# PART E WAGE LOSS BENEFITS SESSION

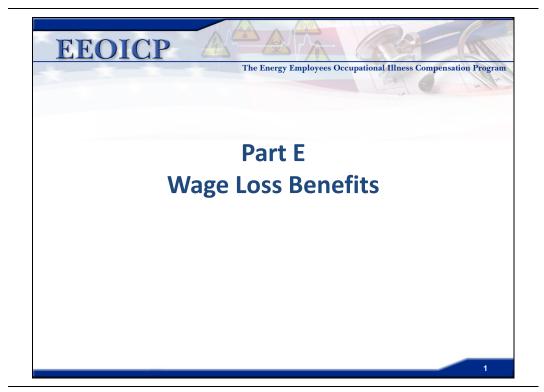
# **SESSION BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Session Title	Part E Wage Loss Benefits
Instructional Time	120 minutes
Session Description	This session focuses on the calculation of wage loss benefits that may be claimed under Part E. A step-by-step approach is used as the trainees are walked through each component of the calculation. Multiple examples are used to illustrate each step. The session also includes a step-by-step demonstration of how to use the Wage Loss Calculator in ECMS.
Instructional Objectives	<ul> <li>Identify what must be included in the development letter for wage loss</li> <li>Calculate annual average wage loss</li> </ul>
Instructor Materials	For this session, the following materials are required: WLSession.PPT
Instructor Reference	PM 2-1400
Trainee Handouts	Wage Loss Case Study Materials Wage Loss Case Study Answer Sheet
Instructor Note:	Included in the Case Studies is the original method of calculating Wage Loss. This allows the CE to understand how the calculations are made.
	It would be helpful for you to have a current case study that is ready for the Wage Loss calculation in ECMS in order to demonstrate the live ECMS actions.
Participant Guide	Wage Loss Session
Case Study	After slide #36, proceed to the case study activity then continue with the remainder of the slide presentation.

# WAGE LOSS SESSION INSTRUCTIONAL CONTENT



#1





#2

# **EEOICP**

The Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program

# Introduction

Part E of the EEOICPA provides that covered employees may receive benefits for any lost wages incurred due to a covered illness(es) contracted through exposure to a toxic substance at a DOE or RECA Section 5 facility.

The purpose of this discussion is to provide you with the steps in calculating wage loss for covered employees or their survivors.

2



#3

# **EEOICP**

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# **Benefits for Wage Loss - Employees**

- Must establish causal link between a covered illness and each claimed year of wage loss
- Compensation depends on percentage of wages earned in a calendar year of claimed wage loss compared to the "average annual wage" (baseline wage)
- $X \le 50\% = $15,000$  per year of wage loss
- $50\% < x \le 75\% = $10,000$  per year of wage loss
- X > 75% = No compensation for wage loss

3



These are the key points about employee wage loss to remember.

# Instructor NOTE

Calculation of average annual wage and wage loss per year will be discussed later in this session.



#4

# **EEOICP**

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# **Benefits for Wage Loss – Survivors**

- Causal link between death and a covered illness must be established
- In addition to the base survivor benefit of \$125,000, the survivor may receive an additional:
  - \$25,000 If between 10 and 19 calendar years of wage loss is established
  - \$50,000 If 20 calendar years or more of wage loss is established
  - \$0 If the evidence establishes less than 10 calendar years of wage loss, the survivor will not receive wage loss compensation benefits
- \$175,000 maximum Part E survivor benefit

4



The \$25K and \$50K buckets are **only applicable** if the actual wages were 50% or less than the average annual wage. This is assumed for the calendar years after the employee's death, but needs to be calculated if the employee experienced wage loss prior to death.

If the employee's wage was over 51% of the average annual wage for a specific year, then that year is not considered towards the \$25K or \$50K bucket.

Instructor NOTE

This is discussed later in the session.



#5

# **EEOICP**

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# Benefits for Wage Loss –Assumption for Survivor Claims

If an employee dies of a covered illness prior to normal SSA retirement age:

- All calendar years after the year of death up to and including the calendar year of normal SSA retirement age are compensable years of wage loss
- Add this period to any other calendar years of wage loss incurred while living
- The CE must evaluate the calendar year of death and prior calendar years if it appears the employee may have had 10 or more years of wage loss prior to normal SSA retirement age

5



#6

# **EEOICP**

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# **Initial Development Letter**

- Employee Send initial development letter once a covered illness is established, ONLY if applicable
- Survivor Send initial development letter ONLY if evidence supports possibility of entitlement
- There is <u>no</u> need to develop for wage loss benefits if the employee was diagnosed with the covered illness after his/her normal SSA retirement age

e



#7

# **EEOICP**

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# **CE Informs the Claimant in a Development Letter to.....**

- Submit a claim for wage loss benefits in writing
- Provide a period of wage loss (when wage loss began, month & year, to what date)
- Provide supporting <u>employment</u> and <u>medical</u> evidence
- Provide a signed Form SSA-581, which is needed to obtain the employee's SSA earnings records

7

Participant Guide Page A copy of the SSA-581 Form is included in this session of the Participant Guide on page 9.



