

Malta

Exchange rate: US\$1.00 equals
0.36 Maltese lira (Lm).

Old Age, Disability, and Survivors

Regulatory Framework

First laws: 1956 (old age and survivors), 1965 (disability), 1965 (social assistance), and 1979 (earnings-related pension).

Current law: 1987.

Type of program: Social insurance and social assistance system.

Coverage

Residents aged 16 or older, citizens employed outside Malta by foreign employers having a place of business in Malta, and students in certain work-study programs.

Exclusions: Married persons not gainfully employed, full-time students, and persons older than age 65. Also persons older than the pension age but younger than age 65 who work but earn less than the national minimum wage.

Source of Funds

Insured person: 10% of wages.

The minimum weekly contribution is Lm 5.79; a flat rate of Lm 2.84 a week if younger than age 18.

The maximum weekly contribution is Lm 13.38; a flat rate of Lm 2.84 a week if younger than age 18.

The maximum weekly wage for contribution purposes is Lm 133.80.

The maximum annual wage for contribution purposes for the earnings-related part of the pension is Lm 6,958.

The maximum annual wage for pensionable income purposes if the employer provides an occupational service pension is Lm 6,958.

The insured's contributions also finance sickness and maternity, work injury, unemployment, and family allowance benefits and noncontributory benefits.

Self-employed person: From Lm 10.20 to Lm 20.07 a week, depending on net income from self-employment and other sources; if net income is less than Lm 2,908, a flat rate of Lm 8.39 a week.

The maximum weekly net income for contribution purposes is Lm 133.80.

The maximum net annual income for payment of the earnings-related pension is Lm 6,958.

The self-employed person's contributions also finance sickness, maternity, work injury, and family allowance benefits and noncontributory benefits.

Employer: 10% of payroll.

The minimum weekly contribution for each employee is Lm 5.79; a flat rate of Lm 2.84 a week for employees younger than age 18 with earnings up to the minimum wage.

The maximum weekly contribution for each employee is Lm 13.38; a flat rate of Lm 2.84 a week for employees younger than age 18 with earnings up to the minimum wage.

The minimum weekly wage is Lm 57.88.

The employer's contributions also finance sickness and maternity, work injury, unemployment, and family allowance benefits and noncontributory benefits.

Government: A sum equal to 50% of the value of total contributions.

The government's contributions also finance sickness and maternity, work injury, unemployment, and family allowance benefits and noncontributory benefits.

Qualifying Conditions

Old-age pension: Age 61 (men) or age 60 (women) with at least 156 weeks of paid contributions, including an annual average of at least 50 weeks of paid or credited contributions.

Partial pension: A reduced pension is payable with an annual average of between 20 and 49 weeks of contributions under the flat-rate pension system or between 15 and 49 weeks under the earnings-related system.

Income test: Earned income from employment or self-employment from age 61 (men) or age 60 (women) must not exceed the national minimum weekly wage (Lm 57.88) until age 65.

The old-age pension is payable abroad.

Old-age noncontributory pension (means-tested):

Payable if the insured does not satisfy the contribution conditions for the old-age pension.

Means test: The means test is based on the capital assets and income of the household members.

The old-age noncontributory pension is payable abroad.

Disability pension: The insured is assessed as totally and permanently incapable of full-time or part-time work and has at least 250 weeks of paid contributions as an employee or as a self-employed person, including an annual average of at least 50 weeks of paid or credited contributions. The insured must have been in continuous full-time or regular part-time employment or self-employment for at least 12 months before the date of the claim.

Partial pension: A reduced pension is payable with an annual average of between 20 and 49 weeks of contributions.

The disability pension is payable abroad.

Disabled child allowance (noncontributory): An income-tested benefit is payable to parents for a child with an assessed disability.

Income test: Total income from employment, pensions, rents, or any other investments in the previous calendar year of benefit entitlement must not exceed Lm 13,270.

The allowance ceases at age 14 for a child assessed with a visual impairment (age 16 for any other assessed disability) and is replaced by the disability pension.

Pension for visually impaired, disabled, or severely disabled persons (noncontributory): Payable for visually impaired, disabled, or severely disabled persons.

Noncontributory disability pensions are not payable abroad.

Survivor pension: Payable to a widow(er) whose deceased spouse had paid at least 156 weeks of contributions, with an annual average of at least 50 weeks of paid or credited contributions.

