The following will answer the most frequently asked questions from employees regarding pregnancy and parental leave.

**What are the eligibility criteria for pregnancy and parental leaves?**
A parent must be employed with the same employer for a period of 13 weeks prior to the expected birth date.

**Who is eligible for pregnancy and parental leaves?**
Both full-time and part-time employees are entitled to unpaid pregnancy and parental leaves.

Only the parent who has given birth is entitled to the 17 week unpaid pregnancy leave.

As of December 3, 2017, both parents are entitled to up to 61 weeks unpaid parental leave. An employee who is the parent and who has not taken pregnancy leave is entitled to up to 63 weeks of job protected parental leave without pay.

**When can I start my pregnancy leave?**
Pregnancy leave may commence up to 17 weeks before the expected birth date and no later than the date of the birth. Pregnancy leave must be taken consecutively and time cannot be split up.

**When can I start my parental leave?**
The parent who has given birth must commence their parental leave immediately upon completion of the unpaid pregnancy leave or when the child comes in their care, custody and control. The other parent and/or adoptive parents must commence their parental leaves within 78 weeks of the child’s birth or after the child first comes into custody, care and control of the parent. Parental leaves must be taken in consecutive weeks.

**How do I apply for pregnancy leave?**
An employee is required to give the City a minimum of two weeks written notice of the anticipated date on which their pregnancy leave is to begin along with a medical certificate estimating the expected birth date.

**How do I apply for parental leave?**
A parent is required to give their department a minimum of two weeks written notice prior to the anticipated start of the parental leave and follow up with a medical or legal certificate confirming the birth date of the child or the date the child came into the custody, care and control of the parent.

**Can I change my intended date of pregnancy or parental leave?**
The start date of either the pregnancy or parental leave may be changed to an earlier date by providing written notice to your department at least two weeks prior to the requested earlier date. The start date may be changed to a later date by providing written notice two weeks prior to the date the leave was originally scheduled to commence.

If a child arrives early or if the parent who will be giving birth is forced to stop work because of pregnancy related complication, written notice outlining the intent to commence pregnancy leave or
parental leave is required within two weeks of the child’s birth or when the parent who has or will be giving birth stops working (for parental or pregnancy leaves).

If I started my Pregnancy or Parental Leave prior to December 3\textsuperscript{rd}, 2017, am I entitled to the new leave provisions?
No. The new provisions for extended leave periods are effective on December 3\textsuperscript{rd}, 2017 and cannot be applied retroactively or for leaves that are already in progress. Any leave that started December 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 2017 or earlier is subject to the former ESA entitlements; 35 weeks for parental leave where it follows a pregnancy leave, and 37 for parental leave that does not follow a pregnancy leave.

Can I change my return to work date?
An employee on pregnancy or parental leave may change to an earlier return date by giving the corporation four weeks written notice of the earlier intended return date. The return date may also be extended (within the maximum legislated limits) by giving the corporation four weeks written notice before the original date the leave was scheduled to end.

How will my seniority be affected when I am taking maternity and parental leave benefits?
Seniority accrues normally as if you had been at work during the period of your pregnancy or parental leave.

How will my employment benefits be affected?
Employment benefits continue uninterrupted during both pregnancy and parental leaves. If an employee is paying for optional life insurance benefits, the employee must make arrangements to pay for the insurance during their leave via post-dated cheques or coverage will be terminated.

How will my vacation entitlement be affected?
An employee who has taken pregnancy/paternal leave is entitled to their full paid vacation entitlement based on aggregate credited service and the appropriate vacation schedule. Paid vacation entitlement will not be subject to pro-rating based on a pregnancy/paternal leave. As per Corporate Policy, any vacation days unused at year-end, (while on pregnancy/paternal leave) can be carried over to a maximum of one year’s entitlement, with appropriate approval.

What if I pass a merit date when I am on a pregnancy or parental leave?
Increases are granted at the discretion of the department. Your department must have adequate opportunity to assess your on the job performance prior to granting an anniversary increase.

What position will I return to when my leave is finished?
You must be reinstated to the same position if it still exists or to a comparable position if it does not. You will be reinstated within the current range of pay for your position.

What happens to my computer purchase loan payments while I am on leave?
As per the promissory note you signed at the time of your loan, you are required to submit post dated cheques to the Finance Payroll section to cover your payments during your leave period.
What options exist for OMERS contributions?
You may buy credited service in the OMERS plan for up to 17 weeks of pregnancy leave and/or up to 61 weeks of parental leave. OMERS treats pregnancy and parental leaves as one continuous period. All leave periods may be purchased, wholly or in part, by December 31st of the year following the leave period end date. If you elect to purchase your leave period within this time frame, then the employer will contribute their matching contribution. If you do not purchase within this time frame, you may still purchase credited service at a later date but the buy back cost will be considerably greater. Refer to the buy back section of your OMERS booklet or the OMERS website at: http://www.omers.com/pension/Buying_Service.aspx

Employment Insurance Registration
You should apply as soon as possible once you have stopped working, even if the City has not yet submitted your ROE to Service Canada. You should be aware that if you delay applying for benefits beyond four weeks after your last day of work, you risk losing benefits. You must apply online through Service Canada’s Website at http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/ei/types/regular.shtml#eligible. Your record of employment from the corporation will automatically be submitted to Service Canada electronically.

What if I am unable to work at my regular job due to my pregnancy?
If you are unable to perform your regular duties due to your pregnancy and you require modified work, discuss your need for accommodated work with your supervisor. You may also be required to submit information, from your treating health care practitioner, outlining your restrictions and limitations to Return to Work Services. The Return to Work Specialist, along with your department management, will identify suitable work within the restrictions/limitations.

What if my doctor does not want me to work at all due to complications during my pregnancy?
If your doctor requires you to remain off work due to complications related to your pregnancy, a Short Term Disability claim form must be completed and submitted to Return to Work Services. Please consult the Income Protection Plan Policy (for non-union), your collective agreement, union representative or supervisor for details of when claim forms are required.

As the parent who will be giving birth, am I eligible for Post Delivery Short Term Disability Benefits?
You can receive 6 weeks of Short Term Disability benefits paid by the City immediately following the delivery. This is not an automatic payment. You must apply for this benefit by submitting a completed claim form to Return to Work Services, confirming the actual date of delivery. Claim forms can be completed by your family doctor, obstetrician or midwife. The completed claim form must be received within two weeks from date of delivery. Upon receipt of the completed claim form, the Absence Management Coordinator will arrange with Finance to process payment of these benefits. This 6 week Short Term Disability period does not extend the pregnancy or parental leave. It is part of the leave period and is a payment issue only.

In the event you begin your pregnancy leave and do not deliver until a later date – the 6 weeks of STD benefits will not begin until the delivery date.
Questions?
If you have any questions about your leave, please speak with your Supervisor or contact your Absence Management Coordinator in Return to Work Services.