

BCTF Salary Indemnity Plan **LONG-TERM**



**Important Information about your
BCTF SIP Long-term Disability Benefits**



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BCTF Salary Indemnity Plan Long-term Disability Benefit Information

This brochure explains the long-term disability benefits you can apply for and describes the main features of your disability plan. Please retain this important information for the duration of your long-term claim. Enclosed as well, is a folder in which to file all your correspondence to and from the BCTF Salary Indemnity Plan and Great-West Life.

The BCTF Salary Indemnity Plan is an employee-pay-all disability plan. This means that the plan is funded by BCTF member contribution.

The BCTF Salary Indemnity Plan (BCTF SIP) contracts the Great-West Life Assurance Company (GWL) to adjudicate claims medically and to make long-term disability benefit payments. Your GWL Case Manager will keep you informed about the status of your claim and will be pleased to answer questions at any time. In addition we urge you to become familiar with the content of this brochure, the BCTF SIP Regulations, and the plan provisions that may affect your entitlement to benefits.

GWL has been given the responsibility for the assessment of your entitlement to benefits. The costs of the benefits are paid by the BCTF SIP, though the cheques are issued by GWL.

The Purpose of Your Disability Plan

In the event of disability you may be provided with long-term disability benefits in order to protect a percentage of your income. Your long-term plan and the management of your claim are designed to achieve three goals:

To ensure your claim is assessed correctly and fairly

The BCTF SIP Regulations define the circumstances in which benefits are payable. GWL is responsible for making sure the plan provisions are applied accurately and equitably. An important part of this process is ensuring that you are aware of the benefits that may be available to you, and that you have the information you need to understand GWL's assessment of your claim.

To help progress toward a safe, timely return to work, if a return is feasible

The long-term design and GWL's administration of claims are based on the belief that everyone stands to gain if after being disabled, you can return to productive employment.

To provide you with continuing financial support and prompt, responsive claim service for as long as you qualify for benefits

GWL will strive not only to pay benefits promptly and accurately but also to keep you well informed about your claim and to answer any questions you may have.

If your benefits are to end because you do not satisfy the plan provisions, GWL will provide you with as much advance notice as possible. It is, however, in your best interest to personally evaluate your situation from time to time. This way, you can make arrangements to return to work as soon as you are able, and avoid any disruption in income.



What Disability Means

The Salary Indemnity Plan defines disability depending on the length of time your disability continues. There are two definitions of disability in the SIP long-term plan: one for the first 12 months of benefits, the “own occupation” period, and after that for the “any occupation” period.

1. Own Occupation Period (See Regulation 17.1)

The long-term disability plan’s own occupation period is intended to allow enough time for most people to recover from disability and return to their own jobs. This period may also allow sufficient time for transition to other work, if appropriate.

During this period, your plan defines “disability” according to normal employment duties and the amount of time you spend performing those duties.

GWL will continually assess your claim during the own occupation period by comparing your medical limitations to the requirements of your job. The frequency of the medical reviews will depend on the nature of your condition and the treatment you are receiving.

2. Any Occupation Period (See Regulation 17.2)

The threshold for benefits is higher after the first 12 months. If your disability lasts beyond the first 12 months of long-term, you will qualify for continuing benefits if disease, illness, or injury prevents you from being gainfully employed. It is very important that you are aware of this change in the definition of “disability” and the timing of this change.

In your plan, gainful employment is defined as:

- work that you are medically able to perform.

- work for which you have the requisite qualifications by reason of education, training or experience.
- work that provides a gross employment income of at least 60% of your full-time equivalent gross employment income within five years of starting the new employment.

How might this change in definition affect you?

If you are capable of gainful employment as defined, your disability benefits will cease at the end of your own occupation period, even if your medical condition has not changed.

How will your claim be assessed when this change occurs?

To assess your claim under this definition, GWL will evaluate your medical limitations and qualifications, and compare them to the requirements of teaching and other jobs.

What if you cannot find work?

The availability of work is not considered in assessing disability. If you are not disabled as defined in your plan, benefits will cease. That is why, if you are capable of working, it is so important to take advantage of the own occupation period to secure employment.

Proof of Loss



The benefits under your long-term plan are payable only if GWL has proof that you continue to be disabled. It is your responsibility to prove disability, both initially and on an ongoing basis. Any fees your physician charges for providing medical documentation will be your responsibility. However, when GWL sends you for an independent medical or vocational assessment, the BCTF SIP will pay for the assessment and reimburse you for your expenses.

Long-term Benefit Payments

Long-term Benefits and Income Tax

BCTF SIP long-term disability benefits under this plan are payable monthly at month end and are non-taxable. If you suffer from a severe and prolonged disability, you may consider applying also for the disability credit for income tax purposes.

Long-term Benefits and Teachers' Pension Plan

The period of time you are in receipt of BCTF SIP long-term benefits will be reported to the Teachers' Pension Plan. If you are enrolled in the TPP this time will be deemed to be both pensionable and contributory service.

