

Minnesota Workers' Compensation Insurers Association, Inc.

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November 16, 2023

ALL ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

Circular No. 23-1831

RE: NCCI ITEM B-1449 – Revisions to the Minnesota Basic Manual Rules Related to Service Charges and Automatic Gratuities

The Minnesota Department of Commerce has approved the above filing to become effective for new and renewal policies effective on and after 12:01 a.m. on January 1, 2024. The purpose of this item is to revise payroll rules related to service charges and automatic gratuities in the *Minnesota Basic Manual*.

Currently, the *Minnesota Basic Manual* rule, Rules for excluding from payroll tips or gratuities, excludes from payroll tips or other gratuities that are received by employees. The current rule does not address the treatment of service charges or automatic gratuities. Additionally, the rule that excludes tips and gratuities does not address whether the intent of the rule is meant to exclude only tips and gratuities that are given voluntarily.

Following are the revisions to the *Minnesota Basic Manual*:

- 1. Establish a new rule, Rules for including service charges and automatic gratuities in payroll, to specify that service charges and automatic gratuities are included in payroll when the customer does not
 - determine the amount of the payment
 - determine who receives the payment, and
 - have the ability to reduce the payment amount below the set percentage or fee.
- 2. Revise the rule, Rules for excluding from payroll tips or gratuities, to add a definition for tips and other gratuities.

Exhibit 1

Details the establishment of the rule, Rules for including service charges and automatic gratuities in payroll in the *Minnesota Basic Manual*.

MWCIA staff recommends to adopt the proposed change(s).

Exhibit 2

Details the revisions to the rule, Rules for excluding from payroll tips or gratuities in the *Minnesota Basic Manual*.

MWCIA staff recommends to adopt the proposed change(s).

The attached exhibits illustrate necessary changes to the *Minnesota Basic Manual*. As in past filings, strikethroughs indicate deleted text while underlining indicates new or added text. A copy of National Council's original filing memorandum is also included to provide additional background information regarding Item B-1449.

Please direct any questions you may have concerning this item to MWCIA's Underwriting Department at 952-897-1737, Option 1, or email to underwriting@mwcia.org.

A NOTICE TO MEMBERSHIP:

MWCIA would like to remind our membership who have filed a Limited Power of Attorney with the Minnesota Department of Commerce that no materials referenced in this Circular Letter are required to be independently filed with the department.

Minnesota Basic Manual

Rule 2 - Premium Basis and Payroll Allocation

B. Payroll

CURRENT PHRASEOLOGY		PROPOSED PHRASEOLOGY	
B. PAYROLL		B. PAYROLL	
For purposes of this manual, the terms "payroll" and "remuneration" mean money or		For purposes of this manual, the terms "payroll" and "remuneration" mean money or	
substitutes for money.		substitutes for money.	
1. Includes:		1. Includes:	
a.	Wages or salaries (including retroactive wages or salaries).	a.	Wages or salaries (including retroactive wages or salaries).
b.	Total pay received by an employee for commissions and draws	b.	Total pay received by an employee for commissions and draws
	against commissions.		against commissions.
c.	Bonuses including stock bonus plans. Refer to Rule 2-D for	C.	Bonuses including stock bonus plans. Refer to Rule 2-D for
	payroll limitation rules.		payroll limitation rules.
d.	Extra pay for overtime work except as provided in Rule 2-C-2.	d.	Extra pay for overtime work except as provided in Rule 2-C-2.
e.	Pay for holidays, vacations, or periods of sickness. Refer to Rule	e.	Pay for holidays, vacations, or periods of sickness. Refer to Rule
	2-G for allocation of payroll for employees subject to more than		2-G for allocation of payroll for employees subject to more than
	one classification code.		one classification code.
f.	Payment by an employer of amounts that would have been	f.	Payment by an employer of amounts that would have been
	withheld from employees to meet statutory obligations for		withheld from employees to meet statutory obligations for

