

FSD'S AND OUR LIVES ABROAD

In the August issue, we introduced the topic of the growing foreign service family. The following is the promised outline of some of the changes in an employee's FSD entitlements which may result from marriage, birth, or adoption.

Medical Benefits

The provisions of FSD's 38, 39, 40 and 42 can cover the Preventive, Special and Normal medical expenses for dependants from the date of marriage, birth or adoption. The only expenses for dependants covered under FSD's 39 and 40 are those incurred outside Canada in excess of the charges payable for eligible treatment services under GSMIP. To ensure adequate and timely coverage for new dependants, it is most important to notify the Health Plans Section (ABMH) as far in advance of the marriage, birth, or adoption as possible.

The Head of Post now has the authority to approve Health Care Travel, sometimes called Medical Evacuation, under FSD 41, for employees and their dependants at post and for dependent students outside Canada. Most important for parents-to-be are the provisions for travelling and living expenses for both mother and father where birth will not take place at the post (see FSD 41.04). This Directive also provides for travelling and living expenses for an escort, where one is judged medically necessary, and for young children obliged to accompany a parent (see FSD 41.03).

Leave Entitlements

FSD 41.03 also provides for the employee's travel leave, but maternity and paternity leave are covered by the employee's collective agreement. Where an agreement does not permit sufficient special leave in specific situations, additional Special Leave of up to 8 days may be approved under FSD 48 by the Staff Relations Section (now ABSR).

Relocation

The provisions of FSD 15.41 apply to marriages in Canada in mid-tour and may cover all or part of the travelling expenses for the spouse and any of his/her dependent children joining the employee at post at least six months before the employee's departure. These include a 20-kg per person unaccompanied baggage allowance, but shipment and/or storage of the rest of the spouse's effects is the employee's own responsibility.

FSD 15.13(b)(ii) allows an employee a subsequent shipment in the event of the birth or adoption of a child, within a weight limitation based on the employee's new household size.

In some circumstances where the new dependant(s) cannot join the employee at post, the employee may be eligible for Family Separation Expenses (see FSD 15.34). The Travel and Relocation Section (now ABMR) determines entitlements under FSD 15.

Shelter

FSD's 25.02(b) and 15.29(c) make provision for any necessary removal to accommodation of a more suitable size. FSD 25.12(a)(ii) provides for the adjustment of the employee's shelter cost to reflect a change in household size, effective the first day of the following month (consult the FSD Schedules for the current figures).

Allowances

The Foreign Service Premium (FSD 56) and the Post Differential Allowance (FSD 58) may increase in the event of marriage, birth or adoption if the employee doesn't already have 2 or more dependants at post. The Pay Section (ABMP) makes the adjustment on the first compensation day following the event (if it takes place at post) or the arrival of the new dependant(s) at post (see the FSD Schedules for the current amounts).

Education

Depending on their level of schooling and the compatibility of schooling at your post, newly adopted dependent children and the dependent children of a new spouse may be eligible for education allowances and school holiday maintenance under certain conditions: see FSD's 34, 35 and 37. FSD 30 also provides for transportation to and from school in some situations at post. The Allowance Operations side of ABSA can best advise what the employee's entitlements may be in this regard.

Travel

Once resident at post, an employee's new dependant(s) may benefit from the employee's remaining travel entitlements under FSD 50.01. Where the employee has already utilized all the entitlements available, the new dependant(s) would be eligible for travel assistance where the period of residence at post will fall within the minimum requirements of FSD 50.01, e.g., at least three years at an 'A' Level post, at least 12 months at a Level IV post. Should the new dependant(s) not join the employee at post, FSD 51 may provide for family reunion travel. The entitlements are expressed in number of trips per 12-month period. Entitlements for shorter periods are at the discretion of the deputy head as exercised by the Head, Allowance Operations (ABSA).

CHRISTMAS IS COMING

October is not too early to begin planning for Christmas travel. Requests for Family Reunion and Foreign Service (Vacation) Travel Assistance should be addressed to Allowance Operations (ABSA), noting who will be travelling and when, and for dependants in Canada, the full name, address and telephone number of the person(s) to contact about arrangements. Requests to trade in Foreign Service Leave (FSD 45) for a transportation entitlement must be addressed to the Pay, Leave and Allowances Section (ABMP). HAPPY HOLIDAYS...

LYCÉE CLAUDEL COSTS WILL BE COVERED

Treasury Board has just authorized the Under-Secretary of State to help cover the costs of educating the children of foreign service employees enrolled in the lycée Claudel. This was requested by the Department in order to offset the risk or danger of having a child lose a year's schooling when changing from one system to another, or even of being denied entrance into a primary or secondary school in the French system after coming from a different system. The details are given in circular document 36/84 which because of the complexity of the issue, we will quote directly:

"On presentation of the appropriate receipts, the Department may refund the tuition fees paid for the children of rotational employees. In addition, certain related specified expenses for prescribed text books (up to the equivalent of Ontario Grade 12) and school supplies (up to the equivalent of Ontario Grade 8) may also be included. The effective date for these provisions is the school year commencing September 1, 1983.

This aid will be provided only to:

- children who were registered in the french lycée system during the assignment of the employee abroad;
- children who commence primary schooling in the first year of the lycée system during the assignment of an employee in Ottawa following an assignment abroad;
- children who are enrolled in the lycée Claudel where an employee has not been offered an initial assignment outside Canada.

Normally, payment shall be limited to the two year period immediately following (i) the employee's assignment to Ottawa from abroad or (ii) the date on which the employee commences rotational employment." This is a taxable benefit. For further information contact ABSA.