

HOUSE BILL No. 2544

By Committee on Commerce, Labor and Economic Development

1-25

1 AN ACT concerning workers compensation; relating to benefit reductions
2 due to retirement benefits; amending K.S.A. 2017 Supp. 44-501 and
3 repealing the existing section.

4
5 *Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Kansas:*

6 Section 1. K.S.A. 2017 Supp. 44-501 is hereby amended to read as
7 follows: 44-501. (a) (1) Compensation for an injury shall be disallowed if
8 ~~such~~ the injury to the employee results from:

9 (A) The employee's deliberate intention to cause ~~such~~ the injury;

10 (B) the employee's willful failure to use a guard or protection against
11 accident or injury which is required pursuant to any statute and provided
12 for the employee;

13 (C) the employee's willful failure to use a reasonable and proper
14 guard and protection voluntarily furnished the employee by the employer;

15 (D) the employee's reckless violation of their employer's workplace
16 safety rules or regulations; or

17 (E) the employee's voluntary participation in fighting or horseplay
18 with a co-employee for any reason, work related or otherwise.

19 (2) ~~Subparagraphs (B) and (C) of paragraph (1) of Subsection (a)(1)~~
20 ~~(B) and (C)~~ shall not apply when it was reasonable under the totality of the
21 circumstances to not use ~~such~~ the equipment, or if the employer approved
22 the work engaged in at the time of an accident or injury to be performed
23 without ~~such~~ the equipment.

24 (b) (1) (A) The employer shall not be liable under the workers
25 compensation act where the injury, disability or death was contributed to
26 by the employee's use or consumption of alcohol or any drugs, chemicals
27 or any other compounds or substances, including, but not limited to, any
28 drugs or medications which are available to the public without a
29 prescription from a health care provider, prescription drugs or medications,
30 any form or type of narcotic drugs, marijuana, stimulants, depressants or
31 hallucinogens.

32 (B) In the case of drugs or medications which are available to the
33 public without a prescription from a health care provider and prescription
34 drugs or medications, compensation shall not be denied if the employee
35 can show that ~~such~~ the drugs or medications were being taken or used in
36 therapeutic doses and there have been no prior incidences of the

1 employee's impairment on the job as the result of the use of ~~such~~ the drugs
2 or medications within the previous 24 months.

3 (C) It shall be conclusively presumed that the employee was impaired
4 due to alcohol or drugs if it is shown that, at the time of the injury, the
5 employee had an alcohol concentration of .04 or more, or a GCMS
6 confirmatory test by quantitative analysis showing a concentration at or
7 above the levels shown on the following chart for the drugs of abuse listed:

	Confirmatory test cutoff levels (ng/ml)
11 Marijuana metabolite ¹	15
12 Cocaine metabolite ²	150
13 Opiates:	
14 Morphine	2000
15 Codeine	2000
16 6-Acetylmorphine ⁴	10 ng/ml
17 Phencyclidine	25
18 Amphetamines:	
19 Amphetamine	500
20 Methamphetamine ³	500
21 ¹ Delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol-9-carboxylic acid.	
22 ² Benzoylcegonine.	
23 ³ Specimen must also contain amphetamine at a concentration greater than or equal to 200 24 ng/ml.	
25 ⁴ Test for 6-AM when morphine concentration exceeds 2,000 ng/ml.	

26 (D) If it is shown that the employee was impaired pursuant to
27 subsection (b)(1)(C) at the time of the injury, there shall be a rebuttable
28 presumption that the accident, injury, disability or death was contributed to
29 by ~~such~~ the impairment. The employee may overcome the presumption of
30 contribution by clear and convincing evidence.

31 (E) An employee's refusal to submit to a chemical test at the request
32 of the employer shall result in the forfeiture of benefits under the workers
33 compensation act if the employer had sufficient cause to suspect the use of
34 alcohol or drugs by the claimant or if the employer's policy clearly
35 authorizes post-injury testing.

36 (2) The results of a chemical test shall be admissible evidence to
37 prove impairment if the employer establishes that the testing was done
38 under any of the following circumstances:

39 (A) As a result of an employer mandated drug testing policy, in place
40 in writing prior to the date of accident or injury, requiring any worker to
41 submit to testing for drugs or alcohol;

42 (B) during an autopsy or in the normal course of medical treatment
43 for reasons related to the health and welfare of the injured worker and not
44 at the direction of the employer;

45 (C) the worker, prior to the date and time of the accident or injury,
46 gave written consent to the employer that the worker would voluntarily
47 submit to a chemical test for drugs or alcohol following any accident or

1 injury;

2 (D) the worker voluntarily agrees to submit to a chemical test for
3 drugs or alcohol following any accident or injury; or

4 (E) as a result of federal or state law or a federal or state rule or
5 regulation having the force and effect of law requiring a post-injury testing
6 program and ~~such~~ the required program was properly implemented at the
7 time of testing.