#8

# **EEOICP**

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# **Employment Evidence**

- CE primarily relies on Social Security Administration (SSA) earnings records
  - Records must include the 3 years <u>prior</u> to the reported wage loss (for AAW determination) and all years during the reported wage loss
- May also use:
  - Tax returns
  - Pay stubs
  - Union records
  - Pension records
  - Social Security Disability Records
  - Document Acquisition Request (DAR)

8



#9

# The Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Medical Evidence Must establish wages were lost/reduced due to covered illness:

- Doctor's office notes
- Return to work slips

**EEOICP** 

- A doctor's signed statement explaining causal relationship between covered illness and period of wage loss
- DAR Records, work restrictions caused by a covered illness may result in a compensable wage loss

The Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program

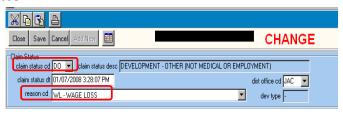
Referral to a District Medical Consultant (DMC)

SHOW PPT

#10

# **ECMS Coding for Developing Letters**

- Enter "DO" with reason code of "WL"
- This code is entered on the ECMS E claim screen in the Case Status History section
- The date of the code must match the date of the letter



10



#11

# **EEOICP**

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# **Wage Loss Claim**

- Input "WC" Wage Loss Claimed into ECMS when claim is received in writing
- Status effective date = postmark date of the letter, if available, or the date the letter is received in the FAB/DO/RC
- If wage loss is claimed multiple times, the "WC" code only needs to be entered once (with the initial claim for wage loss) until a decision is rendered

11



#12

# **EEOICP**

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### **Definitions**

- Calendar year -
  - The twelve-month period from January through December
  - Used for determination of year of wage loss (Do not use actual years. 9 actual years usually equates to 10 calendar years of wage loss)
- Normal SSA retirement age -
  - Is based on date of birth and is set forth in the Social Security Act
  - No wage loss benefits are payable for wage loss for the calendar year after the employee reaches Normal SSA retirement age
- A Consumer Price Index (CPI) -
  - Used in calculation of Average Annual Wage and wage loss to adjust for inflation

12



These definitions are important in the calculations of average annual wage and years of wage loss.

Calendar year is the 12 month period from January through December

**A quarter** is defined as the 3 month period from January to March, April to June, July to September, or October to December.

**CPI** is a measure of the average change over time in the prices paid for goods and services and is the most widely used measure of inflation. It is used to provide for cost of living adjustments.



#13

# The Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program

# **Average Annual Wage (AAW)**

**EEOICP** 

- Average of earnings for 12 quarters <u>prior</u> to first quarter of wage loss
- Baseline for determination of % of wage loss (year of wages compared to AAW)
- Excludes quarters of unemployment. An employee can have limited earnings in a quarter and still be considered unemployed for that quarter

13



#14

# **EEOICP**

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# **Calculate AAW**

- AAW Calculation:
  - Sum of 12 quarters of earnings <u>prior</u> to first quarter of wage loss ÷ 12 = Average quarterly wage
  - Average quarterly wage X 4 = Average Annual wage
  - Quarters of unemployment excluded

14



#15

# **EEOICP**

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# Quarter of "Unemployment"

- Any quarters of "unemployment" are <u>excluded</u> from the calculation of AAW
- \$700 or less reported to SSA (in constant 2005 dollars) = unemployment
  - UNLESS employee had earnings not reported to SSA; and/or employee was retired

1



#16

EEOICP

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Calculation of Unamployment Quarter

# **Calculation of Unemployment Quarter**

- Convert earnings reported by SSA to \$700 in 2005 dollars
- Years <u>after</u> 2005, use the CPI calculator at http://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl to adjust for inflation
- If earnings exceed \$700 (by one penny) in constant 2005 dollars, include the quarter in the AAW calculation

16



\$700.01 is enough to exceed the \$700 unemployment threshold.

If earnings are \$700.00 or less in constant 2005 dollar value, then this would be considered unemployment.

Instructor NOTE

For more information, refer to Unified PM 2-1400, page 13.



#17

**EEOICP** The Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program **Quarters of Unemployment** Example: If the employee earned \$1,400.00 in 1983. Would those 4 quarters be considered unemployed quarters? 1967 1968 1970 1971 \$116.61 \$120.21 \$125.24 \$132.08 \$139.64 \$145. 76 \$150.44 \$159.79 1975 1974 1976 1977 1978 1979 1980 1981 | \$177.43 | \$193.62 | \$204.78 | \$218.10 | \$234.65 | \$261 1982 1983 1984 1985 1986 1988 1989 \$548 \$470.39 \$490. \$520. \$533 \$577 1998 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 \$586.63 | \$599.59 | \$619.74 | \$637.38 | \$647.46 | \$662.21 | \$679.85 | \$700.00 \$1,400.00/4 = \$350.00 Yes, the employee earned less than the \$358.46 per guarter (These quarters would not be used in determining the AAW)



