



Memorandum

Date: 2017-02-23

To: Mike Scott - CUPE Local 30
Lanny Chudyk - CSU 52
Mark Tetterington - ATU 569
Greg Holubowich - EFFU
James Connor - IBEW Local 1007
Brenda Waluk - CEMA

From: Dina Traynor, Director of Labour Relations & Compensation

RE: **Changes to Employment Insurance waiting period**

As you may have heard via media reports, effective January 1, 2017, the Federal Government changed the Employment Insurance (EI) Act to reduce the waiting time for benefits to one week from two weeks. The shorter waiting period will apply to EI claims established on or after January 1, 2017. The reduced waiting time applies to all types of benefits including: regular, sickness, maternity/paternity, and compassionate care. We have considered the impact of this change on our employee group and wanted to share our thoughts with you.

Maternity/Parental Leave and Supplementary Unemployment Benefits (SUB)

As you know, any disability periods of absence from work before the birth of the baby are paid as Short-Term Disability benefits. These benefits continue until the end of the birth week. After the birth of the baby, and starting on the Sunday/date of birth or the Sunday following the date of birth, our employees receive Employment Insurance (EI) maternity benefits, topped up by Supplementary Unemployment Benefits (SUB). The combination of EI and SUB benefit payments continues for the valid, health-related period (normally 6-8 weeks).

The reduced waiting period will not change the timelines to process a claim or receive the first payment. It also does not affect the total number of weeks of benefits (i.e. maternity benefits remain at 15 weeks and paternity benefits remain at 35).

1. Prior to Jan 1/17, the 52 weeks was made up of:
 - 2 weeks waiting period (SUB benefits paid at 95% of salary)
 - 15 weeks of maternity leave benefits (EI benefits during the valid health-related period are topped up with SUB benefits)
 - 35 weeks of paternity leave benefits
 - total = 52 weeks

2. Jan 1/17 forward, the 52 weeks is made up of:
 - one week of a waiting period (SUB benefits paid at 95% of salary)
 - 15 weeks of maternity leave benefits (EI benefits during the valid health-related period are topped up with SUB benefits)
 - 35 weeks of paternity leave benefits
 - one week after the 35 weeks of paternity leave with no benefits
 - total = 52 weeks

The reduced waiting period means that new mothers will receive SUB benefits for one week instead of two, then combined EI/SUB benefits for the health-related period, then EI benefits for the remainder of the benefit period for maternity/parental leave.

Supplementary Income Replacement (SIR) Benefits

As you know, the City participates in the EI Premium Reduction Program and thereby funds a Supplementary Income Replacement (SIR) plan for all temporary, provisional and non-permanent part-time employees. The City's current elimination period for that plan is 10 working days. The elimination period starting January 1, 2017 will be reduced to 7 calendar days, to comply with the change in the legislation. This will mean that non-permanent employees off work due to illness or non-occupational injury will be eligible for SIR benefits sooner, after the one week waiting period is satisfied.

The Employee Service Centre is taking the lead in updating the communications for employees on eCity related to the changes to the SUB and SIR benefit plans resulting from the EI waiting period change. Once these communication messages are in place, we will update all of you with the materials.

Should you have any questions in the interim, please give me a call at 780-496-8241.

Sincerely,



Dina Traynor
Director, Labour Relations & Compensation

- c: Dana Daniel, ESC
- Vera Davies, EPS
- Camille Thorsteinson, Library