

EI extension given royal assent: 5 more weeks for those with an active claim as of March 1st

Thursday, March 12th, Royal Assent was given to the 2009 Budget Implementation Act. As a result the 5 additional weeks of **Regular EI Benefits** come into effect March 1st, 2009 and will remain in force until September 11th, 2010.

Here's the updated summary from EI's website regarding duration of benefits, and accessing information online.

How long can regular benefits be paid?

Regular benefits can be paid from 19 to a maximum of 50 weeks. As part of a temporary initiative called "The Improved Duration of Employment Insurance (EI) Regular Benefits", the length of time regular benefits can be paid is between 19 and 50 weeks. The initiative is effective on all claims where the benefit period has not ended before March 1st, 2009, or where the benefit period does not begin after September 11, 2010. The number of weeks of benefits which may be paid are determined at the start date of the benefit period, based on the unemployment rate in your region and the amount of insurable hours you have accumulated in the qualifying period.

Please note that the number of weeks of benefits which may be paid does not change even if you move in another region after the start date of your claim.

The period of time in which you can claim the weeks you are eligible is 52 weeks. This period ends when the first of the followings occurs :

- * all the weeks to which you are eligible have been paid; or
- * a maximum of 50 weeks of benefits have been paid; or
- * the 52 week duration is reached; or
- * you request and qualify for the termination of your claim.

The duration of the benefit period may be extended up to 104 weeks, but the number of weeks of benefits which may be paid will remain unchanged. Therefore, the benefit period may be extended if you were not paid EI benefits during a benefit period because you were :

- * confined to a jail, penitentiary or other similar institution; or
- * in receipt of worker's compensation payments for an illness or injury; or

- * receiving separation payments from your former employer;
- * your newborn or newly adopted child was hospitalized within 52 weeks after the week of birth or the week the child was placed in your care for adoption; or
- * not working because you were receiving a payment under a provincial law on the basis of having ceased work because continuing to work would have entailed danger to you, your unborn child or a child you were breast feeding.

If one of these reasons applies to you, it is your responsibility to request the extension of your benefit period and to provide all supporting documents.

In order to get paid...

In order to get paid you must complete a report by Internet, telephone or mail every 2 weeks. These reports are very important as regular payments cannot be issued without them.

Shortly after applying for EI, you will receive a Benefit statement in the mail indicating your Access code and the date your first claimant's report is due. Keep in mind that this does not mean that a decision has been made yet on your claim.

Along with your Benefit statement you will also receive instructions on how to complete your report with our Internet reporting service or our Telephone reporting service. If you cannot complete your claimant's reports by Internet or by telephone, you will need to complete and mail them to us. To find out how to complete your report by mail, just follow these step-by-step instructions.

You wish to get information about your EI insurance claim

If you have a current or previous claim for EI benefits, you can with our Internet service My Employment Insurance (EI) Information online:

- * View and update your personal information including your mailing address, telephone number and banking information for direct deposit.
- * View your current EI claim information.
- * View payment information on your current claim including deduction details.
- * View your previous claims for EI benefits.

Please note, if your bank account information changes or if you move, it is important that you let us know as soon as possible. You can update your mailing address,

telephone number and direct deposit information by using My Employment Insurance (EI) Information online.

You can also obtain information about your EI claim by calling our Telephone Information Service 1 800 206-7218 and choosing Option 1.

www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/ei/types/regular.shtml#long

--

Community Legal Assistance Society

Per: James Sayre

Suite 300, 1140 West Pender Street

Vancouver, B.C. V6E 4G1

Tel: 604 685-3425 (68-LEGAL)

Fax: 604 685-7611

Toll Free BC: 1-888-685-6222

E-Mail Address: jsayre@clasbc.net

Alternate Email: jfsayre@gmail.com or jimsayre@telus.net