

**SENATE BILL NO. 95**

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTIETH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY SENATORS MILLER, Taylor, Halford, Torgerson, Donley

Introduced: 2/17/97

Referred: L&C, Judiciary, Finance

**A BILL**

**FOR AN ACT ENTITLED**

1 "An Act relating to workers' compensation self-insurance."

2 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

3 \* **Section 1.** AS 21 is amended by adding a new chapter to read:

4 **Chapter 47. Workers' Compensation Self-insurance Groups.**

5 **Sec. 21.47.010. Scope.** The provisions of this chapter apply to workers'  
6 compensation self-insurance groups. This chapter does not apply to public employees  
7 or governmental entities. A workers' compensation self-insurance group that is issued  
8 a certificate of approval by the director may not be considered to be an insurer or an  
9 insurance company and is not subject to the provisions of the insurance laws of this  
10 title except as otherwise provided in this chapter.

11 **Sec. 21.47.020. Authority to act as a workers' compensation self-insurance**  
12 **group.** A person may not act as a workers' compensation self-insurance group unless  
13 the person has been issued a certificate of approval by the director.

14 **Sec. 21.47.030. Required qualifications.** (a) A proposed workers'  
15 compensation self-insurance group shall file with the director an application for a

1 certificate of approval accompanied by a nonrefundable filing fee of \$500. The  
2 application must include the group's name, location of its principal office, date of  
3 organization, name and address of each member, and other information that the  
4 director may reasonably require, together with the following:

- 5 (1) proof of compliance with the provisions of (b) of this section;
- 6 (2) a copy of the group's articles of association, if any;
- 7 (3) a copy of agreements with the administrator and with any service  
8 company;
- 9 (4) a copy of the bylaws of the proposed group;
- 10 (5) a copy of the agreement between the group and each member  
11 securing the payment of workers' compensation benefits; the agreement must include  
12 a provision for payment of assessments as provided under AS 21.47.170;
- 13 (6) designation of the initial board of trustees and administrator;
- 14 (7) the address in this state where the books and records of the group  
15 shall be maintained at all times;
- 16 (8) a pro forma financial statement on a form acceptable to the director  
17 showing the financial ability of the group to pay the workers' compensation obligations  
18 of its members;
- 19 (9) proof of the group's qualification under 26 U.S.C. 501(c)(6) and  
20 exemption from taxation under 26 U.S.C. 501(a); and
- 21 (10) proof of payment to the group by each member of not less than  
22 25 percent of that member's first year estimated annual net premium on a date  
23 prescribed by the director; payment shall be considered to be part of the first year  
24 premium payment of a member if the proposed group is granted a certificate of  
25 approval.

26 (b) To obtain and to maintain its certificate of approval, a workers'  
27 compensation self-insurance group shall meet the following requirements, as well as  
28 other requirements established by law:

- 29 (1) a combined net worth of all members of the group of at least  
30 \$1,000,000;
- 31 (2) security in a form and amount prescribed by the director that shall

1 be provided by either a surety bond, security deposit, or financial security endorsement  
2 or any combination of bond, deposit, or endorsement; if a surety bond is used to meet  
3 the security requirement, it shall be issued by a corporate surety company authorized  
4 to transact business in this state; if a security deposit is used to meet the security  
5 requirement, securities shall be limited to bonds or other evidences of indebtedness  
6 issued, assumed, or guaranteed by the United States of America, or by an agency or  
7 instrumentality of it; certificates of deposit in a federally insured bank; shares or  
8 savings deposits in a federally insured savings and loan association or credit union; or  
9 any bond or security issued by a state of the United States of America and backed by  
10 the full faith and credit of the state; securities shall be deposited with the director and  
11 assigned to and made negotiable by the commissioner of labor under a trust document  
12 acceptable to the director; interest accruing on a negotiable security shall be collected  
13 and transmitted to the depositor, provided the depositor is not in default; a financial  
14 security endorsement, issued as part of an acceptable excess insurance contract, may  
15 be used to meet all or part of the security requirement; the director may establish and  
16 adjust, from time to time, requirements for the amount of security based on differences  
17 among groups in their size, types of employment, years in existence, and other relevant  
18 factors; the bond, security deposit, or financial security endorsement must be

19 (A) for the benefit of the state solely to pay workers'  
20 compensation claims and associated expenses; and

21 (B) payable upon the failure of the group to pay workers'  
22 compensation benefits that it is legally obligated to pay;

