

**85.59 Benefits for inmates and offenders.**

1. For the purposes of [this section](#):

a. "Inmate" includes:

(1) A person confined in a reformatory, state penitentiary, release center, or other state penal or correctional institution while that person works in connection with the maintenance of the institution, in an industry maintained in the institution, or in an industry referred to in [section 904.809](#), or while on detail to perform services on a public works project.

(2) A person who is performing unpaid community service under the direction of the district court, board of parole, or judicial district department of correctional services, or an inmate providing services pursuant to a [chapter 28E](#) agreement entered into pursuant to [section 904.703](#), or who is performing a work assignment of value to the state or to the public under [chapter 232](#).

b. "Unpaid community service under the direction of the district court" includes but is not limited to community service ordered and performed pursuant to [section 598.23A](#).

2. For purposes of [this section](#), an inmate on a work assignment under [section 904.703](#) working in construction or maintenance at a public or charitable facility, or under assignment to another agency of state, county, or local government, shall be considered an employee of the state.

3. a. If an inmate is permanently incapacitated by injury in the performance of the inmate's work in connection with the maintenance of the institution, in an industry maintained in the institution, or in an industry referred to in [section 904.809](#), while on detail to perform services on a public works project, or while performing services authorized pursuant to [section 904.809](#), or is permanently or temporarily incapacitated in connection with the performance of unpaid community service under the direction of the district court, board of parole, or judicial district department of correctional services, or in connection with the provision of services pursuant to a [chapter 28E](#) agreement entered into pursuant to [section 904.703](#), or who is performing a work assignment of value to the state or to the public under [chapter 232](#), that inmate shall be awarded only the benefits provided in [section 85.27](#) and [section 85.34, subsections 2 and 3](#). The weekly rate for such permanent disability is equal to the minimum rate as provided in [this chapter](#).

b. Weekly compensation benefits under [this section](#) may be determined prior to the inmate's release from the institution, but payment of benefits to an inmate shall commence as of the time of the inmate's release from the institution either upon parole or final discharge. However, if the inmate is awarded benefits for an injury incurred in connection with the performance of unpaid community service under the direction of the district court, board of parole, or judicial district department of correctional services, or in connection with the provision of services pursuant to a [chapter 28E](#) agreement entered into pursuant to [section 904.703](#), or who is performing a work assignment of value to the state or to the public under [chapter 232](#), weekly compensation benefits under [this section](#) shall be determined and paid as in other workers' compensation cases.

c. If an inmate is receiving benefits under the provisions of [this section](#) and is recommitted to an institution covered by [this section](#), the benefits shall immediately cease. If benefits cease because of the inmate's recommitment, the benefits shall resume upon subsequent release from the institution.

d. If death results from the injury, death benefits shall be awarded and paid to the dependents of the inmate as in other workers' compensation cases except that the weekly rate shall be equal to sixty-six and two-thirds percent of the state average weekly wage paid employees as determined by the department of workforce development under [section 96.1A, subsection 35](#), and in effect at the time of the injury.

4. Payment under [this section](#) shall be made promptly out of appropriations which have been made for that purpose, if any. An amount or part thereof which cannot be paid promptly from the appropriation shall be paid promptly out of moneys in the state treasury not otherwise appropriated.

5. The time limit for commencing an original proceeding to determine entitlement to benefits under [this section](#) is the same as set forth in [section 85.26](#). If an injury occurs to an

inmate so as to qualify the inmate for benefits under [this section](#), notwithstanding the fact that payments of weekly benefits are not commenced, an acknowledgment of compensability shall be filed with the workers' compensation commissioner within thirty days of the time the responsible authority receives notice or knowledge of the injury as required by [section 85.23](#).

6. If a dispute arises as to the extent of disability when an acknowledgment of compensability is on file or when an award determining liability has been made, an action to determine the extent of disability must be commenced within one year of the time of the release of the inmate from the institution. This does not bar the right to reopen the claim as provided by [section 85.26, subsection 2](#).

7. Responsibility for the filings required by [chapter 10A, subchapter III](#), for injuries resulting in permanent disability or death and as modified by [this section](#) shall be made in the same manner as for other employees of the institution.

[C79, 81, §85.59]

[83 Acts, ch 101, §4](#); [84 Acts, ch 1280, §1](#); [85 Acts, ch 67, §11](#); [85 Acts, ch 177, §1](#); [87 Acts, ch 111, §5, 6](#); [88 Acts, ch 1165, §1](#); [90 Acts, ch 1251, §3](#); [93 Acts, ch 46, §1](#); [94 Acts, ch 1171, §1](#); [96 Acts, ch 1186, §23](#); [98 Acts, ch 1061, §11](#); [2008 Acts, ch 1079, §2](#); [2009 Acts, ch 133, §21](#); [2019 Acts, ch 24, §104](#); [2020 Acts, ch 1062, §81](#); [2023 Acts, ch 19, §1747](#)

Referred to in [§85.36](#), [85.45](#), [85.61](#), [88.3](#), [232.13](#), [669.14](#), [904.809](#), [907.13](#)

Additional persons deemed state employees, see [§232.13](#)