Minnesota Basic Manual

Rule 2 – Premium Basis and Payroll Allocation

B. Payroll

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CURRENT PHRASEOLOGY	PROPOSED PHRASEOLOGY	
insurance or pension plans such as the Federal Social Security	insurance or pension plans such as the Federal Social Security	
Act or Medicare.	Act or Medicare.	
g. Payment to employees on any basis other than time worked, such	g. Payment to employees on any basis other than time worked, such	
as piecework, profit sharing or incentive plans.	as piecework, profit sharing or incentive plans.	
h. RESERVED FOR FUTURE USE	h. The rental value of an apartment or house provided to an	
i. The rental value of an apartment or house provided to an	employee based on comparable accommodations.	
employee based on comparable accommodations.	i. The value of lodging, other than an apartment or house received	
j. The value of lodging, other than an apartment or house received	by an employee as part of their pay to the extent shown in the	
by an employee as part of their pay to the extent shown in the	employer's records.	
employer's records.	j. The value of meals received by employees as part of their pay to	
k. The value of meals received by employees as part of their pay to	the extent shown in the employer's records.	
the extent shown in the employer's records.	k. The value of store certificates, merchandise, credits or any other	
The value of store certificates, merchandise, credits or any other	substitute for money received by employees as part of their pay.	
substitute for money received by employees as part of their pay.	Payments for salary reduction, employee savings plans,	
m. Payments for salary reduction, employee savings plans,	retirement or cafeteria plans (IRC 125), health savings accounts,	
retirement or cafeteria plans (IRC 125), health savings accounts,	and flexible accounts that are made through employee-authorized	
and flexible accounts that are made through employee-authorized	salary reduction from the employee's gross pay.	
salary reduction from the employee's gross pay.	m. Davis-Bacon wages or wages from a similar prevailing wage law.	

Minnesota Basic Manual

Rule 2 – Premium Basis and Payroll Allocation

B. Payroll

	CURRENT PHRASEOLOGY		PROPOSED PHRASEOLOGY	
n.	Davis-Bacon wages or wages from a similar prevailing wage law.	n.	Annuity plans.	
0.	Annuity plans.	0.	Expense reimbursements to employees if the employer's records	
p.	Expense reimbursements to employees if the employer's records		do not confirm that the expense was incurred as a valid business	
	do not confirm that the expense was incurred as a valid business		expense. Refer to Rule 2-B-2-h for Contractual allowable travel	
	expense. Refer to Rule 2-B-2-h for Contractual allowable travel		expenses.	
	expenses.		Exception:	
	Exception:		When it can be verified that the employee was away from home	
	When it can be verified that the employee was away from home		overnight on the business of the employer, but the employer did	
	overnight on the business of the employer, but the employer did		not maintain verifiable receipts for incurred expenses, a	
	not maintain verifiable receipts for incurred expenses, a		reasonable allowance is permitted to be excluded.	
	reasonable allowance is permitted to be excluded.			
			Refer to Rule 2-B-2-h for additional information about exclusion of	
	Refer to Rule 2-B-2-h for additional information about exclusion of		expense reimbursements.	
	expense reimbursements.			
		p.	Payment for filming of commercials excluding subsequent	
p.	Payment for filming of commercials excluding subsequent		residuals that are earned by the commercial's participant(s) each	
	residuals that are earned by the commercial's participant(s) each		time the commercial appears in any type of media.	
	time the commercial appears in any type of media.			

Minnesota Basic Manual

Rule 2 – Premium Basis and Payroll Allocation

B. Payroll

federal, state, or local minimum wage, whichever is applicable. r. Service charges and automatic gratuities received by employees in payroll. Only the amount of the service charge or automatic gratuity received by employees is included in payroll. Service charges and automatic gratuities are set percentages or fees added to a bill or contract where the customer does not • determine the amount of the percentage or fee determine who receives the percentage or fee, and	CURRENT PHRASEOLOGY	PROPOSED PHRASEOLOGY
set percentage or fee. Refer to Rule 2-B-2-a for additional information about exclusion of tips or other gratuities received by employees.	q. Adjustments made by the employer to raise employees' wages to	q. Adjustments made by the employer to raise employees' wages to federal, state, or local minimum wage, whichever is applicable. r. Service charges and automatic gratuities received by employees in payroll. Only the amount of the service charge or automatic gratuity received by employees is included in payroll. Service charges and automatic gratuities are set percentages or fees added to a bill or contract where the customer does not • determine the amount of the percentage or fee • determine who receives the percentage or fee, and • have the ability to reduce the payment amount below the set percentage or fee. Refer to Rule 2-B-2-a for additional information about exclusion of

