

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY



PA 23-35—sSB 913

*Labor and Public Employees Committee
Appropriations Committee*

**AN ACT EXPANDING WORKERS' COMPENSATION COVERAGE FOR
POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS INJURIES FOR ALL EMPLOYEES**

SUMMARY: Starting January 1, 2024, this act expands eligibility for workers' compensation benefits for post-traumatic stress injuries (PTSI) to all employees covered by the workers' compensation law.

Prior law generally limited eligibility for PTSI benefits to certain first responders (e.g., police officers, firefighters, emergency medical service personnel, and emergency 9-1-1 dispatchers) diagnosed with PTSI as a direct result of certain qualifying events (e.g., witnessing someone's death) that occur in the line of duty. The act instead allows any employee covered by workers' compensation law to qualify for the benefits if the same qualifying events occur in the course of the employee's employment. The PTSI benefits provided to them are subject to the same procedures and limitations that apply to the PTSI benefits for first responders.
EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2024

QUALIFYING EVENTS

Under prior law, only certain first responders were eligible for workers' compensation PTSI benefits if a mental health professional examined them and diagnosed PTSI as a direct result of a "qualifying event" in the line of duty. Beginning January 1, 2024, the act extends these same eligibility requirements to all employees covered by the workers' compensation law. This makes them eligible for workers' compensation benefits if a mental health professional examines them and diagnoses PTSI as a direct result of an event that occurs in their course of employment in which they:

1. view a deceased minor;
2. witness someone's death or an incident involving someone's death;
3. witness an injury to someone who then dies before or upon admission to a hospital as a result of the injury and not any other intervening cause;
4. witness a traumatic physical injury that results in the loss of a vital body part or a vital body function that permanently disfigures the victim; or
5. carry, or have physical contact with and treat, an injured person who then dies before or upon admission to a hospital as a result of the injury and not any other intervening cause.

As with eligibility for first responders, the (1) qualifying event must be a substantial factor in causing the injury and (2) injury must not have resulted from a disciplinary action, work evaluation, job transfer, layoff, demotion, promotion, termination, retirement, or similar action.

OLR PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY

PTSI BENEFITS AND PROCEDURES

The PTSI benefits provided to all employees under the act are subject to the same limitations and procedures that prior law applied to the benefits for first responders. Among other things, this (1) caps the benefits' duration at 52 weeks; (2) prohibits the benefits from being awarded more than four years after the qualifying event; and (3) requires that employers contesting a claim for PTSI benefits do so through a process that is generally similar to the one used for contesting other workers' compensation claims, although with different deadlines.