

Long Term Disability Income Continuance Plan

Long Term Disability
Income Continuance Plan

MyCHOICE

A benefits program for Government of Alberta union employees

Long Term Disability Income Continuance Plan

The Long Term Disability Income Continuance (LTDI) Plan is designed to provide income replacement if you are unable to work due to an illness or injury. This coverage is in force for permanent or temporary salaried employees. The premium is cost-shared 50/50 between you and the Employer.

Claims Adjudicator

All claims are adjudicated by The Great-West Life Assurance Company.

Benefits

The LTDI Plan ensures that you receive 70% of your pre-disability salary, up to a maximum of \$1,839.09 per bi-weekly pay period.

Your LTDI entitlement will be reduced by the amount of income you receive from the following sources:

1. Canada Pension Plan disability benefits
2. Workers' Compensation benefits
3. Benefits from any other employer-sponsored group disability plans

4. Vacation leave pay
5. Income from other employment or self-employment; and/or
6. Loss of income benefits under an auto insurance plan.

LTDI benefits are taxable income.

Eligibility and Effective Date of Coverage

Coverage is mandatory. **Permanent salaried** employees are eligible and automatically covered under the LTDI Plan on the first day of the following pay period after three months of continuous employment with no period of General Illness.

Temporary salaried employees are eligible for the LTDI Plan on the first day of the following pay period after one year of continuous salaried employment.

Making a Claim

You are eligible to apply for LTDI benefits if an illness or injury has caused you to miss work for 80 consecutive work days (or an equivalent number of work hours). This 80-day period is the plan's elimination period. Usually General Illness benefits are payable for this period. If you are approved for LTDI benefits, your payments will begin AFTER the elimination period is over.

A LTDI Liaison Officer has been designated for each government ministry. This person serves as your primary contact when you apply for LTDI benefits and throughout the period when you are receiving benefits.

When you apply, The Great-West Life Assurance Company determines if you qualify for LTDI benefits. Once receiving benefits the adjudicator determines, based on medical evidence received, when you are fit to participate in a rehabilitation program or, the date you are no longer entitled to benefits and are able to return to the workplace or, gainful employment.

Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation programs are designed to assist you in returning to employment. These programs include:

- Periods of trial employment
- Part-time return to work
- Work of a different nature
- On-the-job training; or
- Vocational training

Full or partial LTDI benefits are payable while you are participating in an approved program depending on whether you receive income from rehabilitation employment. In most cases, rehabilitation should lead to your full return to work.

Gainful Employment

Gainful employment means suitable work in any occupation:

- For which you are medically capable of performing
- For which you have the necessary education, skills, training and experience; and
- Which could provide you with at least 60% of your pre-disability income

If The Great-West Life Assurance Company determines that you are not able to perform your regular duties, but you are medically fit for gainful employment, you are eligible to receive LTDI benefits for up to three months from the time of this decision, or until you find a suitable job — whichever comes first. If not gainfully employed after three months, you may be eligible for a severance package.

Income Maintenance

Income maintenance is available when The Great-West Life Assurance Company has made the determination you are capable of performing gainful employment, you have not received a severance package and are within the three months from the date of being found fit for gainful employment. Eligible payments for income maintenance are for up to 36 months or to your 65th birthday (whichever comes first) and equals the difference between the pre-disability salary and the gainful employment income.

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Limitations

LTDI benefits are not paid for:

- Disabilities caused by self-inflicted injuries or illness
- Disabilities caused by participation in criminal activities or war
- Medical conditions which existed and for which you received treatment three months before the effective date of your employment. This limitation does not apply after you have been employed in a permanent or temporary position for two consecutive years and if you are not absent due to your pre-coverage medical condition(s) when this two-year period is completed
- Any period during which you are not under the continuous care of a physician or following the treatment your physician prescribes; or
- Any period during which you are incarcerated in a prison or similar institution

Continuation of Benefits While You Are Receiving LTDI Payments

If you participated in the **MyCHOICE** group life insurance, extended medical, prescription drugs and dental plans prior to receiving LTDI benefits, your participation in these plans continues. Your life insurance will be based at your pre-disability level of coverage. You and your employer continue to pay your respective portions of the premiums.

Your LTDI premium contributions are waived during the time you are receiving LTDI payments. Your public service pension contributions are paid by your employer. The period during which you are receiving LTDI benefits is considered pensionable service.

If after two years from the date of disability you continue to receive your LTDI payments, your Core Group Life Insurance and AD&D Insurance, and if applicable, Enhanced Life Insurance will remain in force without further premium payment at your pre-disability level of coverage. The waiver of premium will remain in effect throughout the period of disability until you are deemed fit for gainful employment, death or age 65, whichever comes first. If you have Dependent Life Insurance, you must continue to pay the full premium to keep that insurance in force.

Termination of Benefits

For **permanent salaried** employees, eligibility for LTDI benefits terminates on the earliest of:

- Fit for own or gainful employment
- Termination of employment or retirement
- Transfer to a position which is not included in the group eligible for the **MyCHOICE** benefits
- 65th birthday; or
- Death

For **temporary salaried** employees, eligibility for LTDI benefits terminates on the earliest of:

- Fit for own or gainful employment
- Termination of employment or retirement
- In receipt of LTDI benefits for 24 months
- Transfer to a position which is not included in the group eligible for the **MyCHOICE** benefits
- 65th birthday; or
- Death

Appeals

If your application for LTDI benefits is denied or ongoing benefits are terminated, you have the option of appealing.

There are two levels of appeal. You must file an appeal within 30 calendar days of receiving notice of the adjudication decision. Medical evidence or other written submissions in support of the filed appeal must be forwarded to The Great-West Life Assurance Company within 90 calendar days of receiving notice of their decision. Further information on the appeals process can be obtained from your LTDI Liaison Officer.

First Level

The first level of appeal is a review with The Great-West Life Assurance Company to discuss the claim. When all relevant information has been submitted or presented, The Great-West Life Assurance Company will review the claim and make a ruling. If The Great-West Life Assurance Company upholds the initial decision, you have the option of proceeding to the second level of appeal.

Second Level

If your first level appeal is denied, you may present your case to the LTDI Second Level Appeal Board. This board is made up of three individuals: a representative nominated by the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees; a representative nominated by the employer; and a third person agreed upon by both parties.

The decision of the LTDI Second Level Appeal Board is final and binding on all parties involved.

For Further Information

Contact your Ministry Human Resources Office or LTDI Liaison Officer.

This handbook is a summary of the principal features of the Long Term Disability Income Continuance Plan for union employees of the Government of Alberta. The terms and conditions of the plan are governed by the Public Service Long Term Disability Income Continuance Plan Regulation.