#18

# **EEOICP**

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# **Retirement vs. Unemployment**

- Being "retired" is not equivalent to being "unemployed", quarters during which an employee had no wages because he or she was voluntarily retired will <u>not</u> be excluded from the AAW calculation
- Retirement ≠ wage loss
- However, being too sick to work is not retirement

18

17



#19

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# Use of SSA Records (Maximum Annual Earnings)

- SSA earnings records should be used to calculate AAW and years of wage loss
- Not all earnings are reported on the SSA earnings records if maximum earnings for a year were reached
- The records <u>may</u> contain missing or reduced wage information once the maximum is reached

19



#20

# **EEOICP**

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# What to do when SSA Records Show Maximum Annual Earnings

- CE
  - Contacts Claimant by phone and requests evidence to support additional wages
  - Notes Claimants response in TMS
  - Follows up with letter notifying claimant of earnings info included in SSA summary and requests claimant to submit evidence of wages unaccounted for as a result of reaching maximum amount of taxable earnings under SSA.
  - If claimant doesn't submit additional evidence within 30 days of letter, CE uses earnings summary reported by SSA.

20



#21



- Compare AAW with employee's earnings in calendar years of reported wage loss
- Begin comparison in calendar year of first quarter of wage loss
- End with last calendar year of wage loss claimed or calendar year of normal SSA retirement age, whichever comes first

21



You count the calendar year after the year of death through and including the calendar of NSSRA.

For example: Joe Claimant's survivors have an accepted claim under Part E. His date of birth is February 1935 and his date of death is June 1978.

His normal Social Security retirement age (NSSRA) is February 2000 which means that he died 22 years before his retirement age.

### For death:

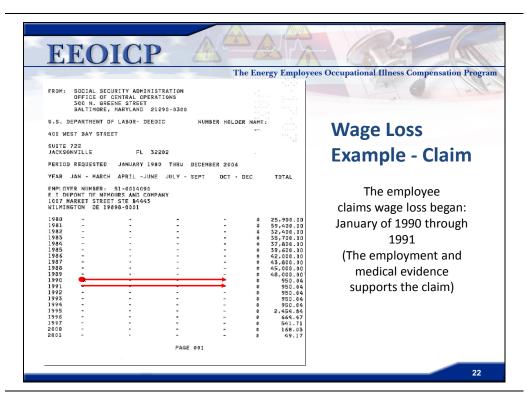
- 0-10 years before retirement age, there is \$0 compensation
- 10-19 years before retirement age, there is \$25,000 compensation award.
- 20 years or greater, there is a \$50,000 compensation award.

Joe Claimant's survivors received an additional award of \$50,000 because he died 22 years before his retirement wage.

The eligible survivors equally split the \$50,000.

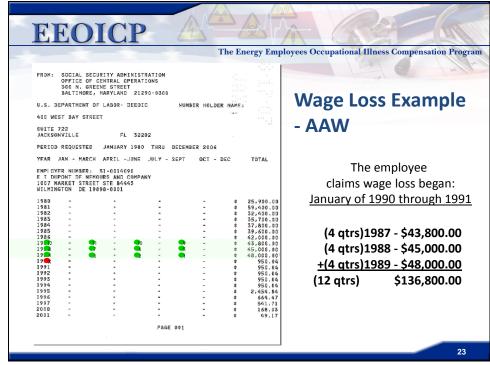


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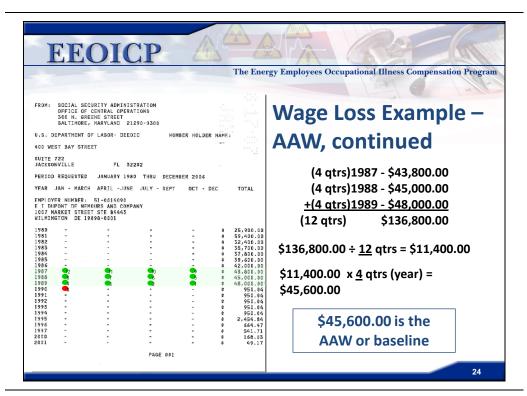


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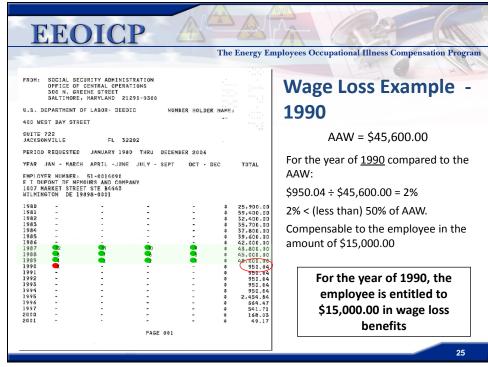


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#25

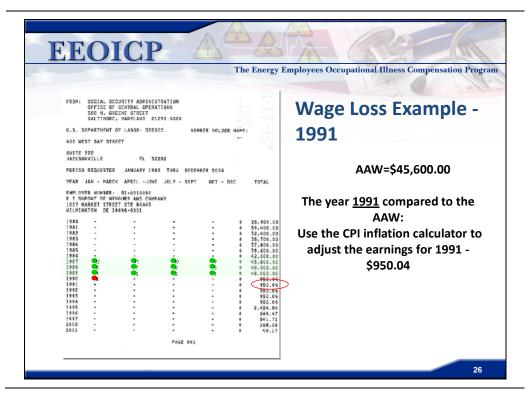




CPI is not used to adjust for inflation in this situation (you can but would end up with the same value) because the wage loss year is the same year as when the claimed wage loss began – same year – no need to take out inflation – there is none.

