

No. 2021-6768

**Official Order
of the
Texas Commissioner of Workers' Compensation**

Date: 04-05-2021

Subject Considered:

StarStone National Insurance Company
P.O. Box 100165
Columbia, South Carolina 29202-3165

Consent Order
DWC Enforcement File Nos. 25534 and 26122

General remarks and official action taken:

This is a consent order with StarStone National Insurance Company (StarStone). The commissioner of the Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation (DWC) considers whether DWC should take disciplinary action against StarStone.

Waiver

StarStone acknowledges that the Texas Labor Code and other applicable laws provide certain rights. StarStone waives all of these rights, and any other procedural rights that apply, in consideration of the entry of this consent order.

Findings of Fact

1. StarStone holds a certificate of authority issued by the Texas Department of Insurance to transact the business of insurance pursuant to TEX. INS. CODE §§ 801.051-801.053 and is licensed to write workers' compensation/employers' liability insurance in Texas.
2. StarStone was not selected to be tiered in the 2007, 2009, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, and 2018 Performance Based Oversight (PBO) assessments.

Failure to Timely Initiate Payment of Accrued Temporary Income Benefits

First Instance, No. 26122

3. StarStone was required to pay temporary income benefits (TIBs) to an injured employee for the period of [REDACTED], through [REDACTED]. The TIBs payment was due seven days after the first day of the pay period, which was [REDACTED]. StarStone issued payment on [REDACTED], which was one day late.
4. StarStone was required to pay TIBs to an injured employee for the period of [REDACTED], through [REDACTED]. The TIBs payment was due seven days after the first day of the pay period, which was [REDACTED]. StarStone issued payment on [REDACTED], which was three days late.
5. StarStone was required to pay TIBs to an injured employee for the period of [REDACTED], through [REDACTED]. The TIBs payment was due seven days after the first day of the pay period, which was [REDACTED]. StarStone issued payment on [REDACTED], which was 14 days late.
6. StarStone was required to pay TIBs to an injured employee for the period of [REDACTED], through [REDACTED]. The TIBs payment was due seven days after the first day of the pay period, which was [REDACTED]. StarStone issued payment on [REDACTED], which was seven days late.

Second Instance, No. 25534

7. StarStone was required to pay TIBs to an injured employee for the period of [REDACTED], through [REDACTED]. The TIBs payment was due seven days after the first day of the pay period, which was [REDACTED]. StarStone issued payment on [REDACTED], which was five days late.
8. StarStone was required to pay TIBs to an injured employee for the period of [REDACTED], through [REDACTED]. The TIBs payment was due seven days after the first day of the pay period, which was [REDACTED]. StarStone issued payment on [REDACTED], for the period of [REDACTED], through [REDACTED], but missed payment for [REDACTED]. On [REDACTED], StarStone issued payment for [REDACTED], including interest. The payment was 162 days late.

Assessment of Sanction

1. Failure to provide income benefits in a timely and cost-effective manner is harmful to injured employees and the Texas workers' compensation system.
2. In assessing the sanction for this case, DWC fully considered the following factors in TEX. LAB. CODE § 415.021(c) and 28 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 180.26(e):
 - the seriousness of the violation, including the nature, circumstances, consequences, extent, and gravity of the prohibited act;
 - the history and extent of previous administrative violations;
 - the violator's demonstration of good faith, including actions it took to rectify the consequences of the prohibited act;
 - the penalty necessary to deter future violations;
 - whether the administrative violation had a negative impact on the delivery of benefits to an injured employee;
 - the history of compliance with electronic data interchange requirements;
 - to the extent reasonable, the economic benefit resulting from the prohibited act; and
 - other matters that justice may require, including, but not limited to:
 - PBO assessments;
 - prompt and earnest actions to prevent future violations;
 - self-report of the violation;
 - the size of the company or practice;
 - the effect of a sanction on the availability of health care; and
 - evidence of heightened awareness of the legal duty to comply with the Texas Workers' Compensation Act and DWC rules.
3. DWC found the following factors in TEX. LAB. CODE § 415.021(c) and 28 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 180.26(e) to be aggravating: the seriousness of the violation, including the nature, circumstances, consequences, extent, and gravity of the prohibited act; the penalty necessary to deter future violations; and whether the administrative violation had a negative impact on the delivery of benefits to an injured employee.
4. DWC found the following factor in TEX. LAB. CODE § 415.021(c) and 28 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 180.26(e) to be mitigating: the violator's demonstration of good faith, including actions it took to rectify the consequences of the prohibited act.

