

MATERNITY BENEFITS FROM U.I.F.



WHAT IS U.I.F.?

All workers, except farm workers, domestic workers, and seasonal workers have Unemployment Insurance Fund (U.I.F.) money deducted from their wages every week. Workers can claim from this money when they lose their jobs. Women workers can also claim from U.I.F. when they go on Maternity Leave to have their babies. U.I.F. is run by the government. While a fund of this kind is necessary, the present fund is not nearly good enough.



WHO CAN CLAIM?

Women who have worked for at least 4 months before they leave to have their baby can claim Maternity Benefits. Those who can't claim are women working on farms, domestic workers, migrant workers, and workers who are only employed for a few months every year. You also won't get U.I.F. if your boss is paying you more than one third of your normal weekly wage (one third is equal to 33%).



HOW MUCH MONEY WILL YOU GET?

Maternity Benefits pay 45% of your weekly wage. That is, for every one rand that you were getting before, you will now get only 45 cents. For example, if you were getting R55.00 a week, you will now only get R21.00 on Maternity Benefits.

The story of Monica and her friend is the story of almost every woman worker who needs to work for survival, and, if she is of child-bearing age, could fall pregnant.

But why should a woman worker face so much insecurity and fear, and not have the choice of keeping her job. The stories of these 2 women raise many questions for women workers.

What we need to fight for is the right of a woman worker to come back to her job when she has a baby; and to have financial support (maternity benefits) while she is on leave. She needs the right to have and care for her baby, and the right to return to the same grade of work at the same pay without losing out on any benefits. And furthermore she needs good child-care facilities and time off to look after sick children.

If a woman has these things it will help her to be more independent. She would be more able to cope with other problems she has to face, like being left by the father of the child, from dealing with the problem of an unemployed husband, rent increases and child-care.



FOR HOW LONG CAN YOU CLAIM?

It is possible to claim for 18 weeks before your baby is born, and up to 8 weeks after it's birth. BUT, THERE IS A CATCH:- Maternity Benefits only give you one week of payment for every six weeks you have worked before going on

Maternity Leave-

TABLE

A is number of weeks worked, B is number of weeks you can claim for EXAMPLE

A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B
6	→1	12	→2	18	→3	24	→4	30	→5	36	→6	42	→7	48	→8
60	→10	66	→11	72	→12	78	→13	84	→14	90	→15	96	→16	102	→18



HOW TO CLAIM YOUR MONEY

The boss should write maternity as a reason for leaving on your blue card. Take this blue card with you when you leave work. The bosses have to give it to you. Very soon after you stop work you should take your blue card with you to the U.I.F. offices.

In Durban there is an office in Masonic Grove government office (Telephone: 321211). There are also offices in all the big townships.

You will be given a form to fill in. On this form there is a medical certificate which your doctor must complete. Your money will be posted to you every two months.



WHAT DO YOU DO IF YOUR MONEY DOESN'T COME?

If you have put in your claim for Maternity Benefits and your money doesn't come you must:

1. Go to your union office and ask the

organiser to phone the U.I.F. office.

2. If you have no union, or your union can't or won't help you, you must contact one of these 2 places:

BLACK SASH ADVICE OFFICE or
SUITE 1 CENTRAL COURT
125 GALE STREET
DURBAN
PHONE: 69215

LEGAL RESOURCES CENTRE
10 ST JOSEPH'S CENTRE
20 ST ANDREW'S STREET
DURBAN
PHONE: 65785

SOME PROBLEMS WITH THIS FUND



It is only available to some groups of workers. Farm workers, domestic workers and migrant women workers can't claim.



The amount you can claim depends on the number of months you have worked for. This means you need to have about 3 to 4 years between each of your children to claim full benefits for each pregnancy.



You can only claim for 18 weeks before and 8 weeks after the baby is born, instead of being able to have more leave after the baby is born.



You only get paid 45% of your weekly wage.



If you are getting paid more than 1/3 of your wage by your boss while you are on maternity leave, you can't claim any benefits from the government fund.



AND OF COURSE THERE IS NOTHING FORCING BOSSES TO GIVE YOU BACK YOUR JOB WHEN YOU RETURN. IF YOU DO GET YOUR JOB BACK YOU MAY BE PAID AS A NEW WORKER, AND HAVE LOST ALL YOUR BENEFITS!

How can we allow this situation to continue? We must see what can be done, and what is being done at the moment.