

St. Vincent and the Grenadines

Exchange rate: US\$1.00 equals 2.70 East Caribbean dollars (EC\$).

Old Age, Disability, and Survivors

Regulatory Framework

First law: 1970 (provident fund).

Current law: 1986 (social insurance), with amendments.

Type of program: Social insurance system.

Note: The Family Services Division of the Ministry of Social Development administers social assistance cash benefits for needy persons, including needy elderly persons, persons with disabilities, and orphans.

Coverage

Employed and self-employed persons aged 16 to 59.

Voluntary coverage for citizens of St. Vincent and the Grenadines aged 16 to 59, who are no longer in covered employment or live abroad.

Source of Funds

Insured person: 3.5% of covered earnings; certain government workers contribute 3.29% of covered earnings; the voluntarily insured contribute 6.84% of declared income.

The minimum weekly earnings for contribution calculation purposes are EC\$15.

The maximum weekly earnings for contribution calculation purposes are EC\$1,000 (EC\$4,330 a month).

The insured person's contributions also finance sickness and maternity benefits.

Self-employed person: 7.5% of declared income, according to eight income categories.

The self-employed person's contributions also finance sickness and maternity benefits.

Employer: 4.5% of monthly payroll.

The minimum weekly earnings for contribution calculation purposes are EC\$15.

The maximum weekly earnings for contribution calculation purposes are EC\$1,000 (EC\$4,330 a month).

The employer's contributions also finance sickness and maternity benefits.

Government: 4.25% or 4.5% of monthly payroll on behalf of government workers, depending on the category of work. Government contributions also finance sickness and maternity benefits.

Qualifying Conditions

Old-age pension: Age 60 with at least 500 weeks of contributions.

Early pension: Paid at age 60 to insured persons who were aged 37 or older on January 5, 1987. The insured must have at least 150 weeks of contributions, plus an additional 25 weeks of contributions for each year the insured was younger than age 50 on January 5, 1987.

Old-age grant: Age 60 with at least 50 weeks of contributions.

Benefits are payable abroad.

Disability pension: The insured must be younger than age 60, assessed with a disability, and have at least 150 weeks of contributions.

Disability grant: The insured must be younger than age 60, assessed with a disability, and have at least 50 weeks of contributions.

Benefits are payable abroad.

Survivor pension: The deceased had at least 150 weeks of contributions at the time of death.

Eligible survivors are a widow(er) and children younger than age 16 (age 18 if a student, no limit if disabled) or dependent parents aged 60 or older.

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

Survivor grant: The deceased did not satisfy the qualifying conditions for a pension but was eligible for an old-age grant or disability grant.

Eligible survivors are a widow(er) and children younger than age 16 (age 18 if a student, no limit if disabled) or dependent parents aged 60 or older.

Benefits are payable abroad.

Funeral grant: The insured had paid at least 26 weeks of contributions. The grant is paid for the death of the insured, the insured's spouse, and the insured's dependent children younger than age 16 (age 18 if a full-time student, no limit if disabled).

Old-Age Benefits

Old-age pension: The base pension is 30% of the insured's average annual earnings with at least 500 weeks of contributions. The pension is increased by 0.5% of average annual earnings for each 25-week period of contributions exceeding 500 weeks.

Average annual earnings are based on the insured's earnings in the best 3 of the last 15 years before the year in which the insured reached age 60. The annual amount is then divided by 52 to determine the weekly pension.

The maximum pension is 60% of the insured's average annual earnings.

Early pension: The base pension is 16% of the insured's average annual earnings in the best 3 of the last 15 years before the year in which the insured reached age 60. The pension is increased by 1% of average annual earnings for each 25-week period of contributions exceeding 150 weeks, up to 499 weeks.

The minimum weekly pension is EC\$70. The pension is paid every 2 weeks.

Benefit adjustment: Benefits are adjusted for inflation every 3 years, subject to an actuarial review.

Old-age grant: A lump sum of six times the average weekly covered earnings is paid for each 50-week period of contributions.

Permanent Disability Benefits

Disability pension: The minimum pension is 30% of the insured's average annual earnings with at least 500 weeks of contributions. The pension is increased by 0.5% of average annual earnings for each 25-week period of contributions exceeding 500 weeks.

Average annual earnings are based on the insured's earnings in the best 3 of the last 15 years. The annual amount is then divided by 52 to determine the weekly pension.

The minimum weekly pension is EC\$70. The pension is paid every 2 weeks.

The maximum pension is 60% of average earnings.

Benefit adjustment: Benefits are adjusted for inflation every 3 years, subject to an actuarial review.

Disability grant: A lump sum of six times the average weekly covered earnings is paid for each 50-week period of contributions.

Survivor Benefits

Survivor pension: The widow(er)'s pension is 75% of the pension the deceased received or would have been entitled to receive at the time of death.

