

No Railroad Retirement Benefit Increase in 2010 and Most Retiree Earnings Limits Remain at 2009 Levels

Railroad retirement annuities, like social security benefits, will not increase in January 2010 as there was no increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) from the third quarter of last year to the corresponding period of the current year.

Also, because there is no cost-of-living adjustment (COLA), social security law prohibits an increase in the amounts social security and railroad retirement beneficiaries subject to earnings restrictions can earn in 2010 without having their benefits reduced.

For those under full retirement age throughout 2010, the exempt earnings amount remains at \$14,160. For beneficiaries attaining full retirement age in 2010, the exempt earnings amount, for the months before the month full retirement age is attained, remains at \$37,680 in 2010.

For employee and spouse annuitants, full retirement age ranges from age 65 for those born before 1938 to age 67 for those born in 1960 or later. For survivor annuitants, full retirement age ranges from age 65 for those born before 1940 to age 67 for those born in 1962 or later.

Special work restrictions continue to be applicable to disability annuitants in 2010. The monthly disability earnings limit will increase to \$780 in 2010 from \$770 in 2009.

Regardless of age and/or earnings, no railroad retirement annuity is payable for any month in which an annuitant (retired employee, spouse or survivor) works for a railroad employer or railroad union.

The Department of Health and Human Services has not yet announced if there will be any Medicare premium changes for 2010. Information about Medicare changes for 2010, when available, will be found at www.medicare.gov.