

**PRESBYTERY OF GENESEE VALLEY  
COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY**

**Disability Guidelines for Board of Pensions Members**

**Key Process Elements for all Leaves**

This leave policy covers all Board of Pensions members serving congregations or validated ministries. The Committee on Ministry shall be notified if any of the following leaves are implemented.

Length of leave will be negotiated between the pastor and the personnel committee, with input from the Committee on Ministry.

The session will approve all actions negotiated between the pastor and the personnel committee.

The chair of the personnel committee will maintain a consistent liaison with the pastor throughout the leave, and involve the other members of the personnel committee as required. The chair will also report to the session at monthly and any special session meetings.

If at any time during the leave it becomes apparent that the pastor will not be able to return to work or assume 100% of his or her duties, then the church's personnel committee, along with the Committee on Ministry and the pastor need to review the situation and make a recommendation to the Session regarding continuation of the relationship.

**Disability Leave**

This disability guideline applies to full-time pastors as defined by the Board of Pensions. It assumes that the pastor will be vested in the Benefits Plan of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), which requires a minimum of three years of church service including seminary. If a pastor is not vested, then the church session, along with the Committee on Ministry, must decide on an appropriate course of action.

*It should be noted that pastoral staff is not covered by any New York Disability Plan.*

The pastor must be under the care of a licensed or registered physician or health care professional to establish a qualifying disability.

This guideline applies to a pastor unable to fulfill his or her leadership role for an extended period of time, defined as a period in excess of two weeks.

Definitions:

1. "Effective Salary" is defined by the Presbytery's Terms of Call.
2. "Terms of Call" is the compensation package, approved by the congregation, under which the pastor is operating at the initiation of the leave period. These "Terms of Call" remain in effect until changed by the congregation.
3. "Sick Leave" is accumulated one day per month beginning with the effective date of service at the church with a maximum accumulation of 90 days. Accumulated sick leave is not included in any severance or termination compensation. The 90 day accumulation is equal to the amount of time required between the advent of disability and the beginning of payments by the BOP. It is the hope of the presbytery that a new pastor without accumulated sick leave days will be treated with compassion.

**For the period up to 90 days:**

The local church will provide the pastor with his or her full compensation as defined in the approved “Terms of Call,” for a period of no less than his or her accumulated sick time, up to a maximum of 90 days. The leave time used during this 90 day waiting period is intended to be the “Sick Leave” accumulated by the pastor during service to the church.

Regardless of the amount of the accumulated sick time, the church will continue to remit full dues to the Board of Pensions on behalf of the pastor for the entire 90 day waiting period.

**After 90 days:**

After 90 days, as per the Board of Pensions policy benefits continue at no cost to you or your employing organization.

As long as you are receiving disability benefits, you are eligible for the following:

- a monthly income benefit
- continuation of medical benefits
- continuation of death benefits and of supplemental death benefits for you and your dependents if you were participating in that plan immediately before becoming disabled
- continuation of pension credit accrual if you were participating in the Pension Plan immediately before becoming disabled

In addition, you may continue to participate in the Dental Plan if you were participating immediately before becoming disabled, but you must pay for this coverage.

**Definition of Permanent Disability**

A Plan member is considered disabled if he or she is unable to perform his or her regular work duties (or any other work providing a reasonably comparable income) due to sickness or bodily injury. After 24 consecutive months of such disability, the member is still considered disabled if, due to sickness or bodily injury, he or she cannot perform any type of work for which he or she is suited for by education, training, or experience. The Board must certify all member disabilities.

**Disability Benefits**

Generally, disability benefits are based on 60 percent of the greater of:

- your effective salary up to a cap of \$90,000
- the appropriate churchwide median in effect when you become disabled

Note: The initial disability benefit cannot exceed 100 percent of your pre-disability effective salary.

When approved, benefit payments begin after a 90-day waiting period, but not before your salary or other benefits terminate.

**Duration of Benefits**

As long as you remain disabled, you continue to receive disability benefit payments until you:

- return to work
- no longer meet the Plan's definition of disability

- reach age 65, the Plan's normal retirement age, except if you become disabled at age 62 or older, in which case benefits continue for the Maximum Duration shown below
- die

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