

## **EMPLOYERS CAN CLAIM PART OF GOVERNMENT PAID MATERNITY LEAVE EARLIER**

From 1 May 2009, employers will be able to make one interim claim for reimbursement for the Government paid portion of maternity leave any time after the mother has taken 8 weeks of maternity leave. The remainder of the claim can be made after all remaining maternity leave has been taken. This enhancement is part of the Ministry's efforts to support employers, especially in the current economic climate, while creating a family-friendly environment.

### **Extension of Paid Maternity Leave**

2. As part of the enhanced 2008 Marriage and Parenthood package, paid maternity leave has been extended from 12 to 16 weeks for eligible mothers. **The first eight weeks will be paid for by the employer, while the remaining eight will be taken care of by the state.** For the third confinement and above, all 16 weeks of maternity leave are paid by the Government. In addition, while mothers could previously take the last 4 weeks of maternity leave flexibly within 6 months from the date of confinement, **the last eight weeks can now be taken flexibly over a period of one year from the birth of the child, and this can be decided mutually between the mother and her company.** These enhancements are to provide working mothers with more time to bond with their newborns.

3. Under the Government Paid Maternity Leave scheme, employers provide eligible employees with all paid maternity leave. Employers then seek reimbursement from the Ministry for the Government paid portion of the maternity leave. Currently, employers can seek reimbursement from the Ministry only after all maternity leave has been consumed. This means that, in cases where employees maximize the 12-month flexibility in consuming maternity leave, employers may have to wait up to 12 months to seek reimbursement for the portion of maternity leave payable by the Government.

4. The above provisions also apply to self-employed women seeking reimbursement from Government for maternity leave taken.

### **Enhancing the Reimbursement Procedure**

5. The Ministry has received feedback that this arrangement may affect the cashflow of employers' and the self-employed. To help employers with this, **with effect from 1 May 2009, employers and self-employed women can make one interim claim for reimbursement for the Government paid portion of maternity leave any time after the mother has taken 8 weeks of maternity leave. Employers and the self-employed can make the final claim after all remaining leave has been taken.**

6. For example, an employee takes 12 weeks maternity leave immediately after the birth of her first child, and intends to take the remaining 4 weeks at the 12<sup>th</sup> month from confinement. Rather than wait until all maternity leave has been consumed at the 12<sup>th</sup> month, an employer may now choose to seek reimbursement from the Ministry after the 12 weeks of maternity leave have been taken. The employer would then receive reimbursement for 4 weeks of leave at this point (the first 8 weeks are paid by the employer for a first confinement). The employer can submit the final claim to the Ministry after the last 4 weeks of maternity leave have been consumed by the employee in the 12<sup>th</sup> month from confinement.

7. The policy to allow an interim claim of maternity leave reimbursement will help employers and self-employed women, especially in the current economic climate.

8. More details on the Government Paid Maternity Leave scheme are available at [Annex](#). Employers who require more information on the Scheme can also visit the website at <http://www.profamilyleave.gov.sg>.

**GOVERNMENT-PAID MATERNITY LEAVE SCHEME**

To allow working mothers, including self-employed mothers, to have more time to recover from childbirth and care for their newborns, maternity leave was extended from 12 to 16 weeks with effect from 31 October 2008 for all births.

**For Employed Mothers**

1. If there is mutual agreement between the mother and her employer, the last 8 weeks of maternity leave may be taken flexibly over a period of 12 months from the birth of the child. Otherwise, the last 8 weeks of leave must be taken as a block immediately after the first 8 weeks.
2. For the first 2 confinements, the first 8 weeks of maternity leave are paid by the employer. The last 8 weeks, capped at \$10,000 per 4 weeks, i.e. \$20,000 per confinement (including CPF contributions), are paid by the Government. For the third and subsequent confinements, the Government pays the full 16 weeks of salary, capped at \$10,000 per 4 weeks, i.e. \$40,000 per confinement (including CPF contributions). The employer should pay the mother the normal salary for the duration of the maternity leave and then claim reimbursement from the Government.

**For Self-Employed Mothers**

3. For self-employed mothers, they are eligible for reimbursement of the last 8 weeks of leave for the first 2 confinements and the full 16 weeks for the third and subsequent confinements. The amount of reimbursement is capped at \$10,000 per 4 weeks, i.e. \$20,000 for the first 2 confinements and \$40,000 for the third and subsequent confinements.

**Eligibility Criteria**

4. To be eligible for maternity leave under the Children Development Co-Savings Act, a mother must meet the following criteria:
  - (a) The child is born on or after 31 October 2008;
  - (b) The child is a Singapore citizen;
  - (c) The mother is lawfully married to the child's father; and
  - (d) The mother has served her employer for a continuous period of at least 90 days immediately preceding her confinement.
5. For self-employed mothers, in addition to criteria (a) to (c), they must have been engaged in a particular business or profession for a continuous period of at least 90 days before the child is born, and have lost income as a result of not engaging in the business or profession during the maternity leave period.