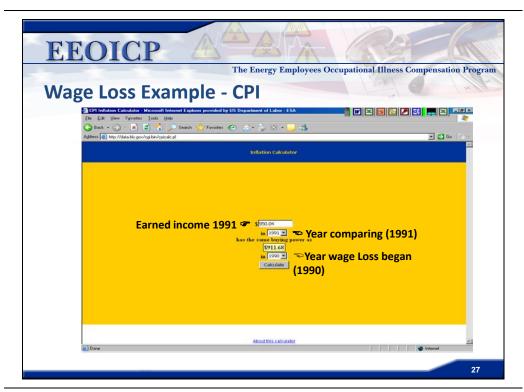


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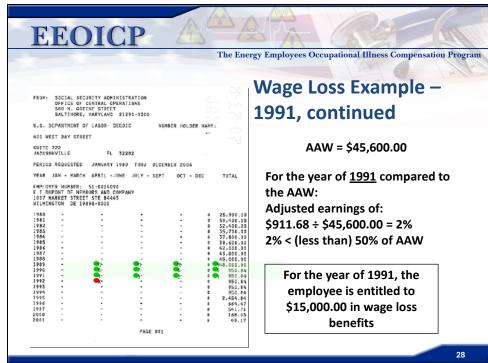


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#28





#29

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# **Total Wage Loss Benefits (Employee)**

- Adjust earnings for each claimed year of wage loss
- Compare adjusted earnings (for each year) to AAW
- Determine % and \$ per year (\$0, \$10K, or \$15K)
- Total all years = **Total wage loss benefit to employee**

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#30

# **EEOICP**

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# **Wage Loss Benefits - Survivor Claims**

- Survivor entitled to benefits for causation (\$125K)
- May be entitled to benefits for employee's wage loss
- Develop for medical and employment same way as employee claim
- Undertake same wage loss calculation

30

29



#31

FEOICP

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# Wage Loss Benefits - Survivor Claims, continued

- Survivor benefits for wage loss are different from those for an employee as discussed earlier
- 10-19 calendar years of wage loss = additional \$25K
- 20 calendar years or more of wage loss = additional \$50K
- Next slide for an example...

31

32



#32

# Example of Survivor Wage Loss The employee's DOD is 1987 and his/her death was due to a covered illness The employee's DOB is 1933. (He was 54 at the time of death) The employee's normal social security retirement age is 65 The employee has 11 years of wage loss. Therefore, the claimant is entitled to \$25K in addition benefits DOB 1987 (54 years old) NSSRA 1998 (65 years old)



#33

FEOICP

Survivor Claims Involving Wage Loss

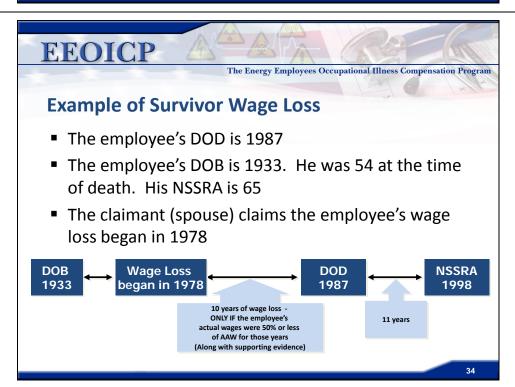
A year of wage loss is included in the 10 – 20 year determination for survivors IF and ONLY IF the employee's actual wages were 50% or less of AAW (i.e. \$15K entitlement) for that year

- If employee's actual wages for that calendar year were 51% or greater of AAW, there is NO entitlement to survivor for that year
- Next slide for an example...

33



#34





In this scenario there is the potential to compensate an additional \$50K if it is found to be true about the 10 years + 11 years = 20+years.



#35



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# **Survivor Claims Involving Wage Loss, continued**

 CE considers any years of wage loss incurred by employee up to and including year of death in addition to years after death through calendar year of employee's normal SS retirement age, when determining percentages of loss

3!



#36

EFOICP

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# **Survivor Claims Involving Wage Loss, continued**

• If employee files claim then dies solely as a result of non-covered illness(es) prior to issuance of recommended decision to accept or payment of compensation, eligible survivor may choose to receive compensation, including any wage loss and/or impairment compensation, that the employee would have been awarded

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The survivor is NOT entitled to the \$125,000 or any survivor wage loss because the covered illness was not related to the death. The ONLY entitlement is to that which the employee may have been entitled.