Partial pension: A reduced pension is payable if the deceased had an annual average of between 20 and 49 weeks of contributions under the flat-rate pension scheme or between 15 and 49 weeks under the earnings-related scheme.

Income test: Earned income must not exceed the minimum wage; widows younger than age 60 with children younger than age 16 (age 18 if a full-time student and not receiving a stipend for studying) qualify for the survivor pension regardless of income.

A widow(er) aged 60 or older without dependent children receives the survivor pension if his or her average weekly earnings do not exceed the national minimum wage.

The widow(er)'s pension ceases on remarriage.

Orphan's pension: Payable for the death of both parents. One parent must have been insured and had at least 1 week of contributions at the time of death.

Survivor benefits are payable abroad.

Old-Age Benefits

Old-age pension: Pensions vary depending on whether entitlement exists to the earnings-related pension that was introduced on January 22, 1979; whether the insured has an occupational service pension (which causes reductions in the social security benefit); and whether the person is married and has a dependent spouse.

Pensions for those who paid contributions only before January 22, 1979, range from a minimum of Lm 41.95 a week to a maximum of Lm 89.37 a week.

Earnings-related pensions, which can be as much as Lm 89.37 a week, are calculated on the basis of 2/3 of annual average earnings of the best 3 consecutive years in the last

10 years before retirement for employed persons or in the last 10 consecutive years before retirement for self-employed persons.

Old-age noncontributory pension (means-tested):

Lm 36.05 is paid for a single person, and Lm 46.40 is paid for a married couple. When only one member of a couple qualifies, Lm 28.39 is paid.

Benefit adjustment: Benefits are adjusted according to increases in prices.

Permanent Disability Benefits

Disability pension: Pensions vary depending on whether an occupational service pension is payable and whether the person is married and has a dependent spouse.

The minimum weekly pension is Lm 31.42.

The maximum weekly pension is Lm 48.46.

Benefit adjustment: Benefits are adjusted according to increases in prices and, in some cases, increases in wages.

Disabled child allowance (noncontributory): Benefits range from a minimum of Lm 1 a week to a maximum of Lm 5 a week, depending on income.

Pension for visually impaired, disabled, or severely disabled persons (noncontributory): Lm 38.84 is paid for a single person; Lm 71.88 for a couple, if both persons qualify.

Benefit adjustment: Benefits are adjusted according to increases in prices.

Survivor Benefits

Survivor pension: The pension payable to a widow(er) varies depending on whether contributions were paid before January 22, 1979, and whether a survivor pension is payable by the deceased spouse's employer.

The maximum pension for a person who paid contributions only before January 22, 1979, is Lm 74.48 a week.

Earnings-related pensions, which can be as much as Lm 74.48 a week, are calculated on the basis of 5/9 of annual average earnings of the best 3 consecutive years in the last 10 years before the spouse's death or retirement on age or medical grounds for employees; in the last 10 consecutive years before the spouse's death or retirement on age or medical grounds for self-employed persons.

Survivor's supplement: Lm 1.95 a week is payable per child if the child is entitled to the child allowance (see Family Allowances, below). An additional Lm 4 a week per child is payable if the child is younger than age 18 and the surviving spouse is not in employment or self-employment.

Benefit adjustment: Benefits are adjusted according to increases in wages and prices.

Remarriage grant: A lump sum equal to 52 weeks' national minimum pension (Lm 41.95 a week).

Orphan's pension: Lm 14.91 a week is paid for each orphan younger than age 16; Lm 33.83 for each orphan between ages 16 and 21, provided the orphan is not gainfully employed. If the orphan is gainfully employed but gross earnings are less than the minimum wage, then the allowance is reduced to make total income from the allowance and gross earnings equal to the national minimum weekly wage (Lm 57.88).

Benefit adjustment: Benefits are adjusted according to increases in prices.

Administrative Organization

Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity (<http://www.mfss.gov.mt>) provides general supervision.

Director of Social Security manages the program.

Department of Social Security administers the program.

Sickness and Maternity

Regulatory Framework

First laws: 1956 (sickness) and 1981 (maternity).

Current law: 1987.

Type of program: Social insurance (cash benefits) and universal (medical benefits) system.

The Employment and Industrial Relations Act requires employers to provide 100% of earnings for 13 weeks' maternity leave.

Coverage

Cash sickness benefits: Employed and self-employed persons.

