
42 U.S. Code § 404

Overpayments and underpayments

(a) Procedure for adjustment or recovery

(1) Whenever the Commissioner of Social Security finds that more or less than the correct amount of payment has been made to any person under this subchapter, proper adjustment or recovery shall be made, under regulations prescribed by the Commissioner of Social Security, as follows:

(A) With respect to payment to a person of more than the correct amount, the Commissioner of Social Security shall decrease any payment under this subchapter to which such overpaid person is entitled, or shall require such overpaid person or his estate to refund the amount in excess of the correct amount, or shall decrease any payment under this subchapter payable to his estate or to any other person on the basis of the wages and self-employment income which were the basis of the payments to such overpaid person, or shall obtain recovery by means of reduction in tax refunds based on notice to the Secretary of the Treasury as permitted under section 3720A of title 31, or shall apply any combination of the foregoing. A payment made under this subchapter on the basis of an erroneous report of death by the Department of Defense of an individual in the line of duty while he is a member of the uniformed services (as defined in section 410(m) of this title) on active duty (as defined in section 410(l) of this title) shall not be considered an incorrect payment for any month prior to the month such Department notifies the Commissioner of Social Security that such individual is alive.

(B)

(i) Subject to clause (ii), with respect to payment to a person of less than the correct amount, the Commissioner of Social Security shall make payment of the balance of the amount due such underpaid person, or, if such person dies before payments are completed or before negotiating one or more checks representing correct payments, disposition of the amount due shall be made in accordance with subsection (d).

(ii) No payment shall be made under this subparagraph to any person during any period for which monthly insurance benefits of such person—

(I) are subject to nonpayment by reason of section 402(x)(1) of this title, or

(II) in the case of a person whose monthly insurance benefits have terminated for a reason other than death, would be subject to nonpayment by reason of section 402(x)(1) of this title but for the termination of such benefits,

until section 402(x)(1) of this title no longer applies, or would no longer apply in the case of benefits that have terminated.

(iii) Nothing in clause (ii) shall be construed to limit the Commissioner's authority to withhold amounts, make adjustments, or recover amounts due under this subchapter, subchapter VIII or subchapter XVI that would be deducted from a payment that would otherwise be payable to such person but for such clause.

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