

LAW & POLICY GROUP

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## **CANADA LAUNCHES EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE PARENTAL SHARING BENEFIT**

*By Mercer's Stephanie Rosseau and Fiona Webster  
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Canada's federal government recently [launched](#) an employment insurance (EI) parental sharing benefit, which provides additional weeks of benefits to families when the parents of a newborn or newly adopted child share parental benefits. The changes, announced in the 2018 budget, are aimed at encouraging the second parent to take leave and support equal partnership in parenting. The benefit is available to parents who make a claim for children born or placed for adoption on or after 17 Mar 2019.

### **HIGHLIGHTS**

Key aspects of the new benefit include the following:

- New parents will still elect either standard (35 weeks) or extended (61 weeks) of benefits but can now receive an additional:
  - Five weeks of benefits if electing the standard option
  - Eight weeks of benefits if electing the extended option
- Both parents must choose the same option (standard or extended), and neither parent can receive more than 35 weeks of benefits total if the standard option is selected or 61 weeks total if the extended option is selected. This will require both parents to take some time off to access some or all of the additional benefits.
- Once parental benefits start being paid on a claim, parents cannot change the duration option, but parents may change how benefit weeks are shared.

The government has said that corresponding changes to the Canada Labour Code will be made to ensure that employees working in the federally regulated private sector have job protection while receiving the parental sharing benefit.

## RELATED RESOURCES

- [Background Information on Parental Sharing Benefit](#) (Employment and Social Development Canada, 18 Feb 2019)
- [Information on EI Maternity and Parental Benefits](#) (Government of Canada)

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