Minnesota Basic Manual

Rule 2 – Premium Basis and Payroll Allocation

B. Payroll

2. Excludes

CURRENT PHRASEOLOGY

PROPOSED PHRASEOLOGY

2. Excludes:

- a. Tips or other gratuities received by employees.
- Payments by an employer to group insurance or group pension plans for employees, other than those covered by Rule 2-B-1-f and Rule 2-B-1-m.
- Payments by an employer into third-party trusts for the Davis-Bacon Act or a similar prevailing wage law provided the pension trust is qualified under IRC Sections 401(a) and 501(a).
- d. The value of special rewards for individual invention or discovery.
- Dismissal or severance payments except for time worked or vacation accrued.
- f. Payments for active military duty.
- g. Employee discounts on goods purchased from the employee's employer.
- h. Expense reimbursements to employees if the employer's records confirm that the expense was incurred as a valid business expense.

2. Excludes:

a. Tips or other gratuities received by employees.

<u>Tips or other gratuities are optional payments added to a bill or contract where</u> the customer

- · determines the amount of payment
- determines that the employees receive the payment for services provided,
 and
- has the option to not add a payment to the bill or contract.
- b. Payments by an employer to group insurance or group pension plans for employees, other than those covered by Rule 2-B-1-f and Rule 2-B-1-m.
- c. Payments by an employer into third-party trusts for the Davis-Bacon Act or a similar prevailing wage law provided the pension trust is qualified under IRC Sections 401(a) and 501(a).
- d. The value of special rewards for individual invention or discovery.
- e. Dismissal or severance payments except for time worked or vacation accrued.
- f. Payments for active military duty.
- g. Employee discounts on goods purchased from the employee's employer.

Minnesota Basic Manual

Rule 2 - Premium Basis and Payroll Allocation

B. Payroll

2. Excludes

CURRENT PHRASEOLOGY	PROPOSED PHRASEOLOGY
Reimbursed expenses and flat expense allowances paid to employees	h. Expense reimbursements to employees if the employer's records confirm that
may be excluded from the audit only if all three of the following conditions	the expense was incurred as a valid business expense.
are met:	
(1) The expenses or allowances are incurred for the business of the	Reimbursed expenses and flat expense allowances paid to employees may be
employer	excluded from the audit only if all three of the following conditions are met:
(2) The amount of each employee's expense or allowance is shown	
separately in the records of the employer	(1) The expenses or allowances are incurred for the business of the employer
(3) The amount of the expense or allowance approximates the actual	(2) The amount of each employee's expense or allowance is shown separately
expense incurred by the employee in the conduct of their work	in the records of the employer
	(3) The amount of the expense or allowance approximates the actual expense
Note: If an employer did not maintain verifiable receipts for incurred	incurred by the employee in the conduct of their work
expenses for an employee that was away from home overnight on the	
business of an employer a maximum expense allowance is permitted to be	Note: If an employer did not maintain verifiable receipts for incurred expenses
excluded. Refer to Rule 2-B-1-p Exception for the maximum employee	for an employee that was away from home overnight on the business of an
expense allowance.	employer a maximum expense allowance is permitted to be excluded. Refer t
	Rule 2-B-1-p Exception for the maximum employee expense allowance.

