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1. Introduction. Part 5 of the BLBA PM sets forth the policies, responsibilities, fundamentals, and procedures for the development of fiscal methodology; computation, obligation and payment of Black Lung (BL) benefits; application of accounting registers, records, and reports in the management of accounts receivable and payable; development and promulgation of fiscal liability and requirements of responsible coal mine operators (ROs); interpretation and amplification of insurance programs and requirements by which ROs secure BL benefit payments; and relationships of the Accounting Section (AS) with other DCMWC Branches, the Department of the Treasury, and other DOL agencies in the operation of the BL Benefit Payment system. BLBA PM 5-100 is reserved for a description of the legislative authority, policies, and staff responsibilities relevant to BL program finances.

2. Payments. The objective of the BL benefit payments system is to provide an automated method of servicing the benefit payments process of BL claims. BLBA PM 5-200 is reserved for a description of the procedures for the issuance of benefit payments not covered in Part 2 of the Procedure Manual. Payments for medical treatment benefits and diagnostic services are processed by the medical bill payment contractor. BLBA PM 5-201 is reserved for procedures for the processing of medical services payments not described elsewhere.

3. Accounting. The Accounting Section is responsible for maintaining manual and computerized accounting registers and records; maintaining accounts receivable for ROs and beneficiaries; and rendering output reports as required by the DCMWC claims accounting and reporting system. The procedures for maintaining and controlling these accounting instruments are contained in BLBA PM 5-300.

4. Responsible Operators. An objective of Congress, in enacting the Black Lung Benefits Reform Act (BLBRA) of 1977, was to pass on to the maximum extent possible the cost of the benefit payments to the coal industry through the use of a trust fund and coal operator liability. Generally, the Act provides for payment of claims by an RO to an eligible miner whose last coal mine employment (CME) occurred after December 31, 1969. Claims for miners whose last CME was before January 1, 1970, or where no RO can be identified, are the collective responsibility of coal mine operators and are paid by a Federally-operated Black Lung Disability Trust Fund (BLDTF) as covered in BLBA PM

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2-1100 and 5-600. The policies, standards, and procedures for identifying ROs are described in BLBA PM 2-800.

5. Insurance. Coal mine operators (ROs) secure their obligation to pay benefits by either qualifying as a self-insurer (as prescribed by the Secretary) or by insuring and keeping insured the payment of such benefits with any stock company or mutual company or association, or with any other person or fund including any State Fund, while such company, association, person, or fund is authorized under the laws of any State to insure workmen's compensation. Such requirement includes former as well as current operators, provided that the former operators are still in business. BLBA PM 5-501 through 503 are reserved for a description of the policies and procedures regarding insurance carriers.

6. Trust Fund. The BLDTF was established under Section 3 of the Black Lung Benefits Revenue Act of 1977 and is administered by the Treasury of the U.S. The trustees of the BLDTF are the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of Labor, and the Secretary of Health and Human Services. The Secretary of the Treasury is the managing trustee and holds, operates, and administers the BLDTF. BLBA PM 5-600 is reserved for a description of the policies, responsibilities, and procedures for the BLDTF.

7. Penalties. BLBA PM 5-700 is reserved for a description of the policies and procedures for the assessment of penalties against operators or employers.