



Long Term Disability Income Continuance Plan

1stchoice

A benefits program for Government of Alberta
managers and non-union employees

Information in the benefits handbook is subject to change without notice. Every effort will be made to ensure that the online version of the 1stchoice handbook is current. Use the online version only and review it from time-to-time. If there are any discrepancies between the information in the handbook and the actual insurance policies, Trusts, Regulations or other governing documents, the terms of the policies and plan documents will prevail. To request a copy of the governing documents, please contact GOA Time and Benefits Support Line by email at GOA.TimeAndBenefits@gov.ab.ca or by calling 780-644-8114.

Long Term Disability Income Continuance Plan

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

The Long Term Disability Income (LTDI) Continuance 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 for this coverage is 100% Employer paid.

Claims Adjudicator

All claims are adjudicated by The Canada Life Assurance Company (Canada Life).

LTDI Benefits

LTDI Plan benefits are payable at 70% of your pre-disability salary.

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

1. Canada Pension Plan disability benefits, Quebec Pension Plan or a government sponsored disability plan in another country with a reciprocal or social security agreement with Canada or the Quebec Pension Plan;
2. Compensation under the Workers' Compensation Act;
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 will be covered under the LTDI Plan on the first day of the pay period following three months of continuous employment with the Government of Alberta without absence due to illness or disability, except for casual illness. **Temporary salaried** employees will be covered under the LTDI Plan beginning the first day of the pay period following one year of continuous salaried employment with the Government of Alberta.

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, Canada Life 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 fit to perform;
- For which you have at least the minimum qualifications; and
- Which provides you with at least 60% of your pre-disability salary.

If Canada Life 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 payment.

Income Maintenance

Income maintenance is available when Canada Life has made the determination you are capable of performing gainful employment and you have not received a severance payment. Income maintenance is payable for up to 36 months from the date Canada Life made the determination you are capable of performing gainful employment. Income maintenance equals the difference between the pre-disability salary and the gainful employment income.

Limitations

LTDI benefits are not paid for:

- Disability suffered as a result of participation in the commission of crime;
- Disability suffered as a result of an act of 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 **1st choice** group life insurance, extended medical, prescription drugs and dental plans, and Health Spending Account prior to receiving LTDI benefits, your participation in these plans continues for as long as you continue to receive LTDI benefits. 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 or management employee's pension (whichever applies) 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 LTDI Benefits

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

- The date an employee is gainfully employed;
- Three months after the date the adjudicator decides an employee is suitable for gainful employment.
- The date the adjudicator determines an employee does not participate and cooperate in a rehabilitative program.
- The date an employee resigns from government service
- The date the adjudicator determines the employee is no longer disabled or the date the employee returns to the employee's regular duties, whichever comes first;
- The date of an employee's 65th birthday; or
- Date of an employee's death.

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

- The date an employee is gainfully employed;
- Three months after the date the adjudicator decides an employee is suitable for gainful employment.
- The date the adjudicator determines an employee does not participate and cooperate in a rehabilitative program.
- The date an employee resigns from government service
- The date the adjudicator determines the employee is no longer disabled or the date the employee returns to the employee's regular duties, whichever comes first;
- The date of an employee's 65th birthday;
- Date of an employee's death; or
- After 24 months of entitlement or after the adjudicator determines that an employee is no longer disabled, whichever comes first.

Appeal Process

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 Canada Life 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 Canada Life to discuss the claim. When all relevant information has been submitted or presented, Canada Life will review the claim and make a decision. If Canada Life upholds the initial decision, you have the option of proceeding to the second level of appeal.

Second Level

The second level appeal is a review by an independent second level appeal board. All Board members are appointed by the Public Service Commissioner.

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

For Further Information

Contact your Service Alberta Employee Benefits and Support LTDI Liaison Officer. LTDI Liaison Officers are assigned to a ministry portfolio, to be connected with the LTDI Liaison Officer for your ministry contact the GoA Time and Benefits Support Line at (780) 644-8114.