

Maternity Benefit

Maternity Benefit is a payment made to women on who are maternity leave from work and covered by social insurance (PRSI). You should apply for the payment 6 weeks before you intend to go on maternity leave (12 weeks if you are self-employed). The amount of money paid to you each week will depend on your earnings .If you are already on certain social welfare payments then you will get half-rate Maternity Benefit.

Maternity Benefit is paid directly to you on a weekly basis into your bank or building society account. Some employers will continue to pay an employee in full, while she is on maternity leave and require her to have any Maternity Leave paid to them. You should check your contract of employment to see what applies to you. Maternity Benefit is a taxable payment since 1st July 2013 but Universal Social Charge and PRSI are not payable.

All employees must have their leave certified by their employer. However, if your contract of employment ends within 16 weeks of your expected date of confinement and you satisfy the social insurance (PRSI) conditions, Maternity Benefit is payable from the day after the date on your P45.

Maternity Benefit is paid for 26 weeks. At least 2 weeks and not more than 16 weeks leave must be taken before the end of the week in which your baby is due.

If your baby is born later than expected and you have less than 4 weeks maternity leave left, you may be entitled to extend your maternity leave to ensure that you have a full 4 weeks off following the week of the birth. In these circumstances Maternity Benefit will continue to be paid to you until the baby is 4 weeks old. You need to notify the Maternity Benefit Section of the Department of Social Protection by sending them a letter from your GP stating the date on which your baby was born.

Maternity Benefit is paid by the Department of Social Protection to women who have a certain number of paid PRSI contributions on their social insurance record and who are in insurable employment up to the first day of their maternity leave. The last day of work can be within 16 weeks of the end of the week your baby is due.

The PRSI contributions can be from employment or self-employment-PRSI classes that count for Maternity Benefit are A,E,H and S(self-employment).

Half-rate Maternity Benefit is payable if you are getting any one of the following payments:

- One Parent Family Payment
- Widow's and Surviving Civil Partner's (contributory) Pension
- Widow's and Surviving Civil Partner's (Non – Contributory) Pension
- Deserted Wife's Benefit
- Prisoner's Wife's Allowance
- Guardians Payment (Contributory)
- Guardians Payment (Non – Contributory)
- Death Benefit by way of Widow's/Widower's or Dependent Parents' Pension (under the Occupational Injuries Scheme)

You can do voluntary work, public representative work (for example, a councillor or TD) and courses of education while you are getting Maternity Benefit. However, your payment will be stopped if you engage in insurable (paid) employment.

If you intend to return to employment earlier than you stated on your application form, you must notify Maternity Benefit Section at least 2 weeks before your new '*return to work date*'.

The standard rate of payment is €235 per week.

To apply fill in a Maternity Benefit application form at least six weeks before you intend to go on maternity leave and send it to the Maternity Benefit Section of the Department of Social and Family Affairs.

If you are self-employed, you should apply at least 12 weeks before you intend to go on maternity leave. This form is also available by post at the address listed below.

Department of Social Protection
McCarter's Road
Ardarvan
Buncrana
Donegal
Tel: 074-9164491
Lo call: 1890 690 690

To get an application text Form MAT followed by your name and address to 51909

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