

Human Resources Legislative Update

Early Effective Date Announced for New Federal Parental Sharing Benefit

Date: September 26, 2018

The government has announced that the new federal Parental Sharing Benefit will [launch on March 17, 2019](#).

As we previously reported, the [2018 federal Budget \(Budget\)](#) proposed to establish an additional Parental Sharing Benefit with the goal of encouraging parents to share Employment Insurance (EI) benefits. The intended goal of this reform was to allow parents, particularly mothers, additional flexibility to plan their return to work. The change was anticipated to come into effect in June of 2019.

Parental Sharing Benefit Explained

Effective December 3, 2017, eligible parents gained the ability to choose to receive EI parental benefits at a lower benefit rate of 33% of average weekly earnings extended over a 61-week period (Extended Parental Benefits) or to receive EI parental benefits at the regular rate of 55% of average weekly earnings over a 35-week period (Regular Parental Benefits).

The Parental Sharing Benefit reforms will introduce additional Regular Parental Benefits of up to 5 weeks (or up to 8 weeks of Extended Parental Benefits) to be used by two-parent families, including same-sex and adoptive parents, where the second parent agrees to share the parental leave (subject to certain minimums). The additional weeks of EI parental benefits will be available if both parents of a newly born or adopted child (or children) choose to take a parental leave and share the available EI benefits. Parents with children born or placed for adoption on or after March 17, 2019, will be eligible for the Parental Sharing Benefit.

While the Parental Sharing Benefit does not increase the amount of the weekly EI benefit available to each individual parent, it encourages the sharing of leaves in two-parent families by making additional weeks of EI benefits available when sharing of EI benefits occurs.

The government Backgrounder is available [here](#).

For more information on implementation of these changes, read our prior publication, [Federal Budget 2018](#), or call any member of our Pension, Benefits and Executive Compensation group.