

Greece

Exchange rate: U.S.\$1.00 equals 1.12 euros (€).

Old Age, Disability, and Survivors

Regulatory Framework

First law: 1934.

Current laws: 1951, 1981 (special noncontributory old-age pension), 1990, 1992, and 1996.

Type of program: Social insurance system.

Coverage

Employees in industry, commerce and related occupations, and certain urban self-employed workers are covered.

Employees affiliated with approved occupational and establishment funds providing equivalent benefits are exempt from the general system.

Special systems for agricultural workers, public employees, tradesmen, and craftsmen.

Voluntary coverage is available to Greeks living abroad.

Source of Funds

Insured person: 6.67% of earnings; 8.87% if in arduous or unhealthy employment.

Employer: 13.33% of payroll; 14.73% if in arduous or unhealthy employment.

Government: 10%.

Maximum earnings for contribution and benefit purposes are •25,192 a year or 14 monthly salaries of •1,799.

Qualifying Conditions

Old-age pension: Age 65 (men) and age 60 (women) with 4,500 days of contributions. Age 65 (men and women) for those who first start working after 1993. Age 60 (men) and age 55 (women) with 4,500 days of contributions of which at least 3,600 days were in arduous or unhealthy employment, including at least 1,000 days in the last 10 years. Age 62 (men) and age 57 (women) with 10,000 days of contributions. Age 58 (men and women) with 10,500 days of contributions. Age 55 (women with dependent or disabled children) with 5,500 days of contributions.

Reduced pension: Age 50 (women with dependent or disabled children) with 5,500 days of contributions. For men and women, age 60 with 4,500 days of contributions.

Benefit is suspended if the beneficiary is working and earnings exceed 50 times the minimum wage of an unskilled worker (•1,047).

Benefit is payable abroad under reciprocal agreement.

Pensioners' social solidarity grant: Age 60 in the cases of old-age and survivor pensioners. Annual allowable income from pension and earnings up to •5,710, yearly personal taxable income up to •6,602, and family taxable income up to •10,367.

Disability pension: Loss of 80% of normal earning capacity for 100% disability; at least 50% loss for partial disability. The insured worker must have 4,500 days of contributions or 1,500 days, including 600 days in the 5 years preceding the onset of disability. For those not yet age 21, 300 days are required in the 5 years preceding the onset of disability; the number of days is gradually increased to 4,200 by adding 120 work days for each year after age 21. (There are different requirements for persons whose working career started after 1993).

Pensioners' social solidarity grant: Same as for old-age pension (see above).

Survivor pension: The qualifying conditions for the survivor pension vary according to the date the deceased entered the system.

Persons insured before 1993: A widow, or a disabled widower without means, whose marriage lasted at least 6 months (2 years if a widow of a pensioner).

Persons insured from January 1, 1993: A widow or widower with monthly income not exceeding 40 times the minimum daily wage for an unskilled manual worker, and must be disabled, age 45, or have two dependents.

Changes effective January 5, 1999, covering all insured persons regardless of when the insured entered the system: The surviving spouse, irrespective of age, is entitled to the survivor pension for a period of 3 years commencing the month following death. Survivors over age 40 when their spouse dies may receive benefits beyond 3 years provided that they do not work or receive any other pension. Survivors who work or receive a pension are entitled to 50% of the normal survivor pension. A full survivor pension is paid if the survivor has a mental or physical disability of at least 67%. Survivor pensions that have been interrupted or reduced will be paid in full when the survivor reaches age 65. Should the survivor work or receive any other form of pension after age 65, 70% of the survivor pension will be paid.

Pensioners' social solidarity grant: Same as for the old-age pension (see above).

Old-Age Benefits

Old-age pension: 30% to 70% of average earnings during the last 5 years, varying inversely with earnings level, according to 28 wage classes, plus 1% of earnings for each 300 days of contributions between 3,300 days and 7,800 days and 1.5% to 2.5% (depending on earnings level) for every 300 days beyond 7,800 days.

For persons who first start working after 1993, 1.714% of average earnings during the last 5 years.

The minimum pension is •360 a month, increased by dependents' supplements.

Early pension: The pension is reduced by 0.5% for each month of early retirement.

Dependents' supplement: •26.99 a month for a nonworking wife or a dependent disabled husband; •17.98 for each child up to a ceiling of 3.20% of the basic pension for the first child, 15% for second, and 10% for third.

The maximum pension is dependent on the insured's earnings.

Schedule of payments: 14 payments a year.

Benefit adjustment: Pensions are indexed to the pensions of civil servants.

Pensioners' social solidarity grant: •80.86 a month for a pension up to •443; •25.89 a month for a pension up to •5,404; •40.43 a month for a pension up to •5,540; •20.21 a month for a pension up to •5,710 (figures based on annual income in 1999).

Permanent Disability Benefits

Disability pension: Same as for the old-age pension (see above), including supplements. Entitlement to the pension begins after that for cash sickness benefit ends. For the loss of 80% of normal earning capacity, the recipient is entitled to 100% of the full old-age pension; for a loss of 67% to 79% of earning capacity, the entitlement is 75% of the full old-age pension.

