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PIA, Overall Minimum PIA, Survivor Tier I PIA, Employee's Retirement Insurance Benefit PIA and Residual Lump-Sum PIA are computed under the Average Indexed Monthly Earnings PIA formula.

(c) *Average Monthly Earnings PIA formula.* The Average Monthly Earnings PIA formula is used to compute a PIA for one of two reasons: either the employee's eligibility year is before 1979 or the type of PIA requires that it always be computed under the Average Monthly Earnings PIA formula.

(1) *Use of Average Monthly Earnings PIA formula based on the employee's eligibility year.* The Average Monthly Earnings PIA formula is used in computing the Tier I PIA, the Overall Minimum PIA, the Employee Fictional Retirement Insurance Benefit PIA and the Residual Lump-Sum PIA when the employee's eligibility year is before 1979.

(2) *Types of PIA's always computed using the Average Monthly Earnings PIA formula.* The following PIA's used by the Board are determined under the Social Security Act as in effect on December 31, 1974, and are always computed using the Average Monthly Earnings PIA formula.

(i) Combined Earnings Dual Benefit PIA described in § 225.12.

(ii) Social Security Earnings Dual Benefit PIA described in § 225.13.

(iii) Railroad Earnings Dual Benefit PIA described in § 225.14.

(iv) Combined Earnings PIA described in § 225.23.

(v) Social Security Earnings PIA described in § 225.24.

(vi) Railroad Earnings PIA described in § 225.25.

(d) *Special Minimum PIA formula.* The Special Minimum PIA formula is based on the employee's years of coverage. The Special Minimum PIA formula usually applies when the employee had consistently low earnings during his or her working lifetime. The Special Minimum PIA formula is used when it is higher than the PIA calculated under the applicable Average Indexed Monthly Earnings formula or the Average Monthly Earnings formula.

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§ 225.4 Limitation on amount of earnings used to compute a PIA.

Certain PIA's used by the Board are based on a combination of compensation and wages, while other PIA's used by the Board are based solely on either compensation or wages. For purposes of crediting earnings when computing any PIA, compensation is always treated as wages. Regardless of whether a PIA is based on a combination of compensation and wages or exclusively on either compensation or wages, the total earnings for each year used in computing a PIA cannot be higher than the maximum social security earnings creditable in that year under sections 209(a) and 211(b) of the Social Security Act. The various PIA's used by the Board are described in subparts B and C of this part.

Subpart B—PIA's Used in Computing Employee, Spouse and Divorced Spouse Annuities

§ 225.10 General.

This subpart contains information about the PIA's that can be used in computing most employee, spouse and divorced spouse annuities. The Tier I PIA is used in computing the tier I component of an employee, spouse or divorced spouse annuity. The Combined Earnings Dual Benefit PIA, Social Security Earnings Dual Benefit PIA and Railroad Earnings Dual Benefit PIA are used in computing an employee's vested dual benefit component and a corresponding tier II component offset when entitlement to a vested dual benefit exists. Retirement annuity computations are discussed in part 226 of this chapter. The Overall Minimum PIA is used in computing the overall minimum guaranty formula rate as discussed in part 229 of this chapter.

§ 225.11 Tier I PIA.

(a) *General.* The Tier I PIA is used in computing an employee, spouse or divorced spouse tier I amount. Except for the cases described in paragraphs (b) through (d) of this section, a Tier I PIA is determined under sections 215 and 223 of the Social Security Act. Railroad

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and Social Security earnings are included in the calculation of a Tier I PIA.

(b) *Employee attains age 60 and/or acquires 30 years of service after June 30, 1984.* When an employee is entitled to an age and service annuity before the month of attaining age 62, as explained in part 216 of this chapter, the following Railroad Retirement Act rules apply in addition to those in §225.11(a) in computing the Tier I PIA.

(1) Four months before the first full month the employee is age 62, the Average Indexed Monthly Earnings is determined as if the employee's eligibility year were the year the annuity began.

(2) The benefit computation years used in computing the Tier I PIA are based on the date of the employee's actual attainment of age 62.

(3) The Tier I PIA is adjusted when the employee reaches age 62 to use the year in which the employee attains age 62 as the eligibility year.

(4) Cost-of-living increases and recomputations apply after the employee attains age 62.

(c) *Employee attains age 60 and acquires 30 years of service before July 1, 1984.* For purposes of determining the benefit computation years to be used in computing the Tier I PIA for an employee who is age 60 through 64, and who both has 30 years of service and attains age 60 prior to July 1, 1984, the employee is considered to be age 65 when the age and service annuity begins. For purposes of computing the Average Indexed Monthly Earnings, the eligibility year is the year the annuity begins or age 62, if earlier. Cost-of-living increases are paid from the year the annuity begins. Recomputations are paid after the employee actually attain age 62.

(d) *Disability annuity.* When an employee is entitled to a disability annuity, as explained in subpart B of part 216 of this chapter, the following Railroad Retirement Act rule applies in addition to those in §225.11(a) in computing the Tier I PIA. The Tier I PIA is computed as if the employee were 62 years old on the date, as determined by the Board, of onset of disability, if the employee is under age 62 on that date.

§ 225.12 Combined Earnings Dual Benefit PIA.

(a) *General.* The Combined Earnings Dual Benefit PIA is used in computing the employee vested dual benefit when the employee meets certain eligibility requirements as described in part 216 of this chapter. The Combined Earnings Dual Benefit PIA is also used in computing the employee's tier II annuity component when the employee becomes entitled to a vested dual benefit. This PIA is determined under section 215 of the Social Security Act as in effect on December 31, 1974. Railroad and social security earnings after 1950 (or after 1936, if applicable) and through December 31, 1974, or the last year of railroad service before 1974 are included in the calculation of this PIA.

(b) *Employee insured on own wage record on December 31, 1974.* Railroad and social security earnings after 1950 (or after 1936, if a higher PIA would result) and through 1974 are used in computing the Combined Earnings Dual Benefit PIA if the employee—

(1) Had at least 25 years of railroad service before January 1, 1975; or

(2) Had at least 10 years of railroad service as of December 31, 1974, and worked in the railroad industry anytime during calendar year 1974; or

(3) Had at least 10 years of railroad service as of December 31, 1974, and had a current connection with the railroad industry (as described in part 216 of this chapter) on December 31, 1974, or when the employee annuity began.

(c) *Employee insured on own wage record in last year of railroad service.* Railroad and social security earnings after 1950 (or after 1936, if a higher PIA would result) and through December 31 of the year before 1974 in which the employee last worked in railroad service are used in computing the Combined Earnings Dual Benefit PIA if the employee—

(1) Had at least 10 but less than 25 years of railroad service through December 31, 1974; and

(2) Did not work in the railroad industry during 1974; and

(3) Did not have a current connection with the railroad industry (as described in part 216 of this chapter) on December 31, 1974, or when the employee annuity began.