5. StarStone acknowledges it communicated with DWC about the relevant statutes and rules it violated; the facts establish that the administrative violation occurred; and the proposed sanction is appropriate, including the factors DWC considered under TEX. LAB. CODE § 415.021(c) and 28 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 180.26(e).
6. StarStone acknowledges that, in assessing the sanction, DWC considered the factors in TEX. LAB. CODE § 415.021(c) and 28 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 180.26(e).

Conclusions of Law

1. The commissioner has jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to TEX. LAB. CODE §§ 402.001, 402.00114, 402.00116, 402.00128, 414.002, 414.003, 415.002, and 415.021.
2. The commissioner has the authority to dispose of this case informally pursuant to TEX. GOV'T CODE § 2001.056, TEX. LAB. CODE §§ 401.021 and 402.00128(b)(7), and 28 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 180.26(h).
3. StarStone has knowingly and voluntarily waived all procedural rights to which it may have been entitled regarding the entry of this order, including, but not limited to, issuance and service of notice of intent to institute disciplinary action, notice of hearing, a public hearing, a proposal for decision, a rehearing by the commissioner, and judicial review.
4. Pursuant to TEX. LAB. CODE § 415.021, the commissioner may assess an administrative penalty against a person who commits an administrative violation.
5. Pursuant to TEX. LAB. CODE § 415.002(a)(20), an insurance carrier or its representative commits an administrative violation each time it violates a DWC rule.
6. Pursuant to TEX. LAB. CODE § 415.002(a)(22), an insurance carrier or its representative commits an administrative violation each time it fails to comply with a provision of the Texas Workers' Compensation Act.
7. Pursuant to TEX. LAB. CODE §§ 408.081, 409.023, and 415.002(a)(16), an insurance carrier must pay benefits weekly, as and when the benefits accrue, without order from the commissioner.

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8. Pursuant to TEX. LAB. CODE §§ 408.081, 408.082, and 409.021 and 28 TEX. ADMIN. CODE §§ 124.3 and 124.7, an insurance carrier is required to initiate payment of TIBs no later than the 15th day after it receives written notice of the injury or the seventh day after the accrual date, unless the insurance carrier notifies DWC and the injured employee in writing of its refusal to pay.
9. StarStone violated TEX. LAB. CODE §§ 409.021, 415.002(a)(20), and 415.002(a)(22) each time it failed to timely initiate payment of TIBs.

Confidential Information Redacted
Texas Labor Code §§402.083 and 402.092

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Order

It is ordered that StarStone National Insurance Company must pay an administrative penalty of \$2,750 within 30 days from the date of this order. StarStone National Insurance Company must pay the administrative penalty by company check, cashier's check, or money order and make it payable to the "State of Texas." Mail the administrative penalty to the Texas Department of Insurance, Attn: DWC Enforcement Section, MC AO-9999, P.O. Box 12030, Austin, Texas 78711-2030.



Cassie Brown
Commissioner of Workers' Compensation

Approved Form and Content:



Tyrus Housh
Staff Attorney, Enforcement
Compliance and Investigations
Division of Workers' Compensation

Affidavit

STATE OF Florida

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COUNTY OF Pinellas

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Before me, the undersigned authority, personally appeared David J Calandro,
who being by me duly sworn, deposed as follows:

"My name is David J Calandro. I am of sound mind, capable of making this
statement, and have personal knowledge of these facts which are true and correct.

I hold the office of Regional Claim Manager and am the authorized representative of
StarStone National Insurance Company. I am duly authorized by the organization to
execute this statement.

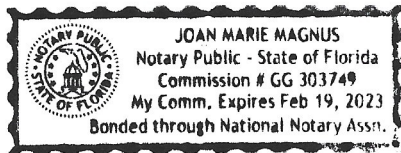
StarStone National Insurance Company has knowingly and voluntarily entered into this
consent order and agrees with and consents to the issuance and service of this consent
order."

David J Calandro

Affiant

SWORN TO AND SUBSCRIBED before me on March 25, 2021.

(NOTARY SEAL)



Joan Marie Magnus
Signature of Notary Public

Joan Marie Magnus
Printed Name of Notary Public

Feb. 19, 2023
Commission Expiration