For example, an employee files, is determined to be covered, and dies in a car accident prior to the RD to accept. The survivor is entitled to any wage loss or impairment benefits the employee would have received.

Trainee HANDOUT

Distribute the Wage Loss Case Study materials to the trainees.

Case Study

The trainees are to review the materials and answer all of the questions.

After allowing sufficient time, review the case study outcome eliciting information from the trainees.

Trainee HANDOUT

Distribute the Wage Loss Case Study Answer Sheet to the trainees upon completion of the case study activity.



#37



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# **Recommended Decisions and Final Decisions**

- CE must first determine if the employee contracted a covered illness due to exposure prior to making a determination on wage loss
- CE can develop for wage loss simultaneously, but this should not delay the issuance of an RD to award benefits
- When case is at FAB, CE2 continues to develop for wage loss and issues an RD as soon as possible

37



The CE determines first if the employee has contracted a covered illness due to exposure to a toxic substance at a DOE facility or RECA section 5 facility **prior** to making a determination on wage loss.

The CE can develop for the wage loss simultaneously with the development of other aspects of the case, but this development should not delay the issuance of a recommended decision to award entitlement benefits.

If wage-loss development is required and the case is with the FAB for their review, the CE2 continues to develop the case for any potential wage loss and issues a determination ASAP – there is no need to wait for FD from FAB before issuing RD.



#38

# **EEOICP**

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# **Wage Loss Solicitation (No Response)**

- If employee does not respond to wage loss solicitation within 60 days (2 - 30 day letters), the CE can assume wage loss is not being claimed.
  - <u>CE sends a letter</u> advising the employee that a claim for wage loss benefits will not be developed at this time and advises him/her of their right to claim wage loss benefits in the future
  - <u>CE enters ECMS code</u> NWL 'Not claiming wage loss' the status effective date is the date a letter is sent to the employee acknowledging that he/she does not wish to file a claim for wage loss (after the expiration of 60 days)

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#39

# **EEOICP**

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# C10 (Partial Claim Closure) Withdrawal of Wage Loss Benefits

- C10/WLW Wage Loss Claim Withdrawn
  - Used in cases where wage loss had been claimed, but the claimant chooses to withdraw his/her claim for wage loss in writing.
  - Status effective date of the 'C10' code = the date stamp date of receipt in the RC, DO or FAB.

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#40

# FEOICP The Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program

# **C10 (Partial Claim Closure)**

- If claims for wage loss and impairment benefits are withdrawn simultaneously, the CE will enter two 'C10' claims status codes, one with the 'WLW' reason code and the other with the 'ICW' reason code
- C10 WLW/ICW should <u>NEVER</u> be used if there is no IC or WC in ECMS

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#41

# **EEOICP**

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# C10 (Partial Claim Closure), continued

- If wage loss is claimed and the claimant is unresponsive for development, the claim MUST BE DENIED, not closed!
- C10 must never be used to "stop the clock" while waiting for wage loss evidence.

4



#42



# **Additional Filings for Wage-Loss Compensation**

 Covered Part E employee previously awarded compensation for wage loss may file a new wage loss claim on Form EE-10 for additional calendar years of wage loss subsequent to calendar years for which the employee was previously compensated

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Use call-ups in ECMS to send reminders to claimants one year after payment for wage loss (if applicable).

**EEOICP** 



#43

# Additional Filings for Wage-Loss Compensation, continued

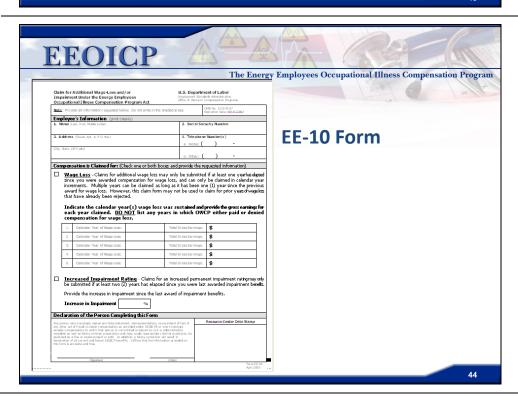
The Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program

 Claims filed using a Form EE-10 must be supported by <u>sufficient employment and medical evidence</u> of another calendar year of compensable wage for claimant to be entitled to benefits

43



#44

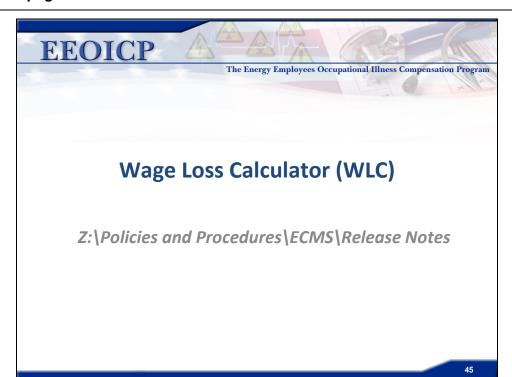


# Participant Guide Page

A copy of the EE-10 is included in this session of the Participant Guide on page 43-44.