Cash maternity benefits: Maltese citizens residing in Malta.

Medical benefits: Maltese citizens residing in Malta.

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: See source of funds under Old Age, Disability, and Survivors, above, for cash benefits. Medical benefits are funded from general revenue.

Qualifying Conditions

Cash sickness benefits: The insured must have at least 50 weeks of paid contributions and 20 weeks paid or credited during the last 2 contribution years before the benefit year in which the claim is made.

Cash maternity benefits: Payable to Maltese citizens residing in Malta and European Union citizens and persons covered by the European Social Charter residing in Malta. The insured must not be entitled to maternity leave under the Employment and Industrial Relations Act.

Medical benefits: There is no minimum qualifying period.

Sickness and Maternity Benefits

Sickness benefit: Lm 6.79 a day is paid for a married person or a person supporting a spouse who is not employed full time; Lm 4.40 a day is paid for other persons. Benefit is payable from the 4th day of incapacity for up to 156 benefit days a year; up to a maximum of 312 benefit days a year if the person undergoes major surgery, suffers a severe injury (not work-related), or has a serious disease requiring long-term treatment before being able to resume work.

During a 2-year period, the total number of benefit days must not exceed 468 days. The total number of benefit days must not exceed the total number of contributions paid since the person first entered the system.

Maternity benefit: The benefit is awarded for 14 weeks, of which at least 5 weeks must be taken after the birth of the child. The benefit is paid for 13 weeks at Lm 20.

Workers' Medical Benefits

Benefits and health services are provided by public hospitals and clinics. Inpatient treatment, including medicines and medical devices, is provided free of charge in public hospitals. Public primary care services and outpatient treatment is free of charge. Persons registered as having a chronic disease receive free medicines. Outpatients, except for low-income persons, pay for medicines and medical devices.

Dependents' Medical Benefits

Benefits and health services are provided by public hospitals and clinics. Inpatient treatment, including medicines and medical devices, is provided free of charge in public hospitals. Public primary care services and outpatient treatment is free of charge. Persons registered as having a chronic disease receive free medicines. Outpatients, except for low-income persons, pay for medicines and medical devices.

Administrative Organization

Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity (<http://www.mfss.gov.mt>) provides general supervision with respect to social security cash benefits.

Ministry for Health, Elderly, and Community Care (<http://www.sahha.gov.mt>) is responsible for in-kind and medical benefits.

Director of Social Security manages the program.

Department of Social Security administers the program.

Work Injury

Regulatory Framework

First law: 1929.

Current law: 1987.

Type of program: Social insurance system.

Coverage

Employed and self-employed persons whose work is interrupted as a result of a work injury.

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

Qualifying Conditions

Work injury benefits: The insured must have at least 1 week of contributions.

Temporary Disability Benefits

Lm 10.29 a day is paid for a single or married person supporting a spouse who is not in full-time employment; Lm 7.68 a day is paid for other insured persons. The benefit is payable from the fourth day of disability for up to 12 months.

Permanent Disability Benefits

Permanent disability pension: For an assessed degree of disability of at least 90%, a full disability pension is payable regardless of the number of contributions paid or credited. Benefits vary depending on whether an occupational service pension is payable and whether the person is

married and has a dependent spouse. Benefits range from a minimum of Lm 20 a week to a maximum of Lm 48.46 a week.

For an assessed degree of disability of between 20% and 89%, the pension ranges from Lm 5.19 to Lm 24.01 a week.

For an assessed degree of disability of between 1% and 19%, a lump sum is paid ranging from Lm 83.32 to Lm 1,582.93.

Benefit adjustment: Benefits are adjusted according to increases in prices and, in some cases, increases in wages.

Workers' Medical Benefits

Benefits include medical, surgical, and rehabilitative treatment and medicines.

Survivor Benefits

Survivor pension: The pension payable to a widow(er) varies depending on whether contributions were paid before or after January 22, 1979, and whether a survivor pension is payable by the deceased spouse's employer.

The maximum pension for a person who paid contributions only before January 22, 1979, is Lm 72.11 a week.

Earnings-related pensions, which can be as much as Lm 72.11 a week, are calculated on the basis of 5/9 of annual average earnings of the best 3 consecutive years in the last 10 years before the spouse's death or retirement on age or medical grounds for employees; in the last 10 consecutive years before the spouse's death or retirement on age or medical grounds for self-employed persons.