Minnesota Basic Manual

Rule 2 – Premium Basis and Payroll Allocation

- B. Payroll
- 2. Excludes

	CURRENT PHRASEOLOGY	PROPOSED PHRASEOLOGY
	Allowable travel expenses permitted by any contract with a federal, state,	
	or local government entity, including, but not limited to, a city, borough, or	Allowable travel expenses permitted by any contract with a federal, state, or
	village, are excluded from payroll. In lieu of verifiable receipts for incurred	local government entity, including, but not limited to, a city, borough, or village,
	expenses, the employer must produce a copy of the contract provision	are excluded from payroll. In lieu of verifiable receipts for incurred expenses,
	permitting the travel expenses at audit. The allowable travel expenses	the employer must produce a copy of the contract provision permitting the travel
	must be in addition to the current wage of the employee.	expenses at audit. The allowable travel expenses must be in addition to the
i.	Meal money for late work.	current wage of the employee.
j.	Work uniform allowances.	i. Meal money for late work.
k.	Sick pay paid to an employee by a third party such as an employer's group	j. Work uniform allowances.
	insurance carrier that is paying disability income benefits to a disabled	k. Sick pay paid to an employee by a third party such as an employer's group
	employee.	insurance carrier that is paying disability income benefits to a disabled
l.	Employer-provided perks such as:	employee.
	Use of company-provided automobiles	I. Employer-provided perks such as:
	Airplane flights	Use of company-provided automobiles
	Incentive vacations (e.g., contest winners)	Airplane flights
	Discounts on property or services	Incentive vacations (e.g., contest winners)

Minnesota Basic Manual

Rule 2 – Premium Basis and Payroll Allocation

B. Payroll

2. Excludes

CURRENT PHRASEOLOGY	PROPOSED PHRASEOLOGY
Club memberships	Discounts on property or services
Tickets to entertainment events	Club memberships
Educational assistance	Tickets to entertainment events
Relocation and moving expenses	Educational assistance
m. Employer contributions to employee benefit plans such as:	Relocation and moving expenses
Employee savings plans	m. Employer contributions to employee benefit plans such as:
Retirement plans	Employee savings plans
Cafeteria plans (IRC 125)	Retirement plans
Health savings accounts	Cafeteria plans (IRC 125)
Flexible spending accounts	Health savings accounts
	Flexible spending accounts
These include contributions made by the employer, at the employer's	These include contributions made by the employer, at the employer's
expense, which are determined by the amount contributed by the	expense, which are determined by the amount contributed by the employee.
employee.	



National Council on Compensation Insurance

Regulatory Services

JUNE 27, 2023

CIF-2023-49

ITEM FILING ANNOUNCEMENT

Countrywide–Announcement of Item B-1449–Revisions to Basic Manual Rules Related to Service Charges and Automatic Gratuities

ACTION NEEDED

Please review the changes outlined in the attachment to this circular for impact on your company's systems and procedures. Also, review the weekly *Status of Item Filings* circular for state approval of this item.

Note: Arkansas law does not permit NCCI to file rules and rates on its members' behalf. Therefore, insurance carriers must make an independent filing with the Arkansas Insurance Department electing to adopt, or not adopt, an item filing filed by NCCI and subsequently approved by the Department. When such a filing is made with the Department, make sure that the NCCI item filing number (not the NCCI circular number) is referenced.

Caution: At the time of distribution of this circular, this filing has been filed with the regulator but is **not yet approved**. This information is provided for your convenience and analysis. Please do not use this information until the regulator has approved the filing.

BACKGROUND

NCCI has submitted Item B-1449—Revisions to Basic Manual Rules Related to Service Charges and Automatic Gratuities to the appropriate state regulatory authorities.

This item is applicable to new and renewal policies and is proposed to become effective on and after January 1, 2024, in all states indicated in the filing except Hawaii. In Hawaii, the effective date is determined upon regulatory approval of the individual carrier's election to adopt this change.

Additionally, this item has been submitted to certain independent bureaus for their consideration.

This item proposes to revise payroll rules related to service charges and automatic gratuities in NCCI's *Basic Manual for Workers Compensation and Employers Liability Insurance (Basic Manual)*.

Refer to the attachment for details on this item, including all state-specific treatments.

IMPACT

As part of NCCI's continuing effort to simplify and clarify manual rules, we anticipate that the proposed changes will enhance the understanding of NCCI's *Basic Manual*. An employer may see an increase in premium, dependent on whether the newly established rule related to payroll service charges and automatic gratuities is different from how the policy is currently being written.