#45





#46

# **EEOICP**

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# What is the WLC?

- A tool available in the Energy Case Management System (ECMS) Part E
- Calculates Average Annual Wage (AAW), Percentage of Loss, and Wage Loss Compensation for Part E:
  - Employee Claims
  - Survivor Claims
  - Survivor (Election of Benefits) Claims
- Extracts some case file data from ECMS Part E
- Determines Normal SSA Retirement Date
- Requires entry of employment & income data
- Adjusts \$700 (2005 Constant Value) unemployment threshold
- Applies the Consumer Price Index (CPI)
- Provides printed standardized reports of wage loss compensation calculations

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#47

# **EEOICP**

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# Who Can Access the WLC?

- Anyone who has access to view ECMS E can view the WLC
- CE, CE2, SCEX, OPS, DD, ADP, FABCE, and HR roles will have the function to add/edit the WLC by default.
  - Access to WLC is added by Energy Tech for additional users

47



#48

# **EEOICP**

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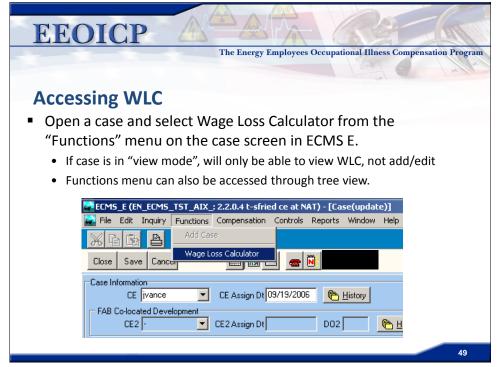
# Data Entered into the WLC

- Month and year of the Date of First Wage Loss
- Wage Loss Claim (WC) Date
- Employment Status [i.e., employer name, Unemployed, Retired, or deceased (which is auto-populated if DOD is in ECMS)] and income earned for claimed wage loss year(s) and 12 quarters prior to Date of First Wage Loss
- Indication of Unemployed or Retired for an AAW quarter
- Offset Amount (SWC/Tort)

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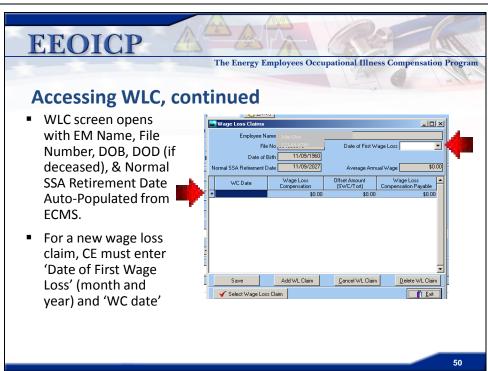


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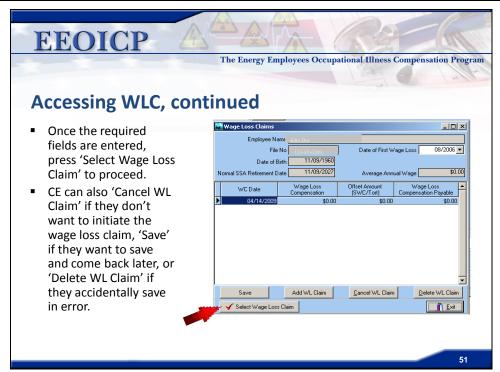


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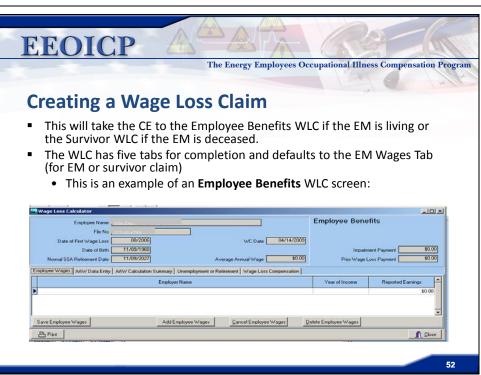


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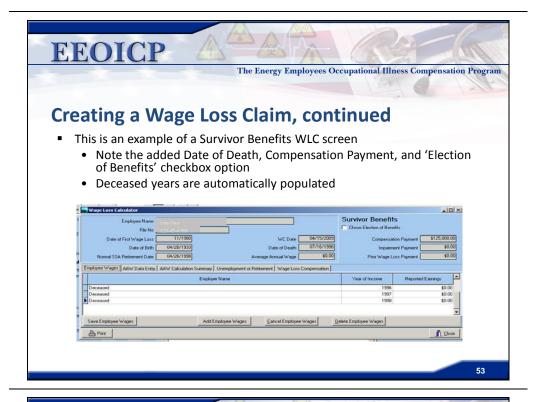


