

III. General

Section 17 – Employer Communication Responsibilities

Contents

17.1	Purpose.....	1
17.2	Rationale.....	1
17.3	Policy	2
17.4	History	4

17.1 Purpose

This policy defines the governance and execution of the Municipal Employees Pension Plan (MEPP) communications by employers and the Commission’s administrator (the administrator) to members and beneficiaries. The purpose of the policy is to:

- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Commission, the administrator and employers in providing information and communication to MEPP members and beneficiaries; and
- Confirm the types of information, tools and training that employers and the administrator provide to members and beneficiaries.

17.2 Rationale

The Commission is responsible for overall communication with MEPP members regarding the MEPP plan and related provisions. By confirming communication accountabilities and processes, and by encouraging employers and the administrator to work collaboratively for the benefit of MEPP members and beneficiaries, the Commission:

- Ensures consistency of communication messaging and content;
- Enhances alignment between employers and the administrator;
- Increases the effectiveness of MEPP communications to members and beneficiaries; and
- Increases awareness of the attributes of the MEPP plan among members and beneficiaries.

To guarantee consistency and accuracy, the Commission endorses a communication approach that requires centralized authority and control under the administrator in areas where potential risk is high, and a more collaborative approach between the administrator and employers where the potential risks are less significant.

The provision of information can create serious liability or risks to the person or group delivering the message, if the information provided is interpreted as advice or recommendations. To minimize these potential risks, the Commission must ensure only valid and appropriate information is communicated to employers and members.

17.3 Policy

General

The communication goal of the Commission is to be responsive to the needs of MEPP members and to inform MEPP members, beneficiaries, employers and the plan sponsor of their benefits, duties and obligations under the plan, through clear, timely and relevant communication.

To achieve these key goals, the Commission maintains oversight for the quality and effectiveness of member communications. In addition, the Commission endorses the collaborative sharing of communication responsibilities between employers and the administrator as specifically outlined in the next section.

Roles and Responsibilities

This section outlines the roles and responsibilities of the Commission, the administrator and employers with respect to MEPP communications.

Commission Responsibilities

Communication responsibilities of the Commission as set out in section 56 of *The Municipal Employees Pension Act* (the Act) include the provision of written explanations for each plan member of the following:

- The terms and conditions of the plan;
- Members' rights under the plan;
- Benefits available to members;
- Information required by *The Pensions Benefits Act, 1992* (the PBA); and
- Any other information the Commission feels is desirable or may be required by the Regulations to the PBA.

In terms of communication with members and employers, the Commission is responsible for establishing and reviewing MEPP communication policy including oversight to ensure employers and the administrator adhere to the policy and related procedures. The Commission also promotes and endorses the collaborative sharing of communication responsibilities between employers and the administrator.

Employer Responsibilities

Employer responsibilities are found in Sections **3**, **17**, and **18** of the Act. Section **3** gives employers the responsibility for designating employees as permanent or non-permanent; sections **17** and **18** apply to the responsibilities of the employer to remit contributions on behalf of employees, and the time and manner in which contributions are to be remitted to the Plan.

Employers have the authority to disseminate MEPP information provided by the administrator to their employees. Employers without dedicated communication resources can fully rely on PEBA to assist with their communication requirements.

Administrator Responsibilities

To ensure the highest standards of quality and accuracy, the administrator develops communication plans including themes, strategies, and tactics in consultation with employers.

However, the administrator is responsible for the development of MEPP related communication information and/or materials for employers to forward to members and beneficiaries. The administrator and employers share responsibility for the timely dissemination or roll-out of these materials to members and beneficiaries.

The administrator is encouraged to work in close association with employers to ensure consistent, targeted and effective themes, messaging and content is disseminated to members and beneficiaries. Where appropriate, the administrator provides employers with tools and training to support communication initiatives. The administrator also develops and implements appropriate measures to monitor the effectiveness of member communications, through surveys, focus groups, and/or communication audits to support the Commission with policy oversight.

Types of Information, Tools and Training

General communication information is included in published materials (information sheets, newsletters, correspondence); through verbal communication (presentations, discussions, responses to inquiries); and via electronic communication (web information and web modeling tools).

It is not the intent of the Commission members, employers or the administrator to provide advice or recommendations. The provision of information is not to be construed as advice or recommendations. The message must be made clear to the members of the Plan through adequate disclaimers and notices.

17.4 History

Approval date: January 18, 2007; and April 17, 2009
Last review: March 16, 2018
Next scheduled review: November 2019