
PEPP *Talk* . . .

on Blackout Periods

This issue of PEPP *Talk* provides members of the Public Employees Pension Plan (PEPP) with information about blackout periods.

What are Blackout Periods?

A blackout period occurs when transactions are suspended by the Public Employees Benefits Agency (PEBA) as administrators of PEPP. During these times, unit values are not declared or posted to the website. Blackout periods may occur because of planned events or they may be totally unexpected and forced by unplanned events.

Transactions that may be suspended are:

- processing contributions;
- inter-fund transfers;
- payments*;
- personal data changes (name, address and beneficiary changes);
- enrolments of new members; and
- scheduled “roll-overs” of your investments from one step of the PEPP Steps Fund to the next step.

Planned Events Causing Blackout Periods

Some planned events that may result in a blackout period are:

- office closures;
- system conversions; and
- major system enhancements.

During these events, it may be necessary to suspend transactions to protect and preserve the integrity of Plan member records and accounts. Any requests received during a blackout period will be processed as soon as possible starting the first business day after the blackout period has ended.

Communication Prior to a Planned Blackout Period

Planned blackout periods may vary in length. For example, they may last one day or they may last two weeks. Prior to a planned blackout period, members will be notified up to 60 days in advance.

PEBA will communicate the anticipated date, duration and reason for the suspension through:

- newsletters; and
- the PEPP website.

*With the exception of regularly scheduled Variable Pension Benefit (VPB) payments. For more information on VPB payments, see page 2.

During planned blackout periods, PEBA anticipates that the Plan website, *PEPP Access* and *Retire@Ease* may continue to be available to members.

Unplanned Events Causing Blackout Periods

Some unplanned events that may result in a blackout period are:

- extended local power outages;
- equipment and/or software failures; and
- catastrophic events, like natural disasters.

These types of events could cause an unplanned blackout period forcing suspension of transactions. Unit values will not be declared during these times.

Communication During an Unplanned Blackout Period

The length of suspensions during an unplanned blackout period may vary depending on the cause. Due to the nature of unplanned events, it would be impossible to provide advance notice of the blackout.

In an unplanned blackout period, PEBA will make every effort to communicate with members through the best method available under the circumstances. PEBA will inform you of the reason for the blackout period and its expected duration. PEBA may use the following communication methods:

- direct mail (letters or bulletins);
- the PEBA and PEPP websites;
- news releases; and
- advertising.

Any requests received during a blackout period will be processed as soon as possible starting the first business day after the blackout period has ended.

Effect on Pensioners Receiving Payments Under the Variable Pension Benefit (VPB)

During a blackout period, members on the Variable Pension Benefit (VPB) will continue to receive their regularly scheduled payments, except under extraordinary circumstances.

At the same time, some transactions may need to be suspended until the blackout period ends. These transactions include:

- altering scheduled payment amounts;
- unscheduled lump-sum payment request;
- altering payment instructions; and
- inter-fund transfers.

If a regularly scheduled payment is missed, the missed payment will be made as soon as possible. Future payments will resume according to the payment schedule.

What Happens After a Blackout Period

After a blackout period has ended, all transactions previously suspended will be processed.

The cause of a blackout and whether market information is available will determine how unit values will be declared after a blackout period.

Other PEPP Talks that may interest you:

- **Units and Unit Values**
provides information about what unitization is and how unit values are calculated.
- **Variable Pension Benefit (VPB)**
provides information on the different retirement income investment options available through the VPB.
- **Changing Your Investment Options**
provides information on the PEPP investment options and how to transfer among them.

PEPP Talks are available on our website at www.peba.gov.sk.ca.

Questions

For further information about blackout periods contact:

Public Employees Pension Plan (PEPP)
c/o Public Employees Benefits Agency (PEBA)
1000 - 1801 Hamilton Street
REGINA SK S4P 4W3

Phone: 306-787-5442 in Regina or toll free at 1-877-275-7377
FAX: 306-787-0244
Email: pepp@peba.gov.sk.ca

The information contained in this issue of PEPP *Talk* does not replace or supersede *The Public Employees Pension Plan Act* or *The Pension Benefits Act, 1992* or related regulations. In the event of any misunderstanding or conflict, the Acts and Regulations will prevail. Please contact PEPP if you are or were working outside Saskatchewan. Your pension may be subject to the legislation of another province.

The Public Employees Pension Plan produces issues of PEPP *Talk* as a service to its members. These documents provide information on specific provisions of the Plan. Plan information is available in a variety of other forms including: issues of PEPP *Talk* on other topics; our newsletter, "Pension Perspectives"; PEPP Member Booklet; and the PEPP home page www.peba.gov.sk.ca/pensions/pepp/home.html

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