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# **EEOICP**

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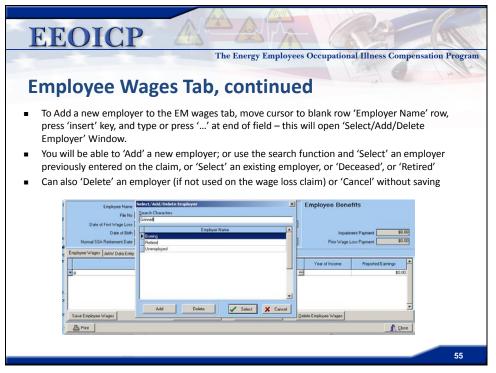
# **Employee Wages Tab**

- Displays the following information (entered by the user) for each year of wage loss claimed and the 12 quarters prior to the Date of First Wage Loss (entered only once for AAW calculation):
  - Employer Name [can also include Retired, Unemployed, or Deceased (which is auto-populated if DOD is in ECMS)]
  - Year of Income
  - Reported Earnings (entered as numbers with decimal point)

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#55





#56

# Employee Wages Tab, continued • Once Employer is entered, enter year and reported income for that year (tab or use mouse to change fields) • Continue to 'Add Employee Wages' for all required years (WL years and 12 Quarters prior to 1st WL) \*\*Continue to 'Add Employee Wages' for all required years (WL years and 12 Quarters prior to 1st WL) \*\*Continue to 'Add Employee Wages' for all required years (WL years and 12 Quarters prior to 1st WL)



#57

# **EEOICP**

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# **AAW Data Entry Tab**

- When data entry on Employee Wages Tab is complete, move to the AAW Data Entry Tab (if necessary)
- Displays the quarters used in the AAW calculation
  - Cannot enter data in the boxes that are blacked out
- Allows for the entry of estimated quarterly earnings (numbers with decimal point) for each employer
- Checkmarks new and changed AAW data entry row for review
- Not all cases require AAW data entry
  - If a case already has another wage loss claim (WC Date) with AAW data, this screen will display as read-only
  - Survivor claims where there is no wage loss experienced prior to the Employee's death

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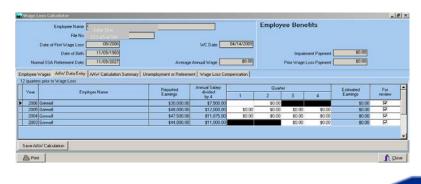
#58

# **EEOICP**

The Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program

# **AAW Data Entry, continued**

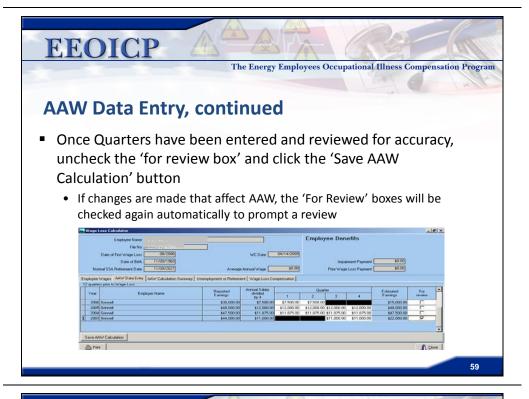
- CE enters the quarterly information for the necessary quarters
  - Use the info provided in 'Annual Salary divided by 4' column, or
  - Data can be overwritten if CE has other earnings info



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#59





#60

# The Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program

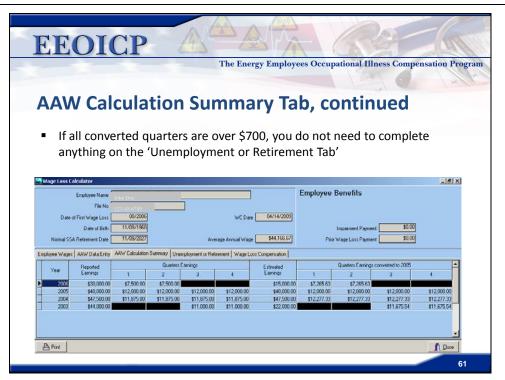
# **AAW Calculation Summary Tab**

- When data entry on the AAW Data Entry Tab (if necessary) is complete, move to 'AAW Calculation Summary' Tab
- Displays the data used in calculating the AAW, based on entries from the following screens:
  - Employee Wages
  - AAW Data Entry
- Displays quarterly earnings as converted to 2005 dollars.