23 (3) specific and aggregate excess insurance in a form, in an amount,  
24 and by an insurance company acceptable to the director; the director may establish  
25 minimum requirements for the amount of specific and aggregate excess insurance  
26 based on size differences among groups, types of employment, years in existence, and  
27 other relevant factors, and may permit a group to meet this requirement by placing in  
28 a designated depository securities of the type referred to in (2) of this subsection;

29 (4) an estimated annual standard premium of at least \$250,000 during  
30 a group's first year of operation; in subsequent years, the annual standard premium  
31 must be at least \$500,000;

1 (5) an indemnity agreement jointly and severally binding the group and  
2 each member of the group to meet the workers' compensation obligations of each  
3 member; the indemnity agreement must be in a form prescribed by the director and  
4 must include minimum uniform substantive provisions prescribed by the director;  
5 subject to the director's approval, a group may add other provisions needed because  
6 of its particular circumstances;

7 (6) a fidelity bond for the administrator in a form and amount  
8 prescribed by the director; and

9 (7) a fidelity bond for the service company in a form and amount  
10 prescribed by the director; the director may also require the service company providing  
11 claim services to furnish a performance bond in a form and amount prescribed by the  
12 director.

13 (c) A group shall notify the director of any change in the information required  
14 to be filed under (a) of this section or in the manner of its compliance with (b) of this  
15 section not later than 30 days after the change.

16 (d) The director shall

17 (1) evaluate the information provided by the application required to be  
18 filed under (a) of this section to assure that gaps in funding do not exist and that funds  
19 necessary to pay workers' compensation benefits will be available on a timely basis;

20 (2) act upon a completed application for a certificate of approval within  
21 60 days; if, because of the number of applications, the director is unable to act upon  
22 an application within this period, the director may have an additional 60 days to act  
23 on an application;

24 (3) issue to the group a certificate of approval upon finding that the  
25 proposed group has met all requirements, or the director shall issue an order refusing  
26 the certificate setting out reasons for refusal upon finding that the proposed group does  
27 not meet all requirements of this chapter.

28 (e) A workers' compensation self-insurance group shall be considered to have  
29 appointed the director as its attorney to receive service of legal process issued against  
30 it in this state. The appointment is irrevocable, binds any successor in interest, and  
31 remains in effect as long as there is in this state an obligation or liability of the group

1 for workers' compensation benefits.

2 **Sec. 21.47.040. Certificate of approval; termination.** (a) A certificate of  
3 approval issued by the director to a workers' compensation self-insurance group  
4 authorizes the group to provide workers' compensation benefits as required under  
5 AS 23.30. The certificate of approval remains in effect until terminated at the request  
6 of the group or revoked by the director under AS 21.47.190.

7 (b) The director may not grant the request of a group to terminate its  
8 certificate of approval unless the group has insured or reinsured all incurred workers'  
9 compensation obligations with an authorized insurer under an agreement filed with and  
10 approved in writing by the director. Workers' compensation obligations must include  
11 both known claims and associated expenses and claims incurred but not reported and  
12 associated expenses. Subject to the approval of the director, a group may merge with  
13 another group engaged in the same or similar type of business only if the resulting  
14 group assumes in full all obligations of the merging groups. The director may hold  
15 a hearing on the merger and shall hold a hearing if any party, including a member of  
16 either group, requests a hearing.

17 **Sec. 21.47.050. Examinations.** The director may examine the affairs,  
18 transactions, accounts, records, and assets and liabilities of a group as often as the  
19 director requires. The expense of an examination shall be assessed against the group  
20 in the same manner that an insurer is assessed for an examination.

21 **Sec. 21.47.060. Board of trustees: membership, powers, duties, and**  
22 **prohibitions; accounts.** (a) A group shall be operated by a board of trustees of not  
23 less than five persons whom the members of a group elect for stated terms of office.  
24 At least two-thirds of the trustees shall be employees, officers, or directors of members  
25 of the group. The group's administrator, service company, or an owner, officer,  
26 employee of, or another person affiliated with the administrator or service company  
27 may not serve on the board of trustees of the group. A trustee shall be a resident of  
28 this state or an officer of a corporation authorized to do business in this state. The  
29 board of trustees of a group shall ensure that all claims are paid promptly and take all  
30 necessary precautions to safeguard the assets of the group.

