



Pregnancy and Parental Leave & Benefits

FAQ

PREGNANCY AND PARENTAL LEAVE & BENEFITS

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Congratulations on welcoming a new addition to your family! PARO is committed to helping you understand the leave time and benefits that you are entitled to during this time.

Pregnancy and parental benefit information can be found under Article 11.5, 14.1, and 15 of the PARO-CAHO Agreement. As well, information about your Employment Insurance benefit entitlements can be found on the Service Canada website at www.servicecanada.gc.ca

How long is pregnancy and parental leave?

All Ontarians are legally entitled to pregnancy and/or parental leave. Pregnancy leave, which applies only to a birth or surrogate mother, is 17 weeks. Parental leave is 35 weeks for birth mothers who also take pregnancy leave and 37 weeks for all new parents who do not take pregnancy leave (e.g. fathers, adoptive parents).

Will I receive Employment Insurance (EI) benefits?

Eligible employees on pregnancy and/or parental leave are entitled to government provided benefits (Employment Insurance) payable during the time the employee is on leave.

To qualify for Employment Insurance, an employee is required to have accumulated 600 insurable hours in the last fifty-two (52) weeks since his/her last claim.

Attachment 11 "Employment Insurance Hours of Work," of the PARO-CAHO Agreement provides that you are entitled to be credited with your **actual** hours worked, rather than any hours recorded for payroll or other administrative purposes.

Each family must wait a one week unpaid waiting period before receiving EI benefits. For example, a mother that takes pregnancy leave will be required to wait one week until she will be in receipt of funds. She will therefore receive a total of 15 weeks of EI payments for her pregnancy leave.

Parental leave benefits are shared **per family** for a maximum of 35 weeks. This means that the benefit is shared between two parents who can decide how the benefit is used. For example, one parent could take 25 weeks of the benefit and the other could take 10 weeks, or one parent could take the entire 35 weeks of benefits.

When EI benefits are shared between parents, a single one week waiting period may apply. For example, if the mother served the one week waiting period during her pregnancy leave, neither parent would need to serve the waiting period for parental benefits.

Note: The leave time (provincial entitlement) is a separate entitlement from the EI benefit payments (federal entitlement). Even if you do not qualify for EI benefits, you are entitled under the Employment Standards Act to the same amount of time off.

Will I get an income top-up to EI payments?

The PARO-CAHO Agreement provides a supplemental income top-up to residents who are on either pregnancy or parental leave and are in receipt of EI (Article 15.7 of the PARO-CAHO Agreement).

This benefit is provided for a maximum of 27 weeks for women who are taking pregnancy and parental leave (15 weeks pregnancy leave top-up + 12 weeks parental leave top-up). For residents on 'stand alone' parental leave (those who did not take pregnancy leave) the top-up will be provided for a maximum of 12 weeks.

The benefit will be equivalent to the difference between 84% of the resident's regular weekly earnings and the sum of the resident's weekly EI benefits and any other earnings.

Note For PGY1s Only: The requirement that residents must have worked thirteen (13) weeks of continuous service to qualify for the income supplemental top-up (Article 15.7) no longer applies.

The below chart summarizes the total length of leave vs. length of benefit payments – both EI and the top-up.

How do I apply for benefits?

Applications for benefits can be made online at www.servicecanada.gc.ca. You will need the following documentation:

- Social Insurance Number (SIN)
- Record of Employment (ROE) which is provided by your payroll centre
- Personal identification such as a driver's licence, birth certificate, passport
- Your complete bank information
- The expected or actual date of birth of your child, if you are claiming pregnancy benefits
- To claim parental leave benefits, you will need your newborn's date of birth, or date of placement in the case of an adoption. For the latter, you will also need to provide the name and full address of the agency handling the adoption.

For a complete list of required documents, please visit Service Canada's website at www.servicecanada.gc.ca

| TYPE OF LEAVE | LENGTH OF LEAVE | LENGTH OF BENEFIT PAYMENTS | WHEN CAN THE BENEFIT BEGIN? | WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR THE BENEFIT? |
|------------------------|--|---|---|--|
| Pregnancy Leave | 17 weeks | (EI and top-up) 15 weeks EI benefits PARO members in receipt of EI also qualify for top-up for the same 15-week period. | The earliest a <u>pregnancy leave</u> can begin is 17 weeks before the due date. The latest a pregnancy leave can begin is the day the baby is born. The earliest the <u>benefit payments</u> can begin is 8 weeks before the expected delivery and can end as late as 17 weeks after the date of birth. | Birth mother or surrogate mother |
| Parental Leave | 35 weeks 37 weeks if you did not take pregnancy leave | 35 weeks EI benefits <u>per family</u> . PARO members in receipt of EI also qualify for 12 weeks of top-up. | Payable no later than 52 weeks after the birth or custody of the child | New parents (note that the Employment Standards Act defines "parent" as birth parent, adopting parent, or person in a relationship with a parent of a child and plans to treat the child as their own) |

How much notice should I give my program?

Residents must give four (4) weeks minimum written notice of their intended timing of their pregnancy and/or parental leave in order to ensure that professional and patient care responsibilities are met. We advise residents that the earlier your program is informed of your leave, the better it will be for all parties involved.

When will I receive my first payment?

The Service Canada website states that “if we have all the required information and if you qualify for benefits, your payment will be issued usually within 28 days from the date of filing your claim. If you do not qualify, Service Canada will notify you of the decision made on your claim.”

You must serve a one week unpaid waiting period before your Employment Insurance and the top-up will be paid.

Does my extended healthcare coverage (e.g. dental) continue during pregnancy and/or parental leave?

As per Article 14.1 of the PARO-CAHO Agreement, all employee benefits continue while on leave.

What happens to my vacation and professional leave days?

You do not lose your vacation entitlement as a result of being on pregnancy or parental leave.

As set out in Article 11.5 of the PARO-CAHO Agreement, while on pregnancy/parental leave, you are entitled to vacation as follows:

- Residents who take pregnancy and parental leave (birth mothers) accumulate vacation for the entire length of their leave, up to 52 weeks.
- Residents who take parental leave (e.g. non-birth mothers, fathers, adoptive parents) accumulate vacation for up to 37 weeks.
- Normally, unused vacation may not be carried over into the following appointment year. However, if you are on pregnancy or parental leave at the end of one appointment year and the start of another,

any unused vacation prior to going on leave, and accumulated vacation while on leave, can be carried over to the new appointment year and taken immediately following the end of your leave, before your return to work. It may also be taken at a later time mutually agreed upon between you and your program and/or preceptor.

- If you are required to undertake additional services at the end of your program to make up for time missed while on pregnancy or parental leave, your vacation entitlement will be pro-rated based on the length of the additional training.
- You do not accumulate professional leave days while on leave and unused professional leave days expire at the end of each appointment year. However, you will be entitled to seven (7) days of professional leave in the next appointment year.

Am I required to be on call while pregnant?

In no event will residents be scheduled or required to participate in on call duties after 27 weeks gestation unless otherwise agreed to by the resident.

Do I have to make up the time I missed while on leave?

Depending on the length of the leave, residents will generally need to make up time missed in order to complete the educational and training requirements outlined by individual programs.

Both the RCPSC and CFPC permit individual universities to grant Waivers of Training (up to a maximum length) to ‘exceptional’ residents. If granted, waivers are applied in the final year of training.

The decision to grant a waiver of training is at the discretion of the specific program director and/or university. Currently, Queen’s University does not grant waivers of training for residents.

We advise you to speak with your program director about the possibility of being granted a waiver of training.

