

APPEAL NO. 990646

This appeal is considered in accordance with the Texas Workers' Compensation Act, TEX. LAB. CODE ANN. § 401.001 *et seq.* (1989 Act). On December 30, 1998, a contested case hearing was held. The issue concerned the entitlement of the appellant (claimant), to her 15th quarter of supplemental income benefits (SIBS). The hearing officer decided this issue in her favor and ordered the respondent (carrier) to pay SIBS.

However, over two and one-half months after this decision was issued, the claimant has filed a document stating that she disagrees with the decision against her. We cannot locate, however, a hearing officer's decision subsequent to this one that the claimant might be appealing.

Because the decision in question is in favor of claimant, and the document filed as an "appeal" is well beyond 15 days after the decision would have been received by the parties, the document filed as an appeal of the 15th quarter of SIBS will not be accepted as such. The decision of the hearing officer that claimant is entitled to her 15th quarter of SIBS has become final by operation of law.

Susan M. Kelley
Appeals Judge

CONCUR:

Stark O. Sanders, Jr.
Chief Appeals Judge

Judy L. Stephens
Appeals Judge