31 (b) The board of trustees shall

1                   (1) be responsible for all money collected or disbursed from the group  
 2 and segregate all money into a claims fund account and an administrative fund  
 3 account; at least 70 percent of the net premium shall be placed into a designated  
 4 depository for the sole purpose of paying claims, allocated claims expenses,  
 5 reinsurance or excess insurance, and special fund contributions, including second injury  
 6 and other loss related funds; this shall be called the "claims fund account"; the  
 7 remaining net premium shall be placed into a designated depository for the payment  
 8 of taxes, general regulatory fees and assessments, and administrative costs; this shall  
 9 be called the "administrative fund account"; the director may approve an administrative  
 10 fund account of more than 30 percent and a claims fund account of less than 70  
 11 percent only if the group shows to the director's satisfaction that

12                               (A) more than 30 percent is needed for an effective safety and  
 13 loss control program; or

14                               (B) the group's aggregate excess insurance attaches at less than  
 15 70 percent;

16                   (2) maintain minutes of its meetings and make the minutes available  
 17 to the director;

18                   (3) designate an administrator to carry out the policies established by  
 19 the board of trustees and delineate in the written minutes of its meetings the areas of  
 20 authority the board of trustees delegates to the administrator;

21                   (4) retain an independent certified public accountant to prepare the  
 22 statement of financial condition required under AS 21.47.100.

23                   (c) The board of trustees may not

24                               (1) extend credit to individual members for payment of a premium  
 25 except under a payment plan approved by the director; or

26                               (2) borrow money from the group or in the name of the group, except  
 27 in the ordinary course of business, without first advising the director of the nature and  
 28 purpose of the loan and obtaining prior approval from the director.

29                   **Sec. 21.47.070. Group membership; termination; liability.** (a) An  
 30 employer joining a workers' compensation self-insurance group after the group has  
 31 been issued a certificate of approval shall (1) submit an application for membership

1 to the board of trustees or its administrator; and (2) enter into the indemnity agreement  
 2 required under AS 21.47.030(b)(5); membership may not take effect earlier than each  
 3 member's date of approval. An application for membership and approval of the  
 4 application shall be maintained as a permanent record by the board of trustees.

5 (b) Individual membership in a group is subject to cancellation by the group  
 6 under the bylaws of the group. In addition, individual members may elect to terminate  
 7 their participation in the group. The group shall notify the director and the division  
 8 of workers' compensation regarding the termination or cancellation of a membership.  
 9 Notice shall be given within 10 days after the termination or cancellation. The group  
 10 shall maintain coverage of a cancelled or terminated member for 30 days after notice  
 11 to the director, at the terminating member's expense, unless the group is notified  
 12 sooner by the division of workers' compensation that the cancelled or terminated  
 13 member has procured workers' compensation insurance, has become an approved self-  
 14 insurer, or has become a member of another group.

15 (c) The group shall pay all workers' compensation benefits for which a  
 16 member incurs liability during its period of membership. A member who elects to  
 17 terminate its membership or is cancelled by a group remains liable for any workers'  
 18 compensation obligations of the group and its members that were incurred during the  
 19 cancelled or terminated member's period of membership.

20 (d) A group member is not relieved of its workers' compensation liabilities  
 21 incurred during its period of membership except through payment by the group or the  
 22 member of workers' compensation benefits required under AS 23.30.

23 (e) The insolvency or bankruptcy of a member does not relieve the group or  
 24 another member of liability for the payment of any workers' compensation benefits  
 25 incurred during the insolvent or bankrupt member's period of membership.

26 **Sec. 21.47.080. Service companies.** (a) A service company or its employees,  
 27 officers, or directors may not be an employee, officer, or director of, or have either a  
 28 direct or indirect financial interest in, an administrator. An administrator or its  
 29 employees, officers, or directors may not be an employee, officer, or director of, or  
 30 have either a direct or indirect financial interest in, a service company.

31 (b) A service contract must state that unless the director permits otherwise, the

1 service company shall handle, to conclusion, all workers' compensation claims and  
2 other obligations incurred during the contract period.

3 **Sec. 21.47.090. Licensing of agent.** Except for a salaried employee of a  
4 group, its administrator, or its service company, a person soliciting membership for a  
5 workers' compensation self-insurance group must be licensed as provided under  
6 AS 21.27.

7 **Sec. 21.47.100. Financial statements and other reports.** (a) A group shall  
8 submit to the director a statement of the financial condition of the group that is  
9 annually audited by an independent certified public accountant on or before the last  
10 day of the sixth month following the end of the group's fiscal year. The financial  
11 statement must be on a form prescribed by the director and must include actuarially  
12 appropriate reserves, known as liabilities, for

- 13 (1) known claims and associated expenses;
- 14 (2) claims incurred but not reported and associated expenses;
- 15 (3) unearned premiums; and
- 16 (4) bad debts.

