

- (1) a county;
- (2) a county board of education;
- (3) a statutory bicounty agency; and
- (4) an incorporated municipality.

(b) Except as provided in subsection (c) of this section, a covered employee may elect to have a hearing on a claim of the covered employee held [in] AT:

(1) [the county where the accidental personal injury, compensable hernia, or last injurious exposure to the hazards of the occupational disease allegedly occurred] A REGIONAL HEARING LOCATION DETERMINED BY THE COMMISSION TO BE CONVENIENT TO ALL PARTIES;

(2) A REGIONAL HEARING LOCATION THAT COVERS the county where the covered employee resided when the accidental personal injury, or compensable hernia, or last injurious exposure to the hazards of the occupational disease allegedly occurred; or

(3) Baltimore City.

(c) (1) Unless the covered employee objects, if the employer is a governmental agency, the Commission shall conduct a hearing in the county in which the governmental agency is located, provided that hearings of the Commission are scheduled in that county.

(2) IF HEARINGS ARE NOT CONDUCTED IN THE COUNTY IN WHICH THE GOVERNMENTAL AGENCY IS LOCATED, A HEARING MAY BE HELD IN THE REGIONAL HEARING LOCATION NEAREST THAT COUNTY'S GOVERNMENT OFFICES.

(d) A covered employee shall notify the Commission of an election under this section within 10 days after the parties are notified of the hearing.

(e) The Commission may deny an election to hold a hearing in Baltimore City, if:

(1) the accidental personal injury, compensable hernia, or last injurious exposure to the hazards of the occupational disease allegedly occurred outside of Baltimore City;

(2) the covered employee did not reside in Baltimore City when the accidental personal injury, compensable hernia, or last injurious exposure to the hazards of the occupational disease allegedly occurred; and

(3) the Commission finds that holding the hearing in Baltimore City would inconvenience a party.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 2000.

Approved April 25, 2000.