
News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Employment Insurance extension to self-employed Canadians now in effect

One of the most significant enhancements to the Employment Insurance program in a decade

MIRAMICHI, NEW-BRUNSWICK, MARCH 2, 2010—TILLY O'NEILL GORDON, Member of Parliament for Miramichi, wants self-employed Canadians to know that they can register, on a voluntary basis, for Employment Insurance (EI) special benefits, which include maternity, parental, sickness and compassionate care benefits.

“Our government expanded the Employment Insurance program to the self-employed because it was the fair and right thing to do,” said O’Neill Gordon. “We believe that self-employed Canadians should not have to choose between their family and their business responsibilities.”

With the passage of the *Fairness for the Self-Employed Act*, self-employed Canadians can take advantage of the same special benefits that are available to salaried employees under the EI program.

As of January 31, 2010, self-employed Canadians have been able to register for the Employment Insurance program. Those who choose to take advantage of these special benefits will be required to register at least one year prior to claiming them. However, as a transitional measure, those who register by April 1, 2010, will be able to make a claim as early as January 1, 2011.

Self-employed residents of Quebec will continue to receive maternity and parental benefits through the Quebec Parental Insurance Plan provided by their provincial government. By registering for EI, self-employed Quebecers will be able to take advantage of sickness and compassionate care benefits.

This measure is part of the Government’s commitment to make responsive and responsible choices to support Canadians through the Employment Insurance program.

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Other temporary measures the Government has undertaken to help those hardest hit by the economic downturn through Canada's Economic Action Plan include providing longer EI benefits, more efficient service and support for training, and protecting jobs through Work-Sharing agreements. The Government has also frozen EI premiums for 2010 at the same rate as 2009.

For more information, visit www.servicecanada.gc.ca/self_employed_workers.

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This news release is available in alternative formats on request.

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Background

Beginning in January 2011, self-employed Canadians will be able to access Employment Insurance (EI) special benefits. There are four types of EI special benefits:

- maternity benefits;
- parental benefits;
- sickness benefits; and
- compassionate care benefits.

Eligibility information

Individuals will be eligible if they:

- are a self-employed person; **and**
- are a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident of Canada; **and**
- have entered into an agreement with the Canada Employment Insurance Commission through Service Canada.

Application information

As of January 31, 2010, self-employed people will be able to enter into an agreement with the Commission through Service Canada. To enter into an agreement with the Commission, they will have to register. For convenience, they can register using My Service Canada Account from anywhere on the Internet, including at a Service Canada Centre.

By entering into this agreement, they will confirm their interest in participating in this measure and in paying EI premiums on their self-employment income.

Please note that if they have previously used My Service Canada Account, they can register using their existing user code and password.

If they have not previously used My Service Canada Account, they can apply at any time for a personal access code on the My Service Canada Account Web page. Once they apply, it will take about 10 days to receive their personal access code in the mail.

Dates and deadlines

As of January 31, 2010, self-employed persons will be able to enter into an agreement.

If they enter into an agreement between January 31, 2010, and April 1, 2010, they will be able to make a claim for EI special benefits as early as January 2011. However, if they enter into an agreement with the Canada Employment Insurance Commission after April 1, 2010, they will have to wait 12 months before they will be able to make a claim for EI special benefits.

Self-employed residents of Quebec will continue to receive maternity and parental benefits through the Quebec Parental Insurance Plan provided by the Government of Quebec. In addition, they will now be eligible to take advantage of the sickness and compassionate care benefits being offered by the Government of Canada through EI. Should they choose to take advantage of the program, they would pay EI premiums at the same rates as employees in Quebec, where rates have already been adjusted downward to take into account the existence of a provincial maternity and parental benefit plan.

Further information on this measure is available at www.servicecanada.gc.ca.