17 (b) The actuarial opinion required under (a) of this section shall be given by  
18 a member of the American Academy of Actuaries or other qualified loss reserve  
19 specialist as defined in the annual statement adopted by the National Association of  
20 Insurance Commissioners.

21 (c) A person may not make an untrue statement of a material fact, or omit to  
22 state a material fact necessary in order to make the statement made, in light of the  
23 circumstances under which it is made, not misleading, in connection with the  
24 solicitation of membership in a group.

25 (d) The director may prescribe the format and frequency of other required  
26 reports including payroll audit reports, summary loss reports, and quarterly financial  
27 statements.

28 **Sec. 21.47.110. Required second injury contribution.** A group is subject to  
29 the required contribution provisions of the second injury fund under AS 23.30.040.  
30 If an employee of a member of a group suffers a compensable injury, the member  
31 shall contribute to the second injury fund as required under AS 23.30.040.

1           **Sec. 21.47.120. Misrepresentation prohibited.** A person may not make a  
2 material misrepresentation or omission of a material fact in connection with the  
3 solicitation of membership of a group.

4           **Sec. 21.47.130. Investments.** Funds not needed by a group for current  
5 obligations may be invested by the board of trustees as provided under AS 21.21.

6           **Sec. 21.47.140. Rates and reporting of rates.** (a) A workers' compensation  
7 self-insurance group shall adhere to the uniform classification system, uniform  
8 experience rating plan, and manual rules designated by the director.

9           (b) Premium contributions to the group shall be determined by applying the  
10 manual rates and rules to the appropriate classification of a member. Premium  
11 contributions shall be adjusted by a member's experience credit or debit. Subject to  
12 approval by the director, the premium contributions may also be reduced by an  
13 advance premium discount reflecting the group's expense levels and loss experience.

14           (c) Notwithstanding (b) of this section, a group may apply to the director for  
15 permission to make its own rates. Rates established under this subsection shall be  
16 based on at least five years of the group's experience.

17           (d) A group shall use the premium rates designated by the director plus an  
18 additional amount representing the member's portion of estimated expenses. A group  
19 may contract with an advisory organization approved by the director for assistance in  
20 developing appropriate rates.

21           (e) A group shall be audited at least annually by an auditor acceptable to the  
22 director to verify proper classifications, experience rating, payroll, and rates. A report  
23 of the audit shall be filed with the director in a form acceptable to the director. A  
24 group or a member of a group may request a hearing on objections to the  
25 classifications. If the director determines that as a result of an improper classification  
26 a member's premium contribution is insufficient, the director shall order the group to  
27 assess that member an amount equal to the deficiency. If the director determines that  
28 as a result of an improper classification a member's premium is excessive, the director  
29 shall order the group to refund to the member the excess premium collected. The  
30 audit required under this subsection shall be at the expense of the group.

31           **Sec. 21.47.150. Refunds.** (a) Money for a fiscal year in excess of the amount

1 necessary to fund all obligations for that fiscal year may be declared to be refundable  
2 by the board of trustees not less than 12 months after the end of the fiscal year.

3 (b) A member shall be given a written description of the refund plan at the  
4 time of application for membership. A refund for any fiscal year shall be paid only  
5 to those employers who remain participants in the group for the entire fiscal year.

6 **Sec. 21.47.160. Premium payment; reserves.** (a) A group shall establish to  
7 the satisfaction of the director a premium payment plan; the plan must include

8 (1) an initial payment by each member of at least 25 percent of that  
9 member's annual premium before the start of the group's fiscal year; and

10 (2) payment of the balance of each member's annual premium in  
11 monthly or quarterly installments.

12 (b) A group shall establish and maintain actuarially appropriate loss reserves  
13 that must include reserves for

14 (1) known claims and associated expenses; and

15 (2) claims incurred but not reported and associated expenses.

16 (c) A group shall establish and maintain bad debt reserves based on the  
17 historical experience of the group or other groups.

18 **Sec. 21.47.170. Deficits and insolvencies.** (a) If the assets of a group are at  
19 any time insufficient to enable the group to discharge its legal liabilities and other  
20 obligations and to maintain the reserves required of it under this chapter, it shall  
21 immediately make up the deficiency or levy an assessment upon the group members  
22 for the amount needed to make up the deficiency.

23 (b) In the event of a deficiency in any fiscal year, the deficiency shall be made  
24 up immediately, either from

25 (1) surplus from a fiscal year other than the current fiscal year;

26 (2) administrative funds;

27 (3) assessment of the membership, if ordered by the group; or

28 (4) an alternate method that the director may approve or direct.

