

## Key Concerns Regarding New EI Requirements

*Most unemployed workers will be expected to accept job offers at much lower wages than in their previous job.*

- frequent claimants (more than three (3) claims and 60 weeks of benefits over the past five (5) years, about one in three of all unemployed workers) would be expected to take a 20% hourly pay cut immediately if offered a job similar to the previous job, and a 30% pay cut for any job offered to them after seven (7) weeks.
- occasional claimants — would be expected to take a 10% pay cut immediately if offered a similar job, a 20% pay cut for a similar job after seven (7) weeks, and a 30% pay cut in any job offered to them after 18 weeks.
- long-tenured workers (worked in seven (7) of the past 10 years and collected less than 35 weeks of benefits in total) will be required to accept similar jobs with a 20% pay cut after 18 weeks.

These changes will work to lower wages and working conditions for all workers, employed as well as the unemployed.

They will also require unemployed workers to take jobs at below their skill level far too quickly, resulting in bad matches for both workers and employers. This will actually increase skills shortages.

Beyond requiring workers to take jobs at lower wages, the new rules will require workers to accept jobs which are different from their previous job in terms of working conditions and work schedule. For example, a worker may be obliged to shift from day work to shift work.

Minister Finley said that claimants will not be required to move from their community. Workers will, however, be expected to accept jobs to which they can commute in one hour, or longer, in some communities.

There will be recognition of personal circumstances, such as health and family obligations — but it is questionable whether the new appeal process will provide adequate protection.

Question: Will the new rules require workers to accept part-time jobs? If so, the cut to weekly wages would be more than the cut to the hourly wage for those who had previously worked full-time, and income could well be much less than EI benefits. And it is not reasonable to expect long commutes to part-time jobs.

### *Job search requirements will be much more intense.*

Claimants will be expected to look for work every day they receive benefits and to keep a record of job search activities. It is unclear if they will be obliged to respond to planned, twice daily notifications of jobs sent to them through electronic “Job Alerts.”

No new resources are being given to HRSDC to support skills training for unemployed workers and to support helpful interventions, such as job search counselling.

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