

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

Exchange rate: US\$1.00 equals
2.70 East Caribbean dollars (EC\$).

Old Age, Disability, and Survivors

Regulatory Framework

First law: 1970 (provident fund).

Current law: 1986 (social insurance), with amendments.

Type of program: Social insurance system.

Note: The Family Services Division of the Ministry of Social Development administers social assistance cash benefits for needy persons, including needy elderly persons, the disabled, and orphans.

Coverage

Employed persons aged 16 to 59.

Voluntary coverage for self-employed persons aged 16 to 59, previously insured persons with at least 150 paid or credited contributions, and persons living abroad.

Source of Funds

Insured person: 2.5% of gross earnings.

The minimum weekly earnings for contribution purposes are EC\$15.

The maximum monthly earnings for contribution purposes are EC\$3,770. (EC\$4,330 from January 2006.)

The above contributions also finance sickness and maternity benefits, below.

Self-employed person: A voluntary contribution of 5.5% of declared gross earnings, according to eight income categories.

Contributions may be paid weekly or monthly.

Employer: 3.5% of monthly payroll.

The minimum weekly earnings for contribution purposes are EC\$15.

The maximum monthly earnings for contribution purposes are EC\$3,770. (EC\$4,330 from January 2006.)

The above contributions also finance sickness and maternity benefits, below.

Government: None; contributes as an employer.

Qualifying Conditions

Old-age pension: Age 60. The minimum required number of weeks of contributions is being increased annually by

25%, up to 500 weeks of contributions. In 2005, the insured must have at least 350 weeks of contributions.

Old-age grant: Age 60 with at least 50 weeks of contributions.

Old-age benefits are payable abroad.

Disability pension: Younger than age 60 and disabled with at least 150 weeks of contributions. The insured must have an assessed degree of disability of at least 30%.

Disability grant: Younger than age 60 and disabled with at least 50 weeks of contributions.

The degree of disability is assessed by National Insurance Services inspectors. (The last inspection was in 2004.)

Disability benefits are payable abroad.

Survivor pension: The deceased had at least 150 weeks of contributions.

Survivor grant: The deceased did not meet the qualifying conditions for a pension but was eligible for an old-age grant or disability grant.

Survivor benefits are payable abroad.

Funeral grant: The deceased had paid at least 26 weeks of contributions. The grant is payable for the death of the insured, the insured's spouse, and the insured's dependent children younger than age 16 (age 18 if a full-time student, no limit if disabled).

Old-Age Benefits

Old-age pension: The pension is equal to 30% of the insured's average annual earnings with 350 weeks of contributions. The pension is increased by 0.5% of average annual earnings for each additional 25-week period of contributions beyond 350 weeks. (The minimum required number of weeks of contributions is being increased annually by 25%, up to 500 weeks of contributions.)

Average annual earnings are based on the insured's earnings in the best 3 of the last 15 years before the year in which the insured reaches age 60.

The minimum pension is EC\$60 a week. The pension is paid every 2 weeks.

The maximum benefit is 60% of average annual earnings.

Benefit adjustment: Benefits are adjusted for inflation every 3 years, subject to an actuarial review.

Old-age grant: The grant is equal to six times average weekly insurable earnings for each 50-week period of contributions.

Average annual earnings are based on the insured's earnings in the best 3 of the last 15 years before the year in which the insured reaches age 60.

Permanent Disability Benefits

Disability pension: The pension is equal to 30% of the insured's average earnings with 350 weeks of contributions. The pension is increased by 0.5% of average annual earnings for each additional 25-week period of contributions beyond 350 weeks. (The minimum required number of weeks of contributions is being increased annually by 25%, up to 500 weeks of contributions.)

Average annual earnings are the sum of the insured's last 50 weeks of insurable earnings or credits before the onset of disability, divided by 50.

The minimum benefit is EC\$60 a week. The pension is paid every 2 weeks.

The maximum benefit is 60% of average annual earnings.

Benefit adjustment: Benefits are adjusted for inflation every 3 years, subject to an actuarial review.

Disability grant: The grant is equal to six times average weekly insurable earnings for each 50-week period of contributions.

Average annual earnings are the sum of the insured's last 50 weeks of insurable earnings or credits before the onset of disability, divided by 50.

Survivor Benefits

Survivor pension: The widow(er) pension is equal to 75% of the pension paid or payable to the deceased.

Eligible survivors are a widow(er), or cohabiting partner who lived with the deceased for at least 3 years, aged 50 or older or disabled or caring for a child who is eligible for survivor benefits.

The pension ceases if the surviving spouse remarries or cohabits.

A limited pension is payable for a year to a pregnant widow younger than age 50 with no dependent children; the benefit continues if the child is born and is eligible for benefits.

Orphan's pension: Each dependent child younger than age 16 (age 18 if a full-time student) receives 25% of the pension paid or payable to the deceased; 50% for a full orphan.

Other eligible survivors (in the absence of the above): Dependent parents aged 60 or older may receive up to 50% of the pension paid or payable to the deceased.

The total survivor pension must not exceed 100% of the deceased's old-age pension or disability pension.