Partial disability: For the loss of 50% to 66% of earning capacity, the entitlement is 50% of the full old-age pension.

The minimum pension is •360 a month.

Schedule of payments: 14 payments a year.

Pensioners' social solidarity grant: Same as for the old-age pension (see above).

Survivor Benefits

Survivor pension: The benefits for the survivor pension vary according to the date the deceased entered the system.

For survivors of an insured worker affiliated before 1993: 70% of the basic pension of the insured is payable to a widow or to a dependent disabled widower if they were married for at least 6 months (2 years if the deceased was a pensioner). Conditions are waived in cases of accidental death or if a child was born from the marriage.

For survivors of insured persons affiliated from January 1, 1993: The surviving spouse receives 50% of the pension; monthly income must not exceed 40 times the minimum daily wage, and the spouse must be disabled, age 45, or have two dependents. One-half the normal pension is awarded if the monthly income is higher than 40 times the minimum daily wage.

According to changes effective January 5, 1999, covering all insured persons independent of the date of affiliation: The surviving spouse, irrespective of age, is entitled to the survivor's pension for a period of 3 years commencing the month following death. Survivors aged 40 or older when their spouse dies may receive benefits beyond 3 years provided that

they do not work or receive any other pension. Survivors who work or receive a pension are entitled to 50% of the normal survivor pension. A full survivor pension is paid if the survivor has a mental or physical disability of at least 67%. Survivor pensions that have been interrupted or reduced will be paid in full when the survivor reaches age 65. Should the survivor work or receive any other form of pension after age 65, 70% of the survivor pension will be paid.

Orphan's pension: 20% of the basic pension of the insured; 60% for a full orphan if under age 18 (age 24 if a student, no limit if disabled).

For deceased insured persons who first started working from January 1, 1993, each orphan receives 25%.

Grandchild or parent (in absence of above): 20% of the pension; 40% if a widowed mother.

Minimum survivor pension: •34 a month.

Maximum survivor pension: 100% of the pension of the insured; 80% if the spouse is not a survivor.

Schedule of payments: 14 payments a year.

Pensioners' social solidarity grant: Same as for old-age pension (see above).

Funeral grant (under sickness insurance): A lump sum of •628.

Administrative Organization

Ministry of Labor and Social Security provides general supervision.

Social Insurance Institute administers the program through branch offices for most covered workers.

Social Insurance Institute managed by a governor and tripartite governing body.

Numerous special occupational and establishment funds administer programs for workers exempt from the general system.

Sickness and Maternity

Regulatory Framework

First law: 1922.

Current laws: 1951 and 1984 (national health service).

Type of program: Social insurance system.

Coverage

Employees in industry, commerce and related occupations, and certain urban self-employed workers are covered. Pensioners are also covered for medical benefits. Employees affiliated with approved occupational and establishment funds with equivalent benefits are exempt from the general system.

Special systems operate for agricultural workers (noncontributory old-age pensioners covered for medical benefits) and public employees.

Source of Funds

Insured person: 2.55% of earnings for medical care; 0.4% of earnings for cash benefits. Pensioners contribute 4% of pension.

Employer: 5.1% of payroll for medical care; 0.8% of payroll for cash benefits.

Government: 3.8%.

Maximum earnings for contribution and benefit purposes are •25,192 a year.

No ceiling for those who start working after January 1, 1993.

Qualifying Conditions

Cash sickness benefit: 100 days of contributions in the calendar year preceding illness, or 100 days in the last 15 months excluding the last quarter.

Cash maternity benefit: 200 days of contributions in the last 2 years.

Medical benefits: 50 days of contributions in the last year (25 days for a nonoccupational accident) or a pensioner.

Sickness and Maternity Benefits

Cash sickness benefit: 50% of earnings, plus 10% of benefit for each dependent.

Maximum benefit is •21.75 a day after 15 days of support.

Minimum benefit is •11.83 a day for the first 15 days of support.

Benefit is payable after a 3-day waiting period for up to 720 days with 1,500 days of employment.

During the first month the employer pays the difference between the cash benefit and worker's earnings.

Cash maternity benefit: 50% of earnings, plus 10% of benefit for each dependent.

Minimum benefit is •6 a day. Benefit is payable for up to 56 days before and 63 days after childbirth.

Lump-sum maternity benefit: •628 for each child (as of July 1, 2001).

Workers' Medical Benefits

Medical services are ordinarily provided directly to patients through facilities of the Social Insurance Institute. Benefits include general and specialist care; care in a hospital, sanatorium, or nursing home; medicines; maternity care or a delivery grant if care is not available; dental care; appliances; and transportation.

Patients are charged 25% of pharmaceutical costs and up to 25% of the cost of other services (including prostheses and eyeglasses) except hospitalization. There is no limit to duration.

Dependents' Medical Benefits

Same as for the insured worker (see above).

Administrative Organization

Ministry of Labor and Social Security provides general supervision.

