

13.9 WV WORKS SANCTIONS

When a member of the AG does not comply with requirements found on his PRC, a sanction must be imposed unless the Worker determines that good cause exists. Information about development of the PRC is found in Chapter 24. Information about the PRC as an eligibility requirement is found in Chapter 1.

NOTE: When the person whose actions cause a sanction to be imposed becomes an SSI recipient prior to imposition of the sanction, no sanction is imposed. In addition, the offense is not counted when determining the level of subsequent sanctions. If the family has already been sanctioned when the offender becomes an SSI recipient, the sanction is lifted as soon as possible considering RAPIDS deadlines. The partial sanction already served counts when determining the level of the subsequent sanctions.

NOTE: If a disabled client chooses to participate, no sanction should be imposed for failing to meet the work requirements if the Worker or Supervisor determines the participant failed to meet the PRC requirements due to his disability.

A. DEFINITION OF SANCTION

NOTE: Once a sanction has been imposed, it cannot be stopped until the appropriate time has elapsed or the appropriate action is taken, whichever is later.

Sanctions are applied to WV WORKS cases in the form of check reductions and, for the 3rd or subsequent offense, termination of benefits. The amount of the check reduction is a fixed amount and is determined as follows:

1st Offense = 1/3 reduction in the check amount, prior to recoupment, that the AG is currently eligible to receive, for 3 months

2nd Offense = 2/3 reduction in the check amount, prior to recoupment, that the AG is currently eligible to receive, for 3 months. If the case is in a 1/3 reduction when the 2nd sanction is applied, the 2/3 reduction is applied to the check amount the client is currently eligible to receive, prior to recoupment; it is not applied to the check amount which has already been reduced by 1/3.

3rd Offense = Ineligibility for cash assistance for 3 or until compliance, and All whichever is later.
Subsequent Offenses

NOTE: See item C below for information about the mandatory home visit after imposition of the 2nd sanction.

Work Requirements

All benefit reductions due to imposition of a sanction require advance notice. See Chapter 6 for specific information. Unless the client shows good cause for non-compliance, the sanction is imposed. This is true even if the client complies after the notice is sent but before the sanction is effective.

Once a reduction in benefits or ineligibility is imposed, i.e. after expiration of the advance notice period, the reduction or ineligibility remains in effect for the pre-determined number of months, regardless of case status.

B. CONCURRENT SANCTIONS

When an additional offense for the same or a different requirement occurs during a sanction period, the next level of sanction is imposed, after proper notification. The client must also be given the opportunity to establish good cause, regardless of the length of time remaining for the sanction that is already in effect. Sanctions may, therefore, run concurrently.

When 2 or more offenses, by the same individual or by different individuals in the same AG, occur prior to the Worker's having mailed the advance notice to the client, it is treated as if only one offense has occurred. Even though all offenses must be addressed in the client notification, only one sanction is imposed. However, if an additional offense, by the same individual or by a different individual(s), occurs after the Worker has mailed the client notification of the preceding offense, an additional sanction may be imposed after proper notification and the opportunity to establish good cause.

C. BEGINNING OF THE SANCTION PERIOD

The sanction period begins the month after expiration of the advance notice period. A sanction is not imposed by having the client repay all or part of the benefit he has already received. A reduced check amount for three months or termination of cash assistance for at least 3 months is the only means by which a sanction is imposed.

Imposition of a sanction may be delayed by a Fair Hearing request. When the Department is upheld, the sanction begins in the month following the Fair Hearing decision.

If the decision is reached after the RAPIDS deadline date, the sanction begins 2 months after the decision.

After the 2nd sanction has been imposed, the Worker must make a home visit. The visit may occur anytime after notification that the 2nd sanction has been imposed, but before notifying the client of the 3rd sanction. It is recommended that the visit occur as soon as possible after the 2nd sanction to try to avoid a 3rd sanction. When the 3rd sanction occurs prior to the home visit, the imposition of the 3rd sanction must be delayed until the home visit is completed. The Worker must attempt 2 home visits before imposing the 3rd sanction without a home visit. At least one of the visits must be scheduled in writing.