

FACT SHEET



STATE DISABILITY INSURANCE PROGRAM

The State Disability Insurance (SDI) program, a worker funded program, contributes to the economic security of California by providing affordable benefits to eligible workers. The SDI program is comprised of two separate wage replacement benefits:

Disability Insurance (DI)

Provides benefits to workers who are unable to work due to nonwork-related illness, injury, or pregnancy. Although work-connected disabilities are covered by workers' compensation laws, DI benefits may also be paid for work-related illnesses or injuries under certain circumstances prescribed by law.

When an insured employee is entitled to temporary or permanent disability, Workers' Compensation benefits, or a maintenance allowance at a rate less than the daily DI benefit amount, they may be entitled to the difference in the DI rate.

Paid Family Leave (PFL)

Persons covered by SDI are also automatically covered by PFL. PFL benefits are available to persons who take time off work and are suffering a wage loss to care for a seriously ill child, parent, parent-in-law, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, spouse, or registered domestic partner, or to bond with a new child. Please see the *Paid Family Leave Fact Sheet*, DE 8714CF, for further information, or visit the website at www.edd.ca.gov/disability.

Background

The DI program was added to the California Unemployment Insurance Code in 1946. California, Rhode Island, New Jersey, New York, Hawaii, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, are the only states providing disability insurance for their workforce. California has become a model in DI implementation and an innovative pioneer covering a unique group of workers and self-employed individuals. California was:

- The first state to authorize voluntary plans for disability insurance coverage.

- The first state to provide SDI coverage for agricultural workers.
- The first state to give self-employed persons coverage on an elective basis.
- The first state to provide coverage for normal pregnancies.
- The first state to provide benefits to claimants recovering from alcohol dependency or drug-induced illnesses while in residence in authorized recovery facilities. (Maximum coverage is 90 days.)
- The first state to offer PFL to persons caring for seriously ill family members or to bond with a new child.

Who is Covered by SDI?

Approximately 13.1 million California workers are covered by the SDI program. The law requires coverage for employees working for employers with payrolls in excess of \$100 in a calendar quarter. There are a few exceptions. Those specifically excluded are:

- Some domestic workers.
- Some governmental employees.
- Employees of interstate railroads.
- Employees of some nonprofit agencies.
- Individuals claiming a religious exemption.

Some workers who are not required to participate but may elect SDI coverage include:

- Individuals who are employers (sole proprietorships and partnerships).
- Self-employed persons. (See the *Disability Insurance Elective Coverage Fact Sheet*, DE 8714CC.)
- Individuals in otherwise excluded family employment.
- Out-of-state entities of California employers.
- Some governmental employees.

State Plan

The California SDI program has both a State Plan and Voluntary Plans (VP). State Plan coverage is mandatory for insured employees unless an employer, with the consent of his/her employees, chooses VP coverage. Administered by the Employment Development Department (EDD), the State Plan is financed entirely by California workers' contributions through their earnings.

Contributions collected go into the DI Fund and are used for payment of SDI benefits and program administration.

Voluntary Plan

A VP is a private plan approved by the Director of the State EDD. It may be substituted for the State Plan if the VP matches the State Plan's benefits, provides at least one greater benefit, and costs the employee no more than the State Plan.

About 3.5 percent of California's workers are covered by SDI VPs.

Employers and employee groups may establish VPs with mutual consent of the employer and a majority of the employees. An employee may choose State Plan coverage even though a VP is available where they work.

Eligibility and Benefits

The DI benefits are payable when a covered employee suffers a wage loss and cannot work due to pregnancy or illness/injury not related to his/her job. Benefits are payable for a maximum of 52 weeks.

To receive benefit payments, a person must:

- File a claim in accordance with regulations.
- Serve a seven-day, non-payable waiting period.
- Have been paid at least \$300 in wages, that are subject to SDI contributions, during the 12-month base period of the claim.
- Submit to a reasonable medical examination, if required.
- File a certificate of disability signed by a duly authorized medical or religious practitioner.

Claims can be filed online at www.edd.ca.gov/disability or by mail. Benefits are generally paid every two weeks.

Disqualifications

The SDI program is committed to program integrity and will take all possible measures to detect and deter fraud and protect benefits. No SDI payments can be made to

persons who willfully make false statements or withhold material facts to gain benefits.

A disabled person is also ineligible for DI benefits:

- When receiving Unemployment Insurance or PFL payments.
- When receiving full wages (benefit payments and wages added together are limited to the total weekly wage, excluding overtime pay, immediately prior to the disability).
- When in legal custody as a result of a conviction or when confined by a court order.
- If religious exemption from SDI taxes has been filed.
- If the individual is no longer in the labor market.
- When receiving Workers' Compensation at a weekly rate equal to or greater than the DI rate.

Appeals

All participants have the right to appeal to an impartial Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) concerning determinations of eligibility or benefit amounts. Further appeal from an ALJ's decision may be filed with the California Unemployment Insurance Appeals Board, or the Board may set aside the ALJ's decision on its own motion. Decisions of the Board may be reviewed by the courts.

Social Security

If a person is permanently disabled, he or she should contact the Social Security Administration for information about benefits under its programs. For additional information, call the Social Security Administration at 1-800-772-1213, or TTY 1-800-325-0778.

State Government Employees

State government employees, through a negotiated agreement between the State of California and a recognized employee organization, may elect to be covered by SDI. For information about SDI, visit the website at www.edd.ca.gov/disability, or call 1-866-352-7675, or TTY 1-800-325-0778.

The EDD administers a separate Non-Industrial Disability Insurance (NDI) program for State employees not covered by SDI. For information about NDI, call 1-866-758-9768, or TTY 1-800-325-0778.

For More Information

For additional information on the SDI program, please visit the EDD's website at www.edd.ca.gov/disability, or call our SDI program representatives at 1-800-480-3287, or TTY 1-800-563-2441.

The EDD is an equal opportunity employer/program.
Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.