

In Difficult Times, Compassionate Care

El Compassionate Care Benefit

A family member is gravely ill and at serious risk of death. It is one of the most difficult times a family will face. You don't want to choose between your job and caring for your family during a medical crisis. If you are in this situation, the Compassionate Care Benefit may be able to help.

Compassionate Care benefits allow people eligible for Employment Insurance (EI) to take a temporary leave of absence from work to provide care or support for loved ones at significant risk of death.

Achieving a balance between work and family life is important, and that is never more difficult than when a loved one is dying. This benefit helps relieve family stress and improve the quality of care given to the gravely ill.

Definition of “family member”

The Compassionate Care Benefit can be used to provide care or support for your:

- parent;
- spouse or common-law partner;
- child or the child of your common-law partner.

Other family relationships are also covered. You may use the benefit to provide care or support for siblings; nieces and nephews; aunts and uncles; grandparents; grandchildren; in-law relations; current and former foster parents, foster children, wards and guardians; **or any gravely ill person who considers you a family member.**

Qualifying for Compassionate Care benefits

To qualify, you must be eligible for Employment Insurance, and have worked 600 insured hours in the last 52 weeks, or since the start date of your last claim. Self-employed fishers need to have made \$3,760 in a maximum period of 31 weeks.

You must also submit a two-part *Medical Certificate for Employment Insurance Compassionate Care Benefits* (form INS5216). The first part is signed by the gravely ill person or their legal representative. The second part must be signed by the doctor of the gravely ill person to confirm they have a significant risk of death within the next 26 weeks. If you are caring for a non-relative, you will also need an attestation signed by that person or their legal representative (form INS5223).

The forms are available online at servicecanada.gc.ca or from your local Service Canada Centre. You may also request to have them mailed to you by calling 1-800-206-7218 and pressing “0”. Assistance is available if you need help completing the forms.

Part III of the Canada Labour Code, which applies to employers and employees in workplaces under **federal jurisdiction**, was amended to allow employees up to eight weeks of compassionate care leave and job protection. Employers under federal jurisdiction

may not dismiss, suspend, lay off, demote or otherwise discipline an employee for taking compassionate care leave or take this into account in any decision to promote or train the employee.

Most provincial and territorial labour codes provide job protection for workers in this type of family situation. However, the definition of “family member” varies. It is important that you confirm with your employer and/or the provincial government that you have job protection for compassionate care leave before you apply.

Duration of benefits

EI provides a benefit rate of 55% of average weekly earnings up to a maximum of \$423 per week. You may begin your claim when it feels right for you within the 26-week period identified by your loved one's doctor. Six weeks of Compassionate Care benefits are available after the standard two-week waiting period has been observed.

Sharing the benefit with family

The benefit can be received by one individual or shared with other EI-eligible family members. A two-week waiting period is applicable, but if the benefits are shared with other eligible family members, only one family member needs to observe it.

Caring for family outside of Canada

Many Canadians have close family members living abroad. The Compassionate Care benefit may be used to care for a gravely ill family member in another country, provided they meet the eligibility requirements. The relative's doctor will be required to complete and submit the *Medical Certificate for Employment Insurance Compassionate Care Benefits* before any benefits can be paid.

For more information

For more information about Employment Insurance Compassionate Care benefits

CALL: 1-800-206-7218
(French: 1-800-808-6352)

CLICK: servicecanada.gc.ca

VISIT: your local Service Canada Centre

For locations nearest you, call **1 800 O-Canada** (1-800-622-6232) or visit the *Service Canada Web site*.