



Sick Leave Policy

The Presbyterian Church in Canada sick leave provision for professional church workers is that:

- (a) During the first three months of sick leave, the congregation is to be responsible for continuing all regular payments to their professional church worker as well as paying for pulpit supply.¹
- (b) Starting with the fourth month and continuing to the end of the seventh month, the congregation is to be responsible for the housing allowance or manse accommodation and the professional church worker, if eligible, will apply to receive federal Employment Insurance sickness benefits.
- (c) If it seems that the professional church worker will not be able to return to their duties by the end of the seventh month, they should contact the Pension and Benefits office to discuss a claim for long term disability benefits.²

The above requirements are minimum requirements. Presbyteries and congregations are free to provide beyond the policy to give compassionate consideration to the minister and the minister's family.

In order for a sick leave to take place, the following is required:

Any absence from work likely to be longer than three weeks will be accompanied by a medical note from a physician or other qualified medical practitioner certifying the inability to work. (The presbytery may choose to require a medical note for shorter durations of absence).

¹ The Presbyterian Church in Canada provides a pulpit supply insurance plan to congregations where a full-time or part time minister/clergy position has been established by its presbytery. Part time positions must be a minimum of 50% full time hours to qualify. The cost of this insurance plan is included in the member's Extended Health and Dental Insurance Plan premium. The maximum period of benefit is seventeen (17) Sundays. Claims can be made using the downloadable form available through the Pension and Benefits page on the national church website.

² In order to apply for long term disability benefits the professional church worker must have been on sick leave for 210 consecutive days commencing with the first day of absence from work due to illness or injury.

The medical note should include the following information:

- The medical practitioner's letterhead or stamp;
- The employee's name;
- The date the employee was seen by the medical practitioner;
- The start date (understood as the first day of absence from work due to illness or injury);
- The expected duration (if known) of the absence;
- The medical practitioner's signature and date signed.

The medical note will be presented to the clerk of presbytery who will arrange for pastoral care and a motion to presbytery noting the professional church worker is placed on sick leave commencing on the start date indicated in the medical note.

In order to return to work, a subsequent medical note indicating the professional church worker is able to return to work must be presented to the clerk of presbytery. The medical note should indicate if the professional church worker is able to return to full duties and responsibilities performed prior to their sick leave; or if there should be a gradual return to work with an estimate of when they will be able to resume full duties and responsibilities; or if they are able to return to work with functional restrictions or limitations requiring accommodation. The clerk of presbytery will arrange for a motion to presbytery that the sick leave ends on the date specified in the note.³

The Sick Leave Policy was adopted by the 1982 General Assembly (A&P 1982, p. 391; A&P 1986, p.390-91; A&P 1990, p. 438; see also A&P 2011, p. 215) and revised by the 2024 General Assembly (A&P 2024, p. 141-143, 21).

³ Where a professional church worker who has returned to work after a sick leave of 30 continuous days or more subsequently goes on another sick leave due to the same condition of illness or injury within 30 days after returning to work, it will be considered an extension of the original sick leave; otherwise it will be considered the start of a new sick leave.