Benefit adjustment: Benefits are adjusted according to increases in wages and prices.

Remarriage grant: The survivor pension ceases on remarriage, and a lump sum is paid equal to 52 weeks' national minimum pension (Lm 41.95 a week).

Orphan's pension: Lm 14.91 a week is paid for each full orphan younger than age 16; Lm 33.83 for each full orphan between ages 16 and 21, provided the orphan is not gainfully employed. If the full orphan is gainfully employed but gross earnings are less than the minimum wage, then the allowance is reduced to make total income from the allowance and gross earnings equal to the minimum wage (Lm 57.88 a week).

Dependent parent's pension: Lm 46.40 is paid for a married dependent father who is supporting a wife; Lm 38.75 for all other cases.

Benefit adjustment: Benefits are adjusted according to increases in prices.

Administrative Organization

Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity (<http://www.mfss.gov.mt>) provides general supervision.

Director of Social Security manages the program.
Department of Social Security administers the program.

Unemployment

Regulatory Framework

First law: 1956.

Current law: 1987.

Type of program: Social insurance and social assistance system.

Coverage

Employed persons.

Source of Funds

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

Self-employed person: Not applicable.

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

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

Qualifying Conditions

Unemployment benefit: The insured must have at least 50 weeks of paid contributions, including 20 weeks of paid or credited contributions in the contribution year before the benefit year in which the claim is made. The insured must be registered as unemployed and be capable of, and available for, work. No benefit is payable for 6 months if unemployment is voluntary or the result of misconduct.

Special unemployment benefit (means-tested): Payable to the head of the household in place of the unemployment benefit if he or she satisfies a means test.

Unemployment assistance: Payable if the insured has exhausted the right to unemployment benefits.

Unemployment Benefits

The daily benefit is Lm 4.13 for a single parent or a married person supporting a spouse who is not in full-time employment; Lm 2.70 a day is paid for other insured persons. The benefit is paid for up to a maximum of 156 days. The total number of benefit days must not exceed the total number of contributions paid since the person first entered the system.

Special unemployment benefit: The daily benefit rate is Lm 6.92 for a single parent or for a married person maintaining a spouse who is not in full-time employment; Lm 4.52 a day for other insured persons. The benefit is payable from the first day of unemployment for up to 156 benefit days;

thereafter, entitlement depends on the insured having completed at least 13 weeks of employment. The total number of benefit days must not exceed the total number of contributions paid since the person first entered the system.

Unemployment assistance (means-tested): The maximum benefit is Lm 34.30 a week. The benefit is reduced by all annual income derived from investments exceeding Lm 40. If weekly income exceeds the weekly benefit, no benefit is payable.

Administrative Organization

Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity (<http://www.mfss.gov.mt>) provides general supervision.

Director of Social Security manages the program.

Department of Social Security administers the program.

Family Allowances

Regulatory Framework

First laws: 1974 (child allowances), 1977 (special allowances), 1988 (disabled child allowances and parental allowances), and 1989 (family bonuses).

Current law: 1987 (social security), with 1996 amendment.

Type of program: Social insurance and social assistance system.

Coverage

All Maltese citizens residing in Malta and European Union citizens and persons covered by the European Social Charter residing in Malta.

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

Qualifying Conditions

Child allowance (income-tested): All households with children younger than age 21, if the income of both parents does not exceed Lm 10,270. For children aged 16 or older, the child must be a full-time student and not receiving a stipend for studying, must never have been in gainful employment, must not be registered as unemployed, and is not entitled to any social benefits.

Care allowance for foster children: The child is certified by a competent authority as being a foster child or under the care of an institution.

Disabled child allowance (income-tested): Payable to all households caring for a child with an assessed physical or mental disability. The child must not receive any other social security pension for the disability. The benefit amount varies according to the annual income of the highest earner in the household. No benefit is payable if the annual income of the highest earner exceeds Lm 13,270.

Family Allowance Benefits

Child allowance: The benefit for one child is calculated on the basis of the difference between Lm 10,270 and the couple's income multiplied by 6%. The benefit increases according to the number of children.

Care allowance for foster children: Lm 12 a week is paid.

Disabled child allowance (income-tested): The maximum benefit is Lm 5 a week.

Administrative Organization

Ministry for the Family and Social Solidarity (<http://www.mfss.gov.mt>) provides general supervision.

Director of Social Security manages the program.

Department of Social Security administers the program.