

In Difficult Times:

Compassionate Care Benefits

One of the most difficult times for anyone is when a loved one is dying or at risk of death. The demands of caring for a gravely ill family member can jeopardize both your job and the financial security of your family. The Government of Canada believes that, during such times, you should not have to choose between keeping your job and caring for your family.

Compassionate care benefits are Employment Insurance benefits paid to people who have to be away from work temporarily to provide care or support to a family member who is gravely ill and who has a significant risk of death within 26 weeks (six months). A maximum of six weeks of compassionate care benefits may be paid to eligible people.

What is meant by providing care or support?

Care or support to a family member means:

- providing psychological or emotional support; or
- arranging for care by a third party; or
- directly providing or participating in the care.

Who is considered a family member?

You can receive compassionate care benefits for a variety of family members—both yours and those of your spouse or common-law partner—as shown below.

Your family members	Family members of your spouse or common-law partner
Children	Children
Wife, husband, common-law partner	
Father, mother	Father, mother (married or common law)
Father's wife, mother's husband	Father's wife, mother's husband
Common-law partner of the father or the mother	Common-law partner of the father or the mother of your spouse or common-law partner
Brothers, sisters, stepbrothers, stepsisters	Brothers, sisters, stepbrothers, stepsisters
Grandparents, stepgrandparents	Grandparents
Grandchildren, their spouses or common-law partners	Grandchildren
Sons-in-law, daughters-in-law (married or common law)	Sons-in-law, daughters-in-law (married or common law)
Father-in-law, mother-in-law (married or common law)	
Brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law (married or common law)	
Uncles, aunts, their spouses or common-law partners	Uncles, aunts
Nephews, nieces, their spouses or common-law partners	Nephews, nieces
Current or former foster parents	Current or former foster parents
Current or former foster children, their spouses or common-law partners	
Current or former wards	Current or former wards
Current or former guardians, their spouses or common-law partners	

Note

A common-law partner is a person who has been living in a conjugal relationship with another person for at least a year.

You can also receive compassionate care benefits to care for a gravely ill person who considers you a family member, such as a close friend or neighbour. A signed Form INS5223, *Compassionate Care Benefits Attestation*, is required from the gravely ill person or their legal representative.

Am I eligible?

To be eligible for compassionate care benefits, you must be able to show that:

- your regular weekly earnings from work have decreased by more than 40 percent; and
- you have accumulated 600 insured hours of work in the last 52 weeks, or since the start of your last claim (this period is called the qualifying period).

What documents do I need?

When requesting compassionate care benefits, you must provide medical proof showing that the ill family member needs care or support and is at risk of dying within 26 weeks. As proof, you must submit the following two forms:

- Form INS5216A, *Authorization to Release a Medical Certificate*, which must be completed and signed by the gravely ill person or his or her legal representative; and
- Form INS5216B, *Medical Certificate for Employment Insurance Compassionate Care Benefits*, which must be completed and signed by the medical doctor of the gravely ill person to confirm their significant risk of death within 26 weeks.

Copies of these forms are available on our Web site at www.servicecanada.gc.ca, or from any Service Canada Centre. A Service Canada agent will be able to print the form, if you cannot.

How long can I receive compassionate care benefits?

You can receive compassionate care benefits for a maximum of six weeks within the 26-week period that starts with the earlier of:

- the week the doctor signs the medical certificate; or
 - the week the doctor examines the gravely ill family member; or
 - the week the family member became gravely ill, if the doctor can determine that date (for example, the date of the test results).
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The basic benefit rate is 55 percent of your average insurable earnings, up to a yearly maximum insurable amount (\$48,600 in 2014). This means that, in 2014, you can receive a maximum payment of \$514 per week. Your Employment Insurance payment is taxable income. This means federal and provincial or territorial taxes, if they apply, will be deducted.

Can I share compassionate care benefits?

You can share the six weeks of compassionate care benefits with other members of your family. However, each family member must apply for and be eligible for these benefits.

If you plan to share compassionate care benefits, you and your family members should agree on the number of weeks each of you will take before you apply for benefits. Each family member can claim the benefits at any time during the 26-week period. Benefits can be paid at the same time or at different times.

Can I receive compassionate care benefits outside Canada?

Yes, you can receive compassionate care benefits to care for or support a family member, regardless of where that family member lives. You have to apply for benefits and submit the same information and documents as you would to take care of a gravely ill family member residing in Canada.

For more information

For details about compassionate care benefits, consult the guide called *Compassionate Care Benefits* (IN-057).

For information on the Employment Insurance program:

CLICK servicecanada.gc.ca

CALL 1-800-206-7218
TTY: 1-800-529-3742

VISIT a Service Canada Centre

Available online only: www.servicecanada.gc.ca

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