

Tax Tip
Week of January 30, 2012

EI and the Self-Employed

Although the self-employed may not receive EI payments for a period of unemployment, they may qualify for four types of EI benefits. There are:

- Maternity benefits are for mothers who give birth. These benefits cover the period surrounding the child's birth (up to 15 weeks)
- Parental benefits are for any parent (mother or father) to care for their newborn or newly adopted child or children. Either parent can receive benefits, or they can share benefits between them (up to 35 weeks)
- Sickness benefits are for people who cannot work due to injury, illness, or the need to be isolated in quarantine because they may be carrying a disease (up to 15 weeks)
- Compassionate care benefits are for people who must be away from work temporarily to provide care or support to a family member who is seriously ill with a significant risk of death (up to six weeks). The six weeks of benefits can be shared between different family members who applied and are eligible to receive them

Note - You can register if you operate your own business, or if you work for a corporation but cannot access EI benefits because you control more than 40% of the corporation's voting shares. You must also be either a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident of Canada. However, some individuals who work independently and are not hired as employees cannot register for these EI special benefits for self-employed people because they are already eligible to receive benefits through the regular EI program. These individuals include:

- barbers
- hairdressers
- taxi
- fishermen who are included as insured persons under the EI Fishing Regulations

