Claiming Maternity Benefits Through UIF

Pregnant women in South Africa are entitled to four months maternity leave as stipulated in The Basic Conditions of Employment Act (No 75 of 1997). If you’ve contributed to UIF during your employment, you can claim benefits when you go on maternity leave.

Maternity leave may be taken from one month before your baby’s due date or if you are fit to continue working, you can arrange with your employer to go on leave later, leaving you with more time at home with baby.

While maternity leave is mandatory in terms of South Africa law, employees are not compelled to pay maternity leave. If you contributed to the Unemployed Insurance Fund (UIF), you can claim a maternity benefit as prescribed in the Unemployment Insurance Act (No 63 of 2001). Foreign nationals, provided they have a valid work permit and contribute to the fund, may also claim.

An amendment of the UIF Act came into effect on 1 January 2019. The changes are positive for mothers and you may now qualify for a higher pay-out. In order to claim benefits, you must have worked for at least 13 weeks prior to application for maternity benefits.

How To Register For And Claim From UIF

You can register for a maternity benefit eight weeks before your due date, or after your baby’s birth, but no longer than 12 months thereafter. Submit your application when you go on maternity leave – you cannot claim while you are still working. No tax is payable on your UIF benefit.

STEP 1

Complete all forms and assemble documentation required. This includes the first copy of form UI-4.

STEP 2

Register for UIF at your local labour centre. You may be requested to bring in additional documentation or return on a certain day – follow staff instructions carefully to streamline your application process. If you are not able to go to the centre yourself, you can send someone in your place. They need all documentation and a letter from you.

STEP 3

The first payment will be processed within eight weeks of your registration. Claims are paid via EFT into a banking account in your name. If you register after baby’s birth, you will receive back pay from the date you went on maternity leave.

STEP 4

Complete and submit form UI-4 every month to claim, until you return to work.

Members can contact GEMS • Call 0860 00 4367 • Fax 0861 00 4367 • Email enquiries@gems.gov.za
Post: GEMS, Private Bag X782, Cape Town, 8000 • Website: www.gems.gov.za
What Forms And Documentation Are Required To Register?

Ensure you tick off each item on this list to prevent any confusion or complications surrounding your claim:

- Green bar-coded ID book, Smart Card or passport (foreign nationals)
- 2 recent payslips
- Benefit Application Form UI-2.3
- Banking details - Form UI-2.8
- Medical certificate from your doctor or birth certificate (if you claim after the birth)
- Form UI-4 for continual payment of benefits (first of four forms must be completed and submitted with your registration)
- Ask your employer to complete Form UI-2.7 (your salary details)

Tip:
Download and print out the forms from the Department of Labour website: www.labour.gov.za.

How Much Will I Qualify For?

- Benefits are no longer calculated on a sliding scale. Women who have contributed to UIF for 13 weeks or longer may claim at a flat rate of 66% of their salaries to a cap of R17,712. If you earn more, the benefit is calculated on this amount.

- If your employer pays your full salary, you cannot claim.
- If your employer pays a portion of your salary, you can claim. For example, your employer pays 60%, you can claim the 40% balance from UIF.
- A maternity benefit claim is no longer impacted by other UIF claims within a four year cycle.
- You can claim benefits between 17 and 32 weeks (calculated according to how long you’ve contributed to the fund).
- In the past, women who miscarried in the third trimester or gave birth to a stillborn baby, could only claim for six weeks. This has since been changed to a full maternity benefit.

Resource:
www.labour.gov.za (UIF)
www.westerncape.gov.za (Maternity)