

Canada's New Parental Sharing Benefit

The Government of Canada recently launched a new Employment Insurance Parental Sharing Benefit on March 17, 2019. Parents, including same-sex parents, are now entitled to additional Employment Insurance benefits after the birth or adoption of a child, subject to both parents sharing the parental leave.

In particular, provided both parents take parental leave *and* select the same benefit option (standard or extended), the increase in eligible benefit length is as follows:

Parents on Standard Parental Benefits Option (benefits at the rate of 55% of earnings up to a weekly maximum of \$562) are eligible for up to five (5) additional paid weeks, for a combined total of forty weeks (40); however, no one parent can receive more than thirty-five (35) weeks of benefits.

Parents on Extended Parental Benefits Option (benefits at the rate of 33% of earnings up to a weekly maximum of \$337 per week) are eligible for up to eight (8) additional paid weeks, for a combined total of sixty-nine (69) weeks; however, no one parent can receive more than sixty-one (61) weeks of benefits.

Lastly, in order to qualify for the additional benefits, the claim must be for children born or adopted on or after March 17, 2019.

For purposes of clarity, the above noted changes do not affect the length of job protected leave parents are entitled to take under applicable provincial minimum employment standards legislation. This is only an extension of Employment Insurance benefits.

Key Takeaways: Employers should anticipate a greater number of parental leave requests from new fathers and non-birth mothers, who perhaps would have not previously considered taking advantage of parental leave.

If you have any questions about this or parental leaves in general, please do not hesitate to reach out to speak to an e2r® Advisor.