60

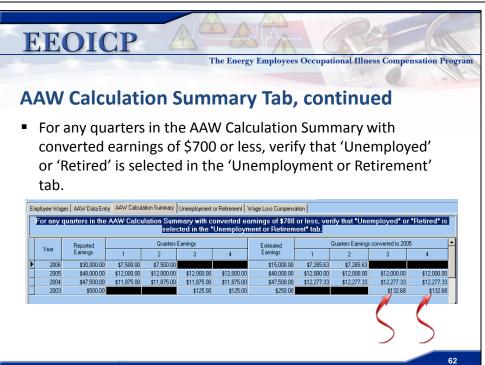


#61



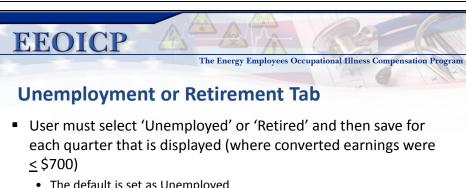


#62



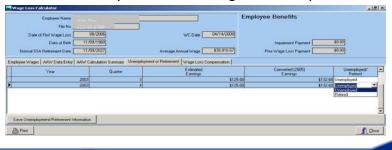


#63



• The default is set as Unemployed

User is then ready to view the 'Wage Loss Compensation' tab



SHOW PPT

#64

# EEOICP

The Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program

# **Wage Loss Compensation Tab**

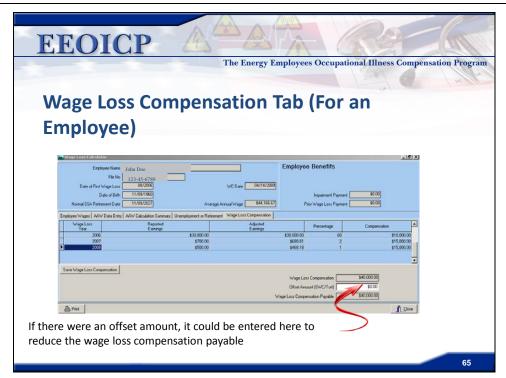
- Displays the Adjusted Earnings (with the CPI), Percentage of Loss for each claimed wage loss year compared to the AAW, Wage Loss Compensation, Offset Amount (SWC/Tort), and Wage Loss Compensation Payable
- 'Wage Loss Compensation Payable' field is solely based on the Wage Loss Compensation calculated for the wage loss years minus the Offset Amount (SWC/Tort)
  - Payments from other sources are not included in this calculation
  - Negative Wage Loss Compensation amounts are displayed in red with a minus sign

64

63

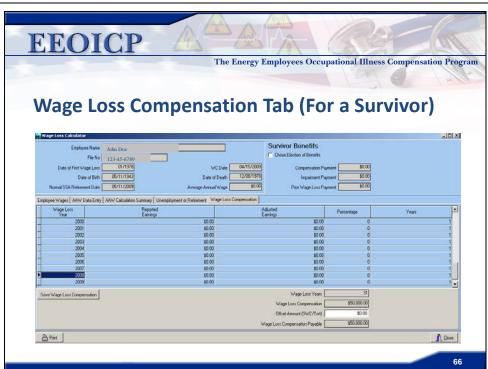


#65





#66



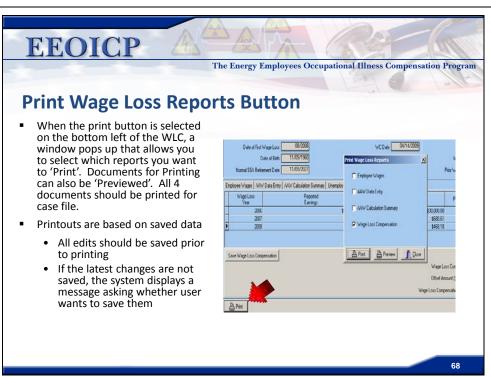


#67

**EEOICP** The Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Wage Loss Compensation Tab (For a Survivor), continued Information needed to complete WLC tabs is same for EM and survivor claims, but calculated differently on Wage Loss Compensation Tab (seen on previous two slides) For 'Election of Benefits' check the 'Choose Election of Benefits' box at the top right of any of the screens of the WLC (will calculate like EM claim). Survivor Benefits Date of First Wage Loss WC Date Date of Birth Date of Death nal SSA Fletirement Date 67



#68





#69

# **EEOICP**

The Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program

# **Maximum Aggregate Compensation**

- Under Part E, excluding medical benefits, payments to employee or survivor may not exceed the total amount of \$250,000 per accepted covered employee
- If survivor not entitled to that which employee would have received, maximum survivor entitlement is \$175,000 per covered employee

69



#70

# **EEOICP**

The Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program

# Recap

- Employee WL Benefits
  - \$0, \$10K or 15K per calendar year depending on % of wages per year as compared to average annual wage

70



#71

# **EEOICP**

The Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program

# Recap, continued

- Survivor WL Benefits
  - \$0, \$25K or \$50K depending on % of wage loss, number of years of wage loss, age at time of death (as compared to normal SSA retirement age) in addition to the base survivor benefit of \$125K
  - If employee filed but died before payment, and a covered illness <u>did not</u> contribute to death, survivor entitled to that which the employee would have received for wage loss and impairment

71



#72

# **EEOICP**

The Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program

# Recap, continued

- Wage Loss steps
  - Determine covered illness or illnesses
  - Obtain wage loss claim in writing
  - Obtain the period of wage loss
  - Obtain supporting employment and medical docs
  - Calculate AAW

72



#73

Recap, continued

Wage Loss steps, continued

Adjust earnings using the CPI inflation calculator for all claimed years

- Compare adjusted earnings to AAW
- Determine % of AAW earned
- Determine \$ amount of award based on above %
- Sum all years for total amount of WL award

73



#74

