensation Act.
7. Pursuant to TEX. LAB. CODE §§ 408.081, 409.023, and 415.002(a)(16), an insurance carrier must pay benefits weekly, as and when the benefits accrue, without order from the commissioner.
8. Pursuant to TEX. LAB. CODE § 408.0041(f), an insurance carrier must pay benefits based on the opinion of the DD during any pending dispute.
9. Pursuant to 28 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 127.10(h), an insurance carrier must pay all benefits in accordance with the DD's report for the issues in dispute no later than five days after receiving the report.

11. Pursuant to 28 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 142.16(f), a decision regarding benefits not appealed to the appeals panel becomes final on the sixteenth day after the date received from the division of hearings. Parties shall comply with a final decision or order within 20 days of the date it becomes final.
10. Trumbull Insurance violated TEX. LAB. CODE §§ 409.023 and 415.002(a)(16), (20), and (22) when it failed to timely pay accrued income benefits in accordance with the DD's report no later than five days after receiving the report.

Order

It is ordered that Trumbull Insurance Company must pay an administrative penalty of \$5,000 within 30 days from the date of this order. Trumbull Insurance Company must pay the administrative penalty by company check, cashier's check, or money order and make it payable to the "State of Texas." Mail the administrative penalty to the Texas Department of Insurance, Attn: DWC Enforcement Section, MC AO-9999, P.O. Box 12030, Austin, Texas 78711-2030.



Cassie Brown
Commissioner of Workers' Compensation

Approved Form and Content:



Mackenzie Arthur
Staff Attorney, Enforcement
Compliance and Investigations
Division of Workers' Compensation

Affidavit

STATE OF CONNECTICUT §
§
COUNTY OF TOLLAND §

Before me, the undersigned authority, personally appeared _____,
who being by me duly sworn, deposed as follows:

"My name is Stephanie W. Raymond. I am of sound mind, capable of making this statement, and have personal knowledge of these facts which are true and correct.

I hold the office of Assistant Vice-President and am the authorized representative of Trumbull Insurance Company. I am duly authorized by the organization to execute this statement.

Trumbull Insurance Company has knowingly and voluntarily entered into this consent order and agrees with and consents to the issuance and service of this consent order."

Stephanie W. Raymond

I attest this signature is valid and confirm that the order was signed on 6/3/2021.
Affiant

SWORN TO AND SUBSCRIBED before me on _____, 2021.

(NOTARY SEAL)

Signature of Notary Public

Printed Name of Notary Public

Commission Expiration

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