

Policy on Compensation and Benefits for Clergy and Lay Employees of the Archdiocese of Canada

This policy is intended to ensure fair remuneration and benefits for parish priests and lay employees in our Archdiocese and to establish a minimum standard of compensation and benefits across the parishes.

1.0 Rationale and Guiding Principles

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide direction and assistance to parishes, deans, the Bishop, and the central administration of the Archdiocese in matters relating to the terms and conditions of assigned parish priests in our archdiocese. As well, it provides direction for minimum remuneration and benefits for lay employees in the Archdiocese.

1.2 Scope

This policy applies to full-time priests and clergy who are assigned to positions that are understood to be half-time or greater. It also includes lay employees who are working a minimum of 24 hours per week. It does not apply to supply priests. Nor does it address the duties and responsibilities of the parish priest as these are beyond the scope of this policy.

It is understood that references to “employer” and “employee” in this policy concern compensation and day-to-day working conditions. These terms are subordinate to the spiritual and ecclesiastical relationship between the bishop, the priest, the deacon, and the parish and the general hierarchical structure of the Orthodox Church, which is guided by the canons of the Orthodox Church, the Statutes of the Orthodox Church in America, and the By-Laws of the Archdiocese of Canada.

2.0 Definitions

2.1 **Full-time clergyman** is one whose principal employment is as a clergyman. His compensation reflects that his Bishop, parish, and Dean deem his position to be full-time.

2.2 **Half-time (or greater) clergyman** is one whose parish, dean, and the Bishop agree that his service to the Church is deemed to be half-time or greater. For purposes of participation in the Archdiocese’s Group Insurance Plan, the clergyman must be seen to work the equivalent of 24 hours per week.

2.3 **Full-time Lay Employee** is one who is employed in a full-time capacity (35 hours a week or more) for the Archdiocese. He or she is entitled to participate in the Group Insurance Plan.

2.4 **Half-time (or greater) employee** is one who is employed for 24 hours per week or more in the Archdiocese. He or she is entitled to participate in the Archdiocese's Group Insurance Plan.

2.5 **Supply priest** is one who works on an irregular basis and who is paid on a per assignment or per service basis. He is not entitled to participate in the benefits plan.

2.6 **Employer** is the parish, Archdiocese, or other Archdiocesan organization responsible for compensation and benefits.

3.0 Compensation and Benefits for Parish Priests

3.1 Annual Compensation

3.1.2 All annual compensation guidelines will be reviewed and updated every three years by the Archdiocesan Council. It will make its recommendations to the Archdiocesan Assembly.

3.1.3 All full-time priests will receive a minimum salary of \$3000 per month. This base compensation does not include the Group Insurance Plan premiums paid by the Parish. If a parish requests an exemption to have minimum compensation below this starting point, the parish must make its request in writing, including the reasons for the request, to the Bishop.

3.1.4 The annual compensation paid to a priest who is full-time or half-time, must be agreed upon through discussions between the Parish Council and the Bishop or his designee. That is to say, all annual compensation arrangements must be approved by the Bishop.

3.2 Travel Allowance

Priests are entitled to a reasonable travel allowance. The reasonable per-km rate for travel allowance will be the rate established by the government of the province / territory in which the ecclesiastical institution is situated.

There are two methods of calculating the travel allowance:

Recommended method

The priest and his parish may agree to compensate travel through verifiable expense claims submitted monthly to the parish. These travel expense payments may vary from one month to the next. This method of payment is exempt from income tax, and the parish can claim a GST rebate of \$0.0124 per kilometer paid.

Alternative method

The payment may be based on the approximate monthly average kilometres travelled. This method of payment is regarded as a taxable benefit.

3.3 Housing

There are three options for considering housing allowances for full-time clergy. It is recommended that parishes consult the section on clergy residence deductions on the Canada Revenue Agency's website to know the tax implications for each scenario:

<http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/bsnss/tpcs/pyrll/bnfts/brd/hsng/clrgy-eng.html>

- 3.3.1 In instances where clergy own their own homes, the parish should nevertheless provide a housing allowance to cover, at least partially, mortgage, property taxes, and utilities.
- 3.3.2 In instances where clergy rent housing, the parish should provide a housing allowance equivalent to fair market value, including the cost of utilities in the parish's locale. This allowance is a taxable benefit classified as income from employment under the general provisions of the *Income Tax Act*.
- 3.3.3 Thirdly, where the cleric resides in a parish-provided residence, this home must be kept in good repair by the parish, and the parish will cover the basic utilities.

3.4 Sick Days and Extended Sick Leave

- 3.4.1 Sick leave is provided for the protection of income that would have been lost due to legitimate illness, injury, or quarantine that prevents priests and other employees from performing their regular duties and that is not covered by any other form of income loss protection such as long term disability insurance and employment insurance.
- 3.4.2 Priests and lay employees with full-time assignments are entitled to ten sick days with pay per annum.
- 3.4.3 Half-time priests (see definition 2.2.4) are entitled to five days of sick leave with pay.

3.5 Earned Vacation Days

Full-time lay employees and priests shall accrue vacation entitlement at the following rates. Note that completed years of service in the Archdiocese are taken into account, regardless of length of stay in a specific parish.

- 3.5.1 Up to the end of the fifth year of service with the Archdiocese – three weeks per year.

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- 3.5.2 From the beginning of the sixth year of service with the Archdiocese – four weeks per year.
- 3.5.3 From the beginning of the eleventh year of service with the Archdiocese – five weeks per year.
- 3.5.4 Paid vacation is not to exceed five weeks.
- 3.5.5 Employees may not carry forward vacation days from one year to the next.
- 3.5.6 Priests are not to exceed four Sundays per year as vacation days.
- 3.5.7 The priest or lay employee must have completed one full year in a given parish before becoming eligible for a vacation.
- 3.5.8 Lay employees and assigned priests other than those holding full-time assignments shall have vacation entitlements pro-rated to the term of the employment. This regulation does not apply to priests who are classified as supply priests or those assigned to less than a half-time appointment.
- 3.5.9 Full-time priests and lay employees may take vacation entitlement at a time mutually acceptable to them, their Parish Council and the Bishop.
- 3.5.10 Time spent participating in professional development or clergy conferences shall not be counted as vacation days.
- 3.6 “Days Off”

Insofar as it is possible, priests should have two days off per week. Each priest may decide to have these days as four half-days, or two half-days and one full day, if that works better for him. If the priest wishes to identify two specific days per week as his “days off,” he should make these days known to the Parish Council. If the priest’s services are required on a day he would ordinarily be “off,” he would be entitled to take another day that same week. “Days off” not taken are not cumulative and are not to be added to vacation time.

4.0 Group Insurance Plan for Clergy and Lay Employees

For all eligible employees, participation in legislated programs including Employment Insurance and the Canada Pension Plan is a condition of employment. Each parish will pay its legislated share of participation in these programs.

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The following benefits program shall be provided to eligible lay employees and clergy (as defined under 2.2.1 and 2.2.2) of the Archdiocese. This insurance plan will be administered by the Archdiocese, and each parish will contribute a portion of the premium as outlined below. Parishes should seek professional advice on the taxation implications of these benefits because some are taxable while others are not.

- 4.1 Provincial Health Care Plan – where eligible. It is recommended that the parish pay the full premium.
- 4.2 Dental Coverage: The employer shall pay 100% of the premium.
- 4.3 Extended Health Care Coverage: The employer shall pay 100% of the premium.
- 4.4 Employee Life Insurance: The employee shall pay 100% of the premium.
- 4.5 Long-term Disability Insurance: The employee shall pay 100% of the premium.