A limited pension is paid for a year to a widow(er) younger than the age 50 with no dependent children.

Orphan's pension: Each dependent child younger than age 16 (age 18 if a full-time student, no limit if disabled) receives 25% of the pension the deceased received or would have been entitled to receive; 50% for a full orphan.

Dependent parent's pension (in the absence of other eligible survivors): Each eligible parent receives up to 50% of the pension the deceased received or would have been entitled to receive.

All survivor benefits combined must not exceed 100% of the deceased's old-age pension or disability pension.

Survivor grant: A widow(er) receives a lump sum of 75% of the old-age grant the deceased received or would have been entitled to receive; an orphan receives 25% (50% for a

full orphan); in the absence of other eligible survivors, each dependent parent receives 50%.

All survivor grants combined must not exceed 100% of the old-age grant the deceased would have been entitled to receive.

Funeral grant: EC\$4,330 is paid to the person who pays for all or part of the insured's funeral. A reduced grant is paid for the funeral of a spouse or child.

Administrative Organization

National Insurance Board (<http://www.nissvg.org>) administers the program.

Sickness and Maternity

Regulatory Framework

First and current law: 1986 (social insurance), with amendments.

Type of program: Social insurance system. Cash benefits only.

Coverage

Employed and self-employed persons aged 16 to 59.

Special systems for certain categories of civil servants.

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

Cash sickness benefits: The insured must be currently employed with at least 26 weeks of contributions, including at least 8 weeks in the 13-week period immediately before the incapacity began.

Cash maternity benefits: The insured must have at least 20 weeks of contributions, including at least 20 weeks in the 30-week period immediately before the claim or 6 weeks immediately before the expected date of child birth.

Maternity grant: The woman or her spouse must have at least 30 weeks of contributions immediately before a live birth.

Sickness and Maternity Benefits

Sickness benefit: The benefit is 65% of the insured's average earnings in the 13 weeks before the incapacity began and is paid for up to 26 weeks.

Maternity benefit: The benefit is 65% of the insured's average earnings in the last 30 weeks of employment. The benefit is paid for 13 weeks, from up to 6 weeks before the expected date of childbirth.

Maternity grant: EC\$630 is paid.

Workers' Medical Benefits

No statutory benefits are provided.

Dependents' Medical Benefits

No statutory benefits are provided.

Administrative Organization

National Insurance Board (<http://www.nissvg.org>) administers the program.

Work Injury

Regulatory Framework

First law: 1939.

Current law: 1997 (work injury).

Type of program: Social insurance system.

Coverage

Employed persons.

Exclusions: Self-employed persons.

Source of Funds

Insured person: None.

Self-employed person: Not applicable.

Employer: 0.5% of payroll.

Government: None; contributes as an employer.

Qualifying Conditions

Work injury benefits: The insured must be employed. Benefits are paid for work injuries or prescribed occupational diseases.

Temporary Disability Benefits

The benefit is 70% of average weekly covered earnings and is paid for up to 52 weeks.

Average weekly covered earnings are based on the insured's earnings in the last 13 weeks or the total number of weeks of employment before the disability began (whichever is lower).

Permanent Disability Benefits

Permanent disability pension: The pension is 70% of average weekly covered earnings multiplied by the assessed degree of disability. The assessed degree of disability must be greater than 30% and the insured must have exhausted entitlement to the temporary disability benefit.

Average weekly insurable earnings are based on the insured's earnings in the 13 weeks before the disability began.

The degree of disability is assessed by a medical doctor and reviewed every 26 weeks.

Constant-attendance allowance: 150% of the disability pension is paid. The insured must be an outpatient receiving a permanent disability pension (100% disability) and require the constant attendance of others to perform daily functions.

If the assessed degree of disability is 30% or less, a lump sum of 365 times the insured's average weekly covered earnings multiplied by the assessed degree of disability is paid. The insured must have exhausted entitlement to a temporary disability benefit.

Workers' Medical Benefits

Benefits include medical, surgical, dental and hospital treatment; skilled nursing services; medicine; prosthetics; and transportation costs.

Survivor Benefits

Survivor pension: 50% of the deceased's permanent disability pension is paid to the widow(er).

The pension ceases on remarriage.

Orphan's pension: Each dependent child younger than age 16 (age 18 if a full-time student) receives 16.6% of the deceased's permanent disability pension (33.3% if disabled).

Other dependent's pension: 16.6% of the deceased's permanent disability pension is paid.

Eligible survivors are a widow(er), unmarried, dependent children, and any other dependent person named by the deceased.

Funeral grant: EC\$4,330 is paid to the person who paid for the funeral.

Administrative Organization

National Insurance Board (<http://www.nissvg.org>) administers the program.