Survivor grant: A lump-sum benefit is paid to survivors.

Funeral grant: EC\$3,800 is paid to the person who meets all or part of the cost of the insured's funeral. A reduced grant is paid for the funeral of a spouse or child.

Administrative Organization

National Insurance Board (<http://www.nissvg.org>) administers the program.

Sickness and Maternity

Regulatory Framework

First and current law: 1986 (social insurance), with amendments.

Type of program: Social insurance system. Cash benefits only.

Coverage

Employed persons aged 16 to 59.

Voluntary coverage for self-employed persons aged 16 to 59.

Special systems for certain categories of civil servant.

Source of Funds

Insured person: See source of funds under Old Age, Disability, and Survivors, above.

Self-employed person: See source of funds under Old Age, Disability, and Survivors, above.

Employer: See source of funds under Old Age, Disability, and Survivors, above.

Government: None; contributes as an employer for certain categories of civil servant.

Qualifying Conditions

Cash sickness benefits: Currently employed with at least 26 weeks of contributions, including 8 weeks in the 13 weeks immediately before the onset of the incapacity.

Cash maternity benefits: Must have at least 30 weeks of contributions, including 20 weeks in the 30 weeks immediately before the claim.

Maternity grant: The woman or her spouse must have at least 20 weeks of contributions in the 30 weeks immediately before the birth of a living child.

Sickness and Maternity Benefits

Sickness benefit: The benefit is equal to 65% of the insured's average earnings in the 13 weeks before the onset of the incapacity. The benefit is payable for up to 26 weeks.

Maternity benefit: The benefit is equal to 65% of the insured's average earnings in the last 30 weeks of employment. The benefit is payable for 13 weeks, starting no earlier than 6 weeks before the expected date of childbirth.

Maternity grant: EC\$550.

Workers' Medical Benefits

No statutory benefits are provided.

Dependents' Medical Benefits

No statutory benefits are provided.

Administrative Organization

National Insurance Board (<http://www.nissvg.org>) administers the program.

Work Injury

Regulatory Framework

First law: 1939.

Current law: 1997 (work injury).

Type of program: Social insurance system.

Coverage

Employed persons.

Voluntary coverage is not possible.

Exclusions: Self-employed persons.

There are no special systems for work injury benefits.

Source of Funds

Insured person: None.

Self-employed person: Not applicable.

Employer: 0.5% of payroll.

Employer contributions may be paid weekly or monthly.

Government: None; contributes as an employer.

Qualifying Conditions

Work injury benefits: The insured must be employed. Employees older than age 59 or younger than age 16 are eligible. Benefits are paid for a work injury or an occupational disease only.

Temporary Disability Benefits

The benefit is equal to 70% of average weekly insurable earnings and is payable for up to 26 weeks in the first instance; thereafter, the benefit is payable for an additional 26 weeks and is equal to 70% of average weekly insurable earnings times the assessed degree of disability.

Average weekly insurable earnings are based on the insured's earnings in the 13 weeks before the onset of disability.

The degree of disability is assessed by a medical doctor and reviewed every 26 weeks.

Permanent Disability Benefits

Permanent disability pension: The pension is equal to 70% of average weekly insurable earnings times the assessed degree of disability. The minimum assessed degree of disability must be greater than 30%, and the insured must have exhausted entitlement to the temporary disability benefit.

The degree of disability is assessed by a medical doctor and reviewed every 26 weeks.

Constant-attendance allowance: Equal to 50% of the disability pension for as long as constant attendance is required. The insured must be an outpatient receiving a permanent disability pension (100% disability) and must need the constant attendance of another person.

If the assessed degree of disability is less than 30%, a lump-sum grant is paid equal to 365 times the insured's average weekly insurable earnings times the assessed degree of disability. The insured must have exhausted entitlement to a temporary disability benefit.

Average weekly insurable earnings are based on the insured's earnings in the 13 weeks before the onset of disability.

Workers' Medical Benefits

Benefits include medical, surgical, and hospital treatment; medicines; appliances; and transportation costs.

Survivor Benefits

Survivor pension: 35% of the deceased's average weekly insurable earnings are paid to the widow(er). The insured's death resulted from a work injury or an occupational disease.

The pension ceases on remarriage.

Average weekly insurable earnings are based on the deceased's earnings in the 13 weeks before the onset of disability.

Orphan's pension: Each child younger than age 16 (age 18 if a full-time student) receives 11.7% of average weekly insurable earnings (23% for a full orphan or if disabled).

Average weekly insurable earnings are based on the deceased's earnings in the 13 weeks before the onset of disability or death.

Other dependent's pension: 11.7% of average weekly insurable earnings is paid for a year.

Average weekly insurable earnings are based on the deceased's earnings in the 13 weeks before the onset of disability or death.

Eligible survivors are a widow(er), unmarried children, and any other person who was fully dependent on the insured. Insured workers have the prior option of naming the beneficiary.

Funeral grant: If the insured died as the result of a work injury or an occupational disease, EC\$3,800 is payable to the person who paid for the funeral.

Administrative Organization

National Insurance Board (<http://www.nissvg.org>) administers the program.