



Anglican Diocese of Ontario

Short-term Disability Policy

Version 2.0

Policy brief & purpose

Our **short-term disability policy** refers to the diocese's provisions for paid leave to clergy and diocesan employees who are medically unable to work for a short time. The company believes that its employees should receive some benefits during an unfortunate time when they will not be able to work. That way we can ensure that they will not struggle to live or spend all their savings to do so.

The diocese will respect any legal guidelines that may be in effect so the present policy is complementary to the law. It is designed to clarify details and procedures related to short-term disability benefits that the company may offer through relevant short-term disability insurance.

Scope

This policy refers to all employees and Bishop's appointees of the diocese who are eligible to utilize short-term disability insurance benefits.

Policy elements

What is short-term disability?

Short-term disability is any physical condition, injury or illness that prevents an employee from working for a certain period of time, without being necessarily work-related. This refers to the inability of the employee to carry out their substantial job duties. It doesn't refer to those who have, for example, sustained minor injuries (e.g. a sprained ankle) and may still be able to fulfill their responsibilities with some accommodation.

This policy covers employees that are temporarily disabled, meaning that they:

- Are being treated for or recover from a health condition (physical or mental)
- Are in need of continuous medical care for a period of time

Disability that results from job-related accidents is not included in this policy since it may be covered from different legal guidelines.

What will the diocese cover for short-term disability?

The Diocesan Sick Leave Policy for clergy and diocesan staff ensures financial support for stipendiary clerics or employees when they are unable to perform their responsibilities as a result of injury or illness.

Initial Enrollment period.

The Diocese of Ontario Short Term Disability program will provide support for up to 119 days for those eligible, supported by appropriate medical documentation. The cleric's or employee's stipend, benefits and housing arrangements continue unchanged during sick leave and short-term disability (119 days). After the first five (5) days of illness or disability, Short Term Disability forms must be completed.

Eligibility. Clerics in active ministry and participating in the Benefits Plan (including LTD) and employees of the diocese (fulltime) will be eligible to receive coverage of the insurance policy. The eligibility of an employee may be assessed by two aspects:

- *Minimum Service period.* The diocese requires an employee or cleric to be employed for 90 days before the coverage takes effect.
- *Working hours and days per week.* The diocese requires that an employee or cleric be at least half time and be enrolled in the Benefits plan (including LTD)

Elimination Period. This term refers to the waiting period between the start of a short term disability and the point that there is eligibility for short term disability benefits. This period is 5 days. In cases of accidents, this period may be zero if determined by the Bishop and DEO.

Exclusionary Period. This 90 day period applies only to employees that had a pre-existing medical condition before signing up for short term disability benefit. During this period, employees will not receive any benefits for short term disability.

Duration of Short-term disability leave. The benefits period (including the 5 days of sick time) is 119 days maximum. An employee is eligible for a maximum of 119 days of Short Term disability leave for the same illness/disability diagnosis in any one period of one year (365 days).

Short-term disability pay. The cleric's or employee's stipend or salary, benefits and housing arrangements continue unchanged during sick leave and short-term disability

Policy exclusions.

- Injuries that are intentionally self-inflicted
- Injuries or illness which results while committing or attempting to commit a criminal offence under the Criminal Code (Canada)
- Injury or condition due to cosmetic surgery or treatment, unless this surgery or treatment is for Injury and begins within 90 days of the accident giving rise to the Injury.

Long-Term Disability Benefits For absences of over 119 days, coverage is provided through the **Long-Term Disability Plan** administered by the National Pension Office which provides for payment of 60% of pre-disability monthly stipend/salary and housing allowance (as applicable).

Procedure

In cases where a cleric or employee becomes temporarily disabled, the following procedure must be followed:

- The employee or cleric must notify the DEO (employees) or the Bishop (clerics) for their disability to apply for short-term disability coverage
- The Bishop, who may delegate to the Diocesan Executive Officer, through consultation and fact finding determines if the emotional, physical, psychological, or behavioural well-being of an individual cleric/employee is significantly impeding their ministry or job function. Judging the suitability of the ministry is the decision of the Bishop in consultation with the Executive Officer. Judging the suitability of the employment duties is the decision of the Executive Officer.
- The employee must provide medical documentation that will describe the disability and provide an estimation of the expected duration of the disability. Additional medical information may be requested to support the continuation of compensation during a sick-leave period. The Diocese will cover the cost of the medical certificate if required
- The employee will be notified if they are eligible for short-term disability benefits
- At the end of the sick-leave or disability period, the cleric/employee must provide the Bishop or Executive Officer with a doctor's certificate indicating that they are fit to return to work.
- If, after the cleric/employee has been on sick leave for 8 weeks, the medical information indicates that the sick-leave may continue beyond 119 days, The Executive Officer and the cleric or employee will ensure an application is made for Canada Pension and Long-Term Disability benefits from the National Church Plan.
- After this period and after the whole of the elimination period has elapsed, the employee or cleric may start collecting short-term disability.
- The employee or cleric must report on their status on a monthly basis to the Bishop (clerics) or Executive Officer (employees).
- Records containing personal medical information are designated as Confidential and handled as such. However, stipendiary clerics/employees who wish to apply for disability benefits under this policy or the Long-Term Disability Policy of the National Church will be required to provide complete medical information to the appropriate insurers.
- The status of a cleric on short-term disability is *On Leave*.
- If the disability is new, full benefits are reinstated one month after the employee returns to work. If the disability is a recurrence of an earlier one, full benefits are reinstated three months after the employee returns to work.
- The Bishop may arrange for a temporary appointment to the parish and will consider appropriate action regarding assisting the parish as needed while the cleric/employee is on sick leave. The diocese covers the cost of Interim/Supply Clergy (other than mileage) at the approved diocesan Supply Clergy Rates.
- The Executive Officer may assist in arranging for a temporary worker to cover key functions and responsibilities of any employee while on leave.

When an employee returns to work after a short-term disability leave, their condition must be evaluated. If they are fully recovered no further action is necessary and they may return to their previous jobs with the same responsibilities and conditions. If, however, they suffer from a permanent implication from the short-term disability that hinders their ability to function, the company may have to arrange accommodations to help them. In this case, the diocesan accessibility policy will be in effect.

In cases where there is a relapse or recurrence of a disability, the diocese will assess the situation and decide on benefits.

Should frequency or patterns of regularity suggest misuse of the policy, the Bishop or Executive Officer will implement performance management procedures immediately. While the diocese cares deeply about those who are ill or injured, abuse of the sick leave policy will not be tolerated. The diocese reserves the right to request a certificate from a registered medical practitioner for an absence of more than 5 days.

Rehabilitation

If, during an extended period of sick leave or short term, medical information indicates that the cleric or employee is medically fit to work on a part-time basis for rehabilitation purposes, he/she will be entitled to arrangements being made for such work, but it may not be in the pre-illness or disability parish or role.

Reasonable Accommodation

Under the terms of the Human Rights Code of Ontario, the Diocese of Ontario has a responsibility to reasonably accommodate a stipendiary cleric/employee when an illness becomes a disability, provided the provision of accommodation does not cause undue hardship. These reasonable accommodations are developed in response to specific restrictions or limitations documented by a physician.

Other Support

The Diocese provides access to counseling services through an Employment & Family Assistance Program through Morneau Shappell and will offer pastoral and spiritual support, if requested.