Direct Deposit

Long-term disability benefits will only be deposited direct to bank, trust company, or credit union accounts. Your GWL case manager will provide you with an explanation of benefit calculations at the outset of your claim and whenever benefits are re-calculated. These benefits are deposited directly in your bank account by GWL from the BCTF SIP.

Long-term Benefit Amounts

Benefits are based on gross annual salary applicable on the last day of work or sick leave. The benefit is calculated as

- 65% of the first \$40,000 of gross annual salary,
- 50% of the next \$40,000 of gross annual salary, and
- 40% of the balance of salary.

Other Income

Other income may reduce the amount you receive under this plan or may be affected by this plan's benefits. You are therefore required to disclose all other income to your GWL case manager on a timely and ongoing basis.

The income you must report on a regular basis to GWL is outlined on the BCTF SIP long-term Declaration of Claimant and includes:

Government benefits, such as:

- Canada or Quebec Pension Plan disability or retirement benefits
- Employment Insurance benefits
- Workers' Compensation Board benefits.

Legislated benefits, such as:

- automobile insurance disability benefits.

Income available through employment, such as:

- earnings, sick leave, and vacation pay
- retirement or disability income under a registered pension plan to which an employer has contributed
- self-employment income.

Other income, such as:

- settlement of a legal action against a third party (see subrogation agreement)
- any other employment or self employment earnings.

Group Benefits during Long-term Disability Benefits

The BCTF SIP long-term disability benefit does not include group benefits such as Medical Services Plan of BC (MSP), Extended Health, or Dental benefits. You should arrange for the continuance of those benefits, by arranging continuity of participation with your employer. Check with the collective agreement, the local union, or your employer for your rights to maintenance of group benefits through your school district. If you have a spouse that has group benefits with the same or another employer you might consider transferring to your spouse's benefit plans.

MSP premiums are based on your net family income. To determine whether you qualify for premium assistance please contact MSP directly and complete their application. As well, you may participate

in an individual Extended Health Benefits plan or Dental plan with a benefit carrier that provides individual plans.

Employment Status

Do not resign even if your long-term disability benefits are approved. If you resign, you will give up access to employment when you recover or if benefits are terminated. You may also give up the opportunity to participate in other group benefits through your employer.

Disclosure of Information

GWL will give you a written notice of assessment showing:

- whether or not benefits have been approved,
- whether or not further information is required, and
- if benefits have not been approved, the reasons for denial and the procedures you may follow to appeal.

Whenever there is a change in your assessment, GWL will thoroughly explain the reasons.

Protecting Your Personal Information

At the BCTF SIP and at the GWL offices, we recognize and respect every individual's right to privacy. Personal information about you that is collected in connection with the benefit plan is kept in confidential files at BCTF Income Security office, at GWL office or in the offices of an organization authorized by BCTF SIP or GWL. This information about you may include personal and medical information.

We limit access to information in your files to BCTF SIP staff, to GWL staff or persons authorized by BCTF SIP or GWL who require it to perform their duties, to persons to whom you have granted access, and to persons authorized by law. GWL uses the information to investigate and assess your claim and to administer the group benefit plan.

Accommodation Employment

Accommodation employment is defined as receiving long-term benefits while working or volunteering. This may include working part-time, reducing your assignment to accommodate your disability, self-employment, volunteering, or participating in a work hardening plan with the BCTF SIP Health and Wellness Program. Long-term disability benefits are contingent upon approval from BCTF SIP for the accommodation employment.

If you are applying for long-term disability benefits and are involved in any of these activities, you must complete an accommodation employment application. This application must be completed and signed by you and your physician. If you are receiving long-term disability benefits and considering initiating part-time work, self-employment, or volunteering, you must seek prior approval from the BCTF SIP with an accommodation employment application.

BCTF SIP Health and Wellness Program

To assist teachers who are or who become disabled to maintain or to return to their teaching positions as early as possible, the BCTF SIP provides a Health and Wellness Program. If GWL determines that you qualify for rehabilitation assistance, a representative from the BCTF SIP Health and Wellness Program will contact you to explain the program. Once you are enrolled,



a Rehabilitation Consultant will work with you, your family, and your health care providers to restore or improve your health and functional capacity.

Canada Pension Plan Disability

If your disability is “severe and prolonged,” you may be eligible for Canada Pension Plan (CPP) disability benefits. GWL will continuously assess your claim to determine whether your disability would likely meet the “severe and prolonged” test established by Service Canada. If GWL determines that your disability would likely meet the “severe and prolonged” test they will direct you to apply for CPP disability benefits (see Regulation 19.8). BCTF SIP long-term disability benefits will be reduced by the amount of potential CPP disability benefits, unless you can show proof of application for or declination of Canada Pension Plan disability benefits.

CPP disability benefits are indexed annually, but your BCTF SIP long-term disability benefits are reduced by only the initial amount. If you are continuing to work part-time while in receipt of SIP long-term disability benefits, you should ask your case manager about Canada Pension Plan disability benefit application requirements.

The period during which you are receiving CPP disability benefits will be taken into account when your CPP retirement benefit is calculated. As a result, your CPP retirement benefit will be greater.



**Please retain this information
and file for future reference.**



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