Statewide premium impact is not quantifiable but is expected to be negligible.

NCCI ACTION

NCCI will take the following actions for Item B-1449:

- Issue a circular notifying you when the item is approved as filed, approved with changes, disapproved, or withdrawn
- Update the weekly **Status of Item Filings** circular on **ncci.com** with the latest state status
- Publish updated pages for NCCI's Basic Manual prior to the effective date, if approved

If you would like to subscribe to any of our manuals, please call our Customer Service Center at 800-NCCI-123 (800-622-4123).

901 Peninsula Corporate Circle, Boca Raton, FL 33487-1362

2121

CIF-2023-49

PERSON TO CONTACT

If you have any questions, please contact: Customer Service Center NCCI

901 Peninsula Corporate Circle Boca Raton, FL 33487-1362 800-NCCI-123 (800-622-4123) Technical Contact: Linda Bello Senior Filing Consultant NCCI 901 Peninsula Corporate Circle Boca Raton, FL 33487-1362

561-893-3813 linda bello@ncci.com

Filing Memorandum

Purpose

This item revises payroll rules related to service charges and automatic gratuities in NCCI's **Basic Manual for Workers Compensation and Employers Liability Insurance (Basic Manual)**.

Background

NCCI conducted a comprehensive review of *Basic Manual* rules related to payroll inclusions and payroll exclusions to determine the appropriate treatment for service charges and automatic gratuities.

NCCI's **Basic Manual** rule, Rules for excluding from payroll tips or gratuities, excludes from payroll tips or other gratuities that are received by employees. In all states except Montana, NCCI's **Basic Manual** rules do not address the treatment of service charges or automatic gratuities. Additionally, the **Basic Manual** rule that excludes tips and gratuities does not address whether the intent of the rule is meant to exclude only tips and gratuities that are given voluntarily.

Banquet halls, country clubs, and private clubs traditionally add a service charge to food and beverage sales. In some cases, members or patrons can adjust the service charge; in others, the amount is a set percentage in place of a tip or gratuity. Additionally, many restaurants have changed their business models to include service charges. These service charges can be in place of, or in addition to, a tip.

NCCI completed research and gathered valuable feedback related to the treatment of service charges and automatic gratuities. Key points of this research and feedback are as follows:

- Tips are "discretionary" payments by a customer that employees receive from customers.
- Service charges are "forced" fees added by the employer through a bill or contract.
- The Internal Revenue Service's (IRS) Publication 15, Employer's Tax Guide states "Service charges aren't tips; therefore, withhold taxes on service charges as you would on regular wages."
- Regarding the inclusion of service charges in payroll, NCCI received valuable feedback from carriers, including
 members of NCCI's Underwriting Committee and discussions at several Policy Research Advisory Committee (PRAC)
 meetings.

Based on NCCl's research and carrier feedback, NCCl determined that it is appropriate to establish a *Basic Manual* rule stating that service charges and automatic gratuities are included in payroll and define service charges and automatic gratuities.

Proposal

This item proposes the following revisions to NCCI's Basic Manual:

- 1. Establish a new rule, Rules for including service charges and automatic gratuities in payroll, to specify that service charges and automatic gratuities are included in payroll when the customer does not
 - determine the amount of the payment
 - determine who receives the payment, and
 - have the ability to reduce the payment amount below the set percentage or fee.
- 2. Revise the rule, Rules for excluding from payroll tips or gratuities, to add a definition for tips and other gratuities.
- 3. Revise state rules in Connecticut and Nevada as described in the Exhibit Comments and Implementation Summary section.

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Filing Memorandum

Impact

As part of NCCl's continuing effort to simplify and clarify manual rules, we anticipate that the proposed changes will enhance the understanding of NCCl's **Basic Manual**. An employer may see an increase in premium, dependent on whether the newly established rule related to payroll service charges and automatic gratuities is different from how the policy is currently being written.

Statewide premium impact is not quantifiable but is expected to be negligible.