Social Insurance Institute administers the program through branch offices for most covered workers.

Institute operates own dispensaries, clinics, and hospitals and also uses other public and private facilities.

Numerous special occupational and establishment funds administer programs for workers exempt from the general system.

Work Injury

Regulatory Framework

First law: 1914.

Current law: 1951.

Type of program: Social insurance system.

Coverage

Employees in industry, commerce, and related occupations are covered. Employees affiliated with approved occupational and establishment funds with equivalent benefits are exempt from the general system.

Source of Funds

Insured person: None.

Employer: 1% of payroll (2% if the employer is in noncompliance with occupational safety laws).

Government: None.

Qualifying Conditions

Work injury benefits: Benefit is payable after a 1-day waiting period.

Temporary Disability Benefits

50% of earnings, plus 1.5 times the minimum daily wage for a wife and one minimum daily wage (•17.98) for each child up to age 3. Benefit is payable for 720 days after a 3-day waiting period (paid retroactively to the first day if the disability continues).

Permanent Disability Benefits

Permanent disability pension: Must be at least 50% disabled. The pension is the same as the full old-age pension (see above).

Workers' Medical Benefits

Same as for ordinary sickness (see above), except there is no cost sharing by the patient.

Survivor Benefits

Survivor pension: Same as for the survivor pension under Old Age, Disability, and Survivors, above.

Administrative Organization

Ministry of Labor and Social Security provides general supervision.

Social Insurance Institute administers the program through branch offices for most covered workers.

Numerous special occupational and establishment funds administer programs for workers exempt from the general system.

Unemployment

Regulatory Framework

First law: 1954.

Current laws: 1985, 1989, and 1990.

Type of program: Social insurance system.

Coverage

Employees in industry, commerce, and related occupations are covered. Special systems for seamen and printing workers.

Source of Funds

Insured person: 1.33% of earnings.

Employer: 2.67% of payroll.

Government: None.

Qualifying Conditions

Unemployment benefit: 125 days of contributions in the last 14 months, excluding working days in the last 2 months, or 200 days in the last 2 years, excluding working days in the last 2 months (for a first-time beneficiary, also 80 days in each of the last 2 years). Must be capable of, and available for, work and registered at an employment office. Unemployment should not be due to voluntary leaving. Under age 65 and not receiving a disability pension.

Self-employed persons are not included in the program.

Young persons' benefit: Aged 20 to 29 and never having worked.

Special benefit: Awarded in cases in which the unemployment benefit is exhausted or the person does not qualify for unemployment benefit. The insured must have 24 months of service and income below •6,380 per year.

Unemployment Benefits

40% of wages or 50% of salary.

The minimum benefit is 66 2/3% of the daily minimum wage (•9.94 per day).

Payable after a 6-day waiting period for 125 days of employment for up to 5 months, 150 days up to 6 months, 180 days up to 8 months, 220 days up to 10 months, 250 days if aged 49 or older, and 210 days for a maximum of 12 months.

A reduced rate can be paid for an additional 1 month.

Dependents' allowance: 10% of earnings for each dependent.

Young persons' benefit: Payable for 5 months at the single-person rate of •75.50, plus •5.80 for each child.

Special benefit: Thirteen minimum daily unemployment benefits, increased by 10% for each dependent member.

Special seasonal allowance: Paid to seasonal sectors of employment (including builders, tobacco workers, and actors), payable once a year and varies according to the employment of each entitled person. The person must have worked during the preceding year.

Unemployment assistance: Persons not qualifying for unemployment benefits or those who have exhausted their benefit may receive unemployment assistance providing that they have worked for 2.4 months. The annual family income must not exceed •6,380. The assistance is equivalent to 13 minimum daily unemployment benefits and is increased by 10% for each dependent member.

Administrative Organization

Ministry of Labor provides general supervision.

Manpower Employment Organization administers benefits and the employment service through local employment offices.

A tripartite board manages the Manpower Employment Organization.

Social Insurance Institute collects contributions.

Family Allowances

Regulatory Framework

First and current law: 1958.

Type of program: Employment-related system.

Coverage

Employees in industry, commerce, and related occupations, with one or more children, are covered. Employees receiving equivalent allowances from employer are exempt.

Source of Funds

Insured person: 1% of earnings.

Employer: 1% of payroll.

Government: None.

Qualifying Conditions

Family allowances: Child must be under age 18 (no limit if disabled, age 22 if a student), single, living in Greece or other EU member country. Parent must have had 50 days of employment in the preceding year for full allowances.

Family Allowance Benefits

The allowance for one child is •5.80 a month; two children, •17.40 a month; three children, •39.15 a month; four children, •47.56 a month; and for each additional child, •7.97 a month. An additional •3.62 a month for each child may be paid to widows, widowers, and soldiers.

Special benefit for three children: •2.90 per month.

Administrative Organization

Ministry of Labor provides general supervision.

Manpower Employment Organization administers allowances through local offices.

Social Insurance Institute collects contributions.