



# WOODS HOLE OCEANOGRAPHIC INSTITUTION

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Date: December 20, 2007

To: All Benefits-eligible Employees

From: Emily Schorer  
Director of Human Resources

Re: Administrative Changes to Family Illness Days and Short-Term Disability Income

**All benefits-eligible employees are strongly encouraged to read this memo carefully to learn about changes that will be taking place with the first pay period of 2008 (begins December 23, 2007):**

- **New reporting requirements for absences associated with Family Illness Days**
- **Reduced waiting period and claims procedure for Short-term Disability Income benefit**

## **Family Illness Days**

Benefit-eligible employees may receive up to 5 paid days per year to be used for the birth, adoption or illness of an immediate family member. "Family Member" is generally defined by the Family & Medical Leave Act (spouse, son or daughter, parent). At WHOI, the definition of "Family Member" is further expanded to include eligible domestic partners.

Beginning December 23, 2007, a line item for "Family Illness" will be added to employee timecards. Any time that is charged for absences associated with a Family Illness must be recorded appropriately on the timecard.

## **Short-term Disability**

### **1. Reduced Waiting Period**

The waiting period for Short-term Disability income is being reduced from 14 to 7 calendar days.

The amount of salary paid through Short-term Disability income continues to be based on an employee's length of service to the Institution. There are no changes to the amount of salary you may be eligible to receive or the amount of time you can continue to receive Short-term Disability income.

Short-term Disability Income Schedule:

<b>Years of Service</b>	<b>100% of Pay Through STD Income</b>	<b>60% of Pay Through STD Income</b>
<b>Less than 5</b>	Weeks 2 through 6	Weeks 7 through 26
<b>5 to 10</b>	Weeks 2 through 8	Weeks 9 through 26
<b>10 to 15</b>	Weeks 2 through 13	Weeks 14 through 26
<b>More than 15</b>	Weeks 2 through 26	

As always, if you receive less than 100% of your normal salary, you may coordinate Short-term Disability income with any accrued vacation time you have.

## **2. Initiating a Short-term Disability Claim**

Another important change for 2008 has to do with your role in initiating a Short-term Disability claim. Once you have determined that you expect to be out of work for more than 7 calendar days, you should:

- Call your supervisor to report how long you expect to be absent from work.
- Call the CIGNA hotline at 1-800-362-4462 to begin the claim process. Please see the attached CIGNA brochure for complete details on how to report a disability claim over the telephone or via the CIGNA website.

*Prompt reporting is essential. If you fail to notify your supervisor and CIGNA in a timely manner, it may create a delay or interruption in salary continuation.*

Please remember that your right to Short-term Disability income is subject to approval by CIGNA and may require complying with any requirements imposed by CIGNA.

## **3. Intermittent Short-term Disability for the Same Illness or Injury**

If you have an illness or injury that requires you to take approved intermittent time off for the same illness or injury, the time taken will be accumulated and charged against the total period allowed under the Short-term Disability benefit (130 workdays). If you return to work on your regular schedule for a period of 30 days or more, any subsequent absence will not be considered to be part of the same Short-term Disability claim.

## **4. Effects on FMLA**

It is important for you to know that an illness or injury that qualifies for Short-term Disability will also be a qualifying event under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) for employees who are eligible for FMLA leave. Short-term Disability will run concurrently with the time period allotted under the FMLA.

A new Institution policy will be issued shortly, which will cover Short-term Disability Income in greater detail. In the meantime, if you have questions, please contact your Benefits Specialist, Donna Hyman (x3743) or Linda Snow (x3763), or refer to the attached **CIGNA brochure** on reporting a disability claim.