Exhibit Comments and Implementation Summary

Exhibit	Exhibit Comments	Implementation Summary
1	Details the establishment of the rule, Rules for including service charges and automatic gratuities in payroll (Rule ID: BM-PAYI-SCF23), in NCCI's <i>Basic Manual</i> . • Applies in: AK, AL, AR, AZ, CO, DC, GA, HI, IA, ID, IL, IN, KS, KY, LA, MD, ME, MO, MS, NE, NH, NM, OK, OR, RI, SC, SD, TN, TX, UT, VA, VT, WV • Refer to state exhibits for CT and NV	item is to become effective for new and renewal
2	 Details the revisions to the rule, Rules for excluding from payroll tips or gratuities (Rule ID: BM-PAYE-RAE1F), in NCCI's <i>Basic Manual</i>. Applies in: AK, AL, AR, AZ, CO, DC, GA, HI, IA, ID, IL, IN, KS, KY, LA, MD, ME, MO, MS, NE, NH, NM, OK, OR, RI, SC, SD, TN, TX, UT, VA, VT, WV Refer to state exhibits for CT and NV 	
3	,	This item is to become effective for new and renewal policies with effective dates on and after 12:01 a.m. on January 1, 2024.
3	Details the revisions to the rule, Rules for including tips or gratuities in payroll (Rule ID: BM-PAYI-R79CC), in NCCI's <i>Basic Manual</i> for Nevada to conform with NV ADC 616A.200(13) & (14).	

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Exhibit 1

Basic Manual—Effective 2021 (Applies in: AK, AL, AR, AZ, CO, DC, GA, HI, IA, ID, IL, IN, KS, KY, LA, MD, ME, MO, MS, NE, NH, NM, OK, OR, RI, SC, SD, TN, TX, UT, VA, VT, WV)

Rules for including service charges and automatic gratuities in payroll

Rule ID: BM-PAYI-SCF23

Effective Date: January 1, 2024

Include service charges and automatic gratuities received by employees in payroll. Only the amount of the service charge or automatic gratuity received by employees is included in payroll.

Service charges and automatic gratuities

Service charges and automatic gratuities are set percentages or fees added to a bill or contract where the customer does not

- <u>determine the amount of the percentage or fee</u>
- determine who receives the percentage or fee, and
- have the ability to reduce the payment amount below the set percentage or fee.

References

Refer to

- Rules for excluding from payroll tips or other gratuities, and
- NCCI's Basic Manual User's Guide for an example of service charges and automatic gratuities.

Exhibit 2

Basic Manual—Effective 2021 (Applies in: AK, AL, AR, AZ, CO, DC, GA, HI, IA, ID, IL, IN, KS, KY, LA, MD, ME, MO, MS, NE, NH, NM, OK, OR, RI, SC, SD, TN, TX, UT, VA, VT, WV)

Rules for excluding from payroll tips or other gratuities

Rule ID: BM-PAYE-RAE1F

Effective Date: November 1, 2021 January 1, 2024

Exclude from payroll tips or other gratuities received by employees.

Tips or other gratuities

Tips or other gratuities are optional payments added to a bill or contract where the customer

- determines the amount of payment
- <u>determines that the employees receive the payment for services provided, and</u>
- has the option to not add a payment to the bill or contract.

References

Refer to Rules for including service charges and automatic gratuities in payroll.

Exhibit 3 Basic Manual—Effective 2021—Connecticut

Rules for excluding from payroll tips, service charges, or other gratuities

Rule ID: BM-PAYE-RAE1F

Effective Date: November 1, 2021 January 1, 2024

Exclude from payroll tips, service charges, or other gratuities that are received by employees or are itemized or otherwise included in a bill.

Exhibit 3 Basic Manual—Effective 2021—Nevada

Rules for including tips or gratuities in payroll

Rule ID: BM-PAYI-R79CC

Effective Date: November 1, 2021 January 1, 2024

Include tips or other gratuities received by employees in payroll. In accordance with NV ADC 616A.200(13) & (14), include in payroll 1. tips collected and disbursed by employers which were not paid at the discretion of the customer, and

2. tips not included in #1, above, which the employee has reported pursuant to 26 USC 6053(a).