

## Benefits 101—Important Events, Required Action: Unemployment, Leaving the Trade

Life is full of changes. Some changes, we make happen. Others happen to us.

Some key changes in life require you to take action when it comes to your Health, Pension and Supplemental Unemployment Benefit (“SUB”) plans. This Benefits 101 addresses two changes that participants and their families may experience—loss of work and leaving the trade. Here’s what you need to do if this happens to you. All Plans referenced in this article refer to the Southern California IBEW-NECA Health, Defined Benefit (DB), Defined Contribution (DC) and Supplemental Unemployment Benefit Plans. Please contact your Plan’s Administrator if you are not a Participant in these Plans.

### Unemployment

Becoming unemployed is a serious issue. If it’s due to a disability or a workers’ compensation claim, you need to read the Temporary or Permanent Disability Life Events pages on [this website](#). If it is due to other factors, such as being laid off, you will need to plan accordingly. You will want to review your benefit plans as soon as possible to note how this reduction in work will affect your Pension and Health Plans’ status.

- You may be eligible for Supplemental Unemployment Benefits if you meet certain eligibility requirements. The Supplemental Unemployment Benefits Trust Fund was established by the Trustees for IBEW Local 11 Inside Wiremen, Intelligent Transportation, Inspectors and Railroad Workers. The purpose of the Fund is to provide payments that supplement state unemployment compensation for Participants whose employment with an Employer is terminated involuntarily due to lack of work or a reduction in workforce.

- Once you become a Participant in the Plan, you will become eligible for Supplemental Unemployment Benefits upon meeting all of the following eligibility requirements:
  - Covered Employment Terminated: Your Covered Employment must have been terminated involuntarily due to lack of work or reduction in workforce. No benefits are paid if unemployment is due to a strike, work stoppage, lockout, voluntary quit or a discharge due to misconduct; and
  - Hour Requirement: You must meet the hour requirement by working a minimum of 1,040 hours in Covered Employment in either the four (4) Contribution Quarters prior to your Layoff Date or the 12-Month Review Period; and
  - Registered with the Union Referral Hall: You must be registered with the Union Referral Hall as “Available for Work” and follow the Referral Hall’s daybook procedures; and
  - Application for Supplemental Unemployment Benefits: An application for Supplemental Unemployment Benefits must be filed with the Fund Office; and
  - Received Unemployment Compensation Benefits: You must provide appropriate proof of your actual receipt of unemployment compensation benefits for days you are claiming Supplemental Unemployment Benefits.
- If your reduction in work results in insufficient hours (less than 100/125 per month) to maintain continuing health coverage and after you have exhausted your Hours Bank Reserve, under most circumstances you may elect to self-pay for health coverage on a monthly basis for up to 18 months. You may be eligible for a subsidized COBRA rate for the first three consecutive months of COBRA health coverage.



## Leaving the Trade

Whatever the reason may be for your leaving the industry, you should determine the effect this will have on your benefit plans.

- Once you leave covered employment and have exhausted your Hours Bank Reserve, under most circumstances, you may elect to self-pay on a monthly basis to stay covered under COBRA for up to 18 months.
- Check your vesting status under the DB Pension Plan to determine whether you are vested for a pension benefit. Since the DB benefit will not be payable until you reach the required age, you must keep your address information current with the Administrative Office.
- If you have met all the eligibility requirements of the DC Plan, you are permitted to withdraw your account balance.
- If you are vested and married when you leave the electrical industry and you later become divorced, be sure to deal with the division of your DB and DC pension benefits at the time of your divorce. If you wait until you reach retirement age to do this, you may experience a considerable delay before you can get the paperwork straightened out and begin receiving benefits.

The information provided in this Benefits 101 newsletter is of a general nature only and does not replace or alter the official rules and policies contained in the official Plan documents that legally govern the terms and operation of the Plan. If this Benefits 101 differs in any way from the official Plan documents, the official Plan documents always govern.

**Note:** The information regarding death benefits through the Southern California IBEW-NECA Pension Plan is valid for retirees with benefit effective dates prior to April 1, 2017.