8 (3) Notwithstanding subsection (b)(2), the results of a chemical test
9 performed on a sample collected by an employer shall not be admissible
10 evidence to prove impairment unless the following conditions are met:

11 (A) The test sample was collected within a reasonable time following
12 the accident or injury;

13 (B) the collecting and labeling of the test sample was performed by or
14 under the supervision of a licensed health care professional;

15 (C) the test was performed by a laboratory approved by the United
16 States department of health and human services or licensed by the
17 department of health and environment, except that a blood sample may be
18 tested for alcohol content by a laboratory commonly used for that purpose
19 by state law enforcement agencies;

20 (D) the test was confirmed by gas chromatography-mass
21 spectroscopy or other comparably reliable analytical method, except that
22 no ~~such~~ confirmation is required for a blood alcohol sample;

23 (E) the foundation evidence must establish, beyond a reasonable
24 doubt, that the test results were from the sample taken from the employee;
25 and

26 (F) a split sample sufficient for testing shall be retained and made
27 available to the employee within 48 hours of a positive test.

28 (c) (1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), compensation shall not
29 be paid in case of coronary or coronary artery disease or cerebrovascular
30 injury unless it is shown that the exertion of the work necessary to
31 precipitate the disability was more than the employee's usual work in the
32 course of the employee's regular employment.

33 (2) For events occurring on or after July 1, 2014, in the case of a
34 firefighter as defined by K.S.A. 40-1709(b)(1), and amendments thereto,
35 or a law enforcement officer as defined by K.S.A. 74-5602, and
36 amendments thereto, coronary or coronary artery disease or
37 cerebrovascular injury shall be compensable if:

38 (A) The injury can be identified as caused by a specific event
39 occurring in the course and scope of employment;

40 (B) the coronary or cerebrovascular injury occurred within 24 hours
41 of the specific event; and

42 (C) the specific event was the prevailing factor in causing the
43 coronary or coronary artery disease or cerebrovascular injury.

1 (d) Except as provided in the workers compensation act, no
2 construction design professional who is retained to perform professional
3 services on a construction project or any employee of a construction
4 design professional who is assisting or representing the construction
5 design professional in the performance of professional services on the site
6 of the construction project, shall be liable for any injury resulting from the
7 employer's failure to comply with safety standards on the construction
8 project for which compensation is recoverable under the workers
9 compensation act, unless responsibility for safety practices is specifically
10 assumed by contract. The immunity provided by this subsection to any
11 construction design professional shall not apply to the negligent
12 preparation of design plans or specifications.

13 (e) An award of compensation for permanent partial impairment,
14 work disability, or permanent total disability shall be reduced by the
15 amount of functional impairment determined to be preexisting. ~~Any such~~
16 *The* reduction shall not apply to temporary total disability, nor shall it
17 apply to compensation for medical treatment.

18 (1) Where workers compensation benefits have previously been
19 awarded through settlement or judicial or administrative determination in
20 Kansas, the percentage basis of the prior settlement or award shall
21 conclusively establish the amount of functional impairment determined to
22 be preexisting. Where workers compensation benefits have not previously
23 been awarded through settlement or judicial or administrative
24 determination in Kansas, the amount of preexisting functional impairment
25 shall be established by competent evidence.

26 (2) In all cases, the applicable reduction shall be calculated as
27 follows:

28 (A) If the preexisting impairment is the result of injury sustained
29 while working for the employer against whom workers compensation
30 benefits are currently being sought, any award of compensation shall be
31 reduced by the current dollar value attributable under the workers
32 compensation act to the percentage of functional impairment determined to
33 be preexisting. The "current dollar value" shall be calculated by
34 multiplying the percentage of preexisting impairment by the compensation
35 rate in effect on the date of the accident or injury against which the
36 reduction will be applied.

37 (B) In all other cases, the employer against whom benefits are
38 currently being sought shall be entitled to a credit for the percentage of
39 preexisting impairment.

40 (f) If the employee receives, whether periodically or by lump sum,
41 retirement benefits *other than* under the federal social security act ~~or~~
42 ~~retirement benefits from any other retirement system, program, policy or~~
43 ~~plan which is~~ *that are* provided by the employer against which the claim is

1 being made, any compensation benefit payments ~~which for permanent~~
2 *disability that the employee is eligible to receive under the workers*
3 *compensation act for such the claim shall be reduced by the weekly*
4 *equivalent amount of the total amount of all such the retirement benefits*
5 *other than under the federal social security act, less any portion of any*
6 ~~such the retirement benefit, other than retirement benefits under the federal~~
7 ~~social security act, benefits that is are~~ attributable to payments or
8 contributions made by the employee, but in no event shall the workers
9 compensation benefit be less than the workers compensation benefit
10 payable for the employee's percentage of functional impairment. Where
11 the employee elects to take retirement benefits in a lump sum, the lump
12 sum payment shall be amortized at the rate of 4% per year over the
13 employee's life expectancy to determine the weekly equivalent value of the
14 benefits.

15 *(g) If the employee receives retirement benefits under the federal*
16 *social security act, any compensation benefit payments for permanent*
17 *disability that the employee is eligible to receive under the Kansas*
18 *workers compensation act for the claim shall be reduced by 50% of the*
19 *weekly equivalent amount of the employee's social security retirement*
20 *benefit. In no event shall the workers compensation benefit be less than*
21 *the workers compensation benefit payable for the employee's percentage*
22 *of functional impairment.*

23 Sec. 2. K.S.A. 2017 Supp. 44-501 is hereby repealed.

24 Sec. 3. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after its
25 publication in the statute book.