29 (c) The director shall be notified before a transfer of surplus funds from one  
30 fiscal year to another. If a group fails to assess its members or to otherwise make up  
31 a deficit within 30 days, the director shall order the group to make up the deficit.

1 (d) If a group fails to make the required assessment of its members within 30  
 2 days after the director orders it to do so, or if the deficiency is not fully made up  
 3 within 60 days after the date on which the assessment is made, or within a longer  
 4 period of time that is specified by the director, the group shall be considered to be  
 5 insolvent.

6 (e) The director shall proceed against an insolvent group in the same manner  
 7 as the director would proceed against an insolvent domestic insurer in this state as  
 8 provided under AS 21.78.

9 (f) In the event of the liquidation of a group, the director shall levy an  
 10 assessment upon its members in an amount the director determines to be necessary to  
 11 discharge all liabilities of the group, including the reasonable cost of liquidation.

12 **Sec. 21.47.180. Penalties.** (a) After notice and opportunity for a hearing, the  
 13 director may impose a civil penalty on a person or group found to be in violation of  
 14 any provision of this chapter. The civil penalty may not exceed \$1,000 for each act  
 15 or violation and may not exceed \$10,000 in the aggregate.

16 (b) After notice and opportunity for a hearing, the director may issue an order  
 17 requiring a person or group to cease and desist from engaging in an act or practice  
 18 found to be in violation of any provision of this chapter.

19 (c) Upon a finding, after notice and opportunity for a hearing, that a person  
 20 or group has violated a cease and desist order, the director may

21 (1) impose a civil penalty of not more than \$10,000 for each act or  
 22 violation of the order not to exceed an aggregate amount of \$100,000; or

23 (2) revoke the group's certificate of approval or any insurance license  
 24 held by the person.

25 **Sec. 21.47.190. Revocation of certificate of approval.** (a) After notice and  
 26 opportunity for a hearing, the director may revoke a group's certificate of approval if  
 27 the group

28 (1) is found to be insolvent;

29 (2) fails to pay any premium tax, regulatory fee or assessment, or  
 30 special fund contribution imposed upon the group; or

31 (3) fails to comply with any of the provisions of this chapter or with

1 any lawful order of the director within the time prescribed.

2 (b) In addition to (a) of this section, the director may revoke a group's  
3 certificate of approval if, after notice and opportunity for hearing, the director finds  
4 that

5 (1) a certificate of approval that was issued to the group was obtained  
6 by fraud;

7 (2) there was a material misrepresentation in the application for the  
8 certificate of approval; or

9 (3) the group or its administrator has misappropriated, converted,  
10 illegally withheld, or refused to pay over upon proper demand any money that belongs  
11 to a member, an employee of a member, or a person otherwise entitled to it, and that  
12 has been entrusted to the group or its administrator in its fiduciary capacities.

13 **Sec. 21.47.500. Definitions.** In this chapter,

14 (1) "administrator" means an individual, partnership, or corporation  
15 engaged by a workers' compensation self-insurance group's board of trustees to carry  
16 out the policies established by the group's board of trustees and to provide day-to-day  
17 management of the group;

18 (2) "insolvent" or "insolvency" means the inability of a workers'  
19 compensation self-insurance group to pay its outstanding lawful obligations as the  
20 obligations mature in the regular course of business, as may be shown either by an  
21 excess of its required reserves and other liabilities over its assets or by its not having  
22 sufficient assets to reinsure all of its outstanding liabilities after paying all accrued  
23 claims owed by the group;

24 (3) "net premium" means premium derived from standard premium  
25 adjusted by an advance premium discount;

26 (4) "service company" means a person that provides services not  
27 provided by the administrator, including

28 (A) claims adjustment;

29 (B) safety engineering;

30 (C) compilation of statistics and the preparation of premium,

31 loss, and tax reports;

- 1 (D) preparation of required self-insurance reports;  
2 (E) development of members' assessments and fees; and  
3 (F) administration of a claim fund;

4 (5) "standard premium" means the premium derived from the manual  
5 rates adjusted by experience modification factors but before advance premium  
6 discounts;

7 (6) "workers' compensation self-insurance group" or "group" means a  
8 not-for-profit unincorporated association that has qualified as a trade organization  
9 under 26 U.S.C. 501(c)(6) (Internal Revenue Code) and is exempt from taxation under  
10 26 U.S.C. 501(a) (Internal Revenue Code), and consists of five or more employers who  
11 are engaged in the same or similar type of business, who are members of the same  
12 bona fide trade or professional association that has been in existence for not less than  
13 five years, and who enter into agreements to pool their liabilities for workers'  
14 compensation benefits in this state.