24 March 2020

WHAT CONSTITUTES A VALID CLAIM BY AN EMPLOYEE FROM THE SICK, ACCIDENT AND MATERNITY PAY FUND DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS?

The Sick, Accident and Maternity Pay Fund is a Fund, administered by MIBCO, that pays employees when they are either booked off-sick, absent due to a serious accident or on maternity leave. It is a benefit that is funded by an employer's contribution through the MIBCO returns system and is restricted to RMI Members only (non-Members cannot participate in this Fund). When the Fund has paid an employees for absence due to illness, accident or maternity, the employer is not required to pay the employee for the time that they were absent from work.

Many RMI Members have enquired as to what is required for a valid claim by an employee to the Fund.

Firstly, it is imperative to distinguish between self-isolation, isolation and quarantine.

Self-isolation happens when an employee <u>decides</u> to isolate themselves as a result of having been in contact with a person who may have been infected with the COVID-19 virus. The employee is not necessarily sick and does not have a medical certificate stating that they are unfit to report for work, as a diagnostic test would not have been administered.

Isolation happens when the employee is <u>ordered</u> to isolate themselves due to having been in contact with a person infected with the COVID-19 virus, having travelled to a high-risk area or country, or who is displaying flu-like symptoms. In this instance, the employee does not choose to isolate themselves, but is ordered to do so by their employer, and typically would not have a valid medical certificate as a diagnostic test would not have been administered.

Quarantine happens when an employee is <u>positively diagnosed</u> as having contracted the COVID-19 virus, and such an employee is placed in a quarantine facility. A medical doctor will issue a medical certificate to the employee, declaring them as unfit to report for work.

In terms of the Rules of the Sick-, Accident- and Maternity Pay Fund, sick leave benefits are **<u>ONLY</u>** paid in the event of claim that is supported by a valid medical certificate (and in terms of the schedule of benefits below), certifying the employee as unfit to report for duty. The Sick, Accident and Maternity Pay Fund will not honour claims in respect of self-isolation or isolation, where no diagnostic test was administered and therefore, no medical certificate can be presented in support of such a claim.

Contributions payable in respect of employees participating in the fund are as follows:

Table 1	**Sick Fund**	**Maternity Fund**	**Death & Funeral**	**Total New Contribution**
Male	R14.99	-	R3.50	R18.49
Female	R14.99	R7.06	R3.50	R25.55

Participating employees may claim the following benefits from the Fund:

MISA Members:

Sick leave – first 10 days at 100% of wages/salaries.
Next 5 days at 50% of wages/salaries.
Employers will pay the MISA members directly and claim the benefit back from the Fund afterwards.

All Other Employees:

Sick leave - 15 days at 75% of wages/salaries.

Other Benefits, for all Employees:

Accident Pay - Up to 40 days at 75% of wages/salaries.
Maternity Pay - Up to 17 weeks at 30% of wages/salaries.

In addition to the sick leave benefits, participating employees will also have access to the following benefits after 8 consecutive weeks' contributions:

1. A death benefit of **R20 000.00** per Fund member, upon the passing of the member;
2. A funeral benefit of **R10 000.00** for the Fund member, as well as his / her spouse/partner, children between the ages of 14 and 18 and **R7 000.00** for children under the age of 14, to a maximum of three claims per year (an existing benefit); and
3. A funeral benefit of **R7 000.00** in the case of the still-birth of a child of the member.

All death- and funeral benefit-related queries may be directed to MISA on call centre number 086 099 4147 or email info@ms.org.za.

Members requiring advice or assistance in this regard, may call on any of the RMI's regional offices and discuss their requirements with any one of the RMI's highly skilled IR Specialists. Contact details for the regional offices are available on the RMI website (www.rmi.org.za) or mobile application.

Footnote : We remind employers that participation in the Fund is restricted to paid-up members of the **RMI** only, with membership being compulsory for employees that are members of the Motor Industry Staff Association **(MISA)**. All non-MISA members, employed by RMI-registered employers, may participate in the Fund on a voluntary basis.