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# 1 ENROLMENT

## 1.1 Enrolling your employee

Enrolment is based on eligibility rules outlined below.

Once you have determined that an employee is eligible to join the pension plan, you will need to follow the enrolment process. Some employers are Public Service employers for certain groups of employees only. For example, the employer might have applied to be an employer solely for continuing the enrolment of a specific group of employees that have been transferred from government. If you are one of these employers, please remember that the enrolment rules only apply to employees covered under the plan.

If you fail to enrol employees as soon as they become eligible to contribute to the plan and they have not signed the waiver then you will be required to pay the employer's portion of the arrears. See section 2.3.

You are responsible for providing your employee with pension plan information. Your employee can obtain information from the plan's website, [pspp.pensionsbc.ca](https://pspp.pensionsbc.ca).

Once becoming a member of the pension plan, the employee must continue to contribute until termination of employment. A member must stop contributing to the plan by November 30 the year they turn 71. In addition, member and employer contributions stop when a regular member reaches 35 years of pensionable service.

For provincial court judges (judge) or masters of the Supreme Court (master), pension contributions must be collected until termination of employment. A member must stop contributing to the plan by November 30 of the year they turn 75. See section 4.1 Eligibility for a pension for more information.

### **1.1.1 New employees**

Note that we will advise your new employee if they have service with an employer that participates in another pension plan administered by the Pension Corporation: Municipal, College, Teachers' and WorkSafeBC pension plans, which they may be able to transfer to the Public Service Pension Plan. (See section 2.8 for more information on transferring service.)

### ***Mandatory enrolment***

Employees who meet the following criteria must be enrolled and cannot sign a waiver:

- regular employees,
- non-regular employees (e.g., auxiliary, casual or temporary employees) who, in any calendar year, earn a salary that exceeds 50 per cent of the year's maximum pensionable earnings (YMPE),
- new employees who are already contributing to the plan through another Public Service Pension Plan employer,
- existing employees who begin contributing to the plan through another plan employer,
- employees who terminate and are re-employed by the same employer within 30 days,
- assistant deputy ministers and associate deputy ministers, and
- employees to whom an enactment or Order in Council specifically states that the plan will apply.

### ***Optional enrolment***

There are some employees who may opt out of contributing to the plan, but to exercise that choice, they must provide a signed waiver. If a signed waiver is not obtained from these employees, they must be enrolled in the plan as soon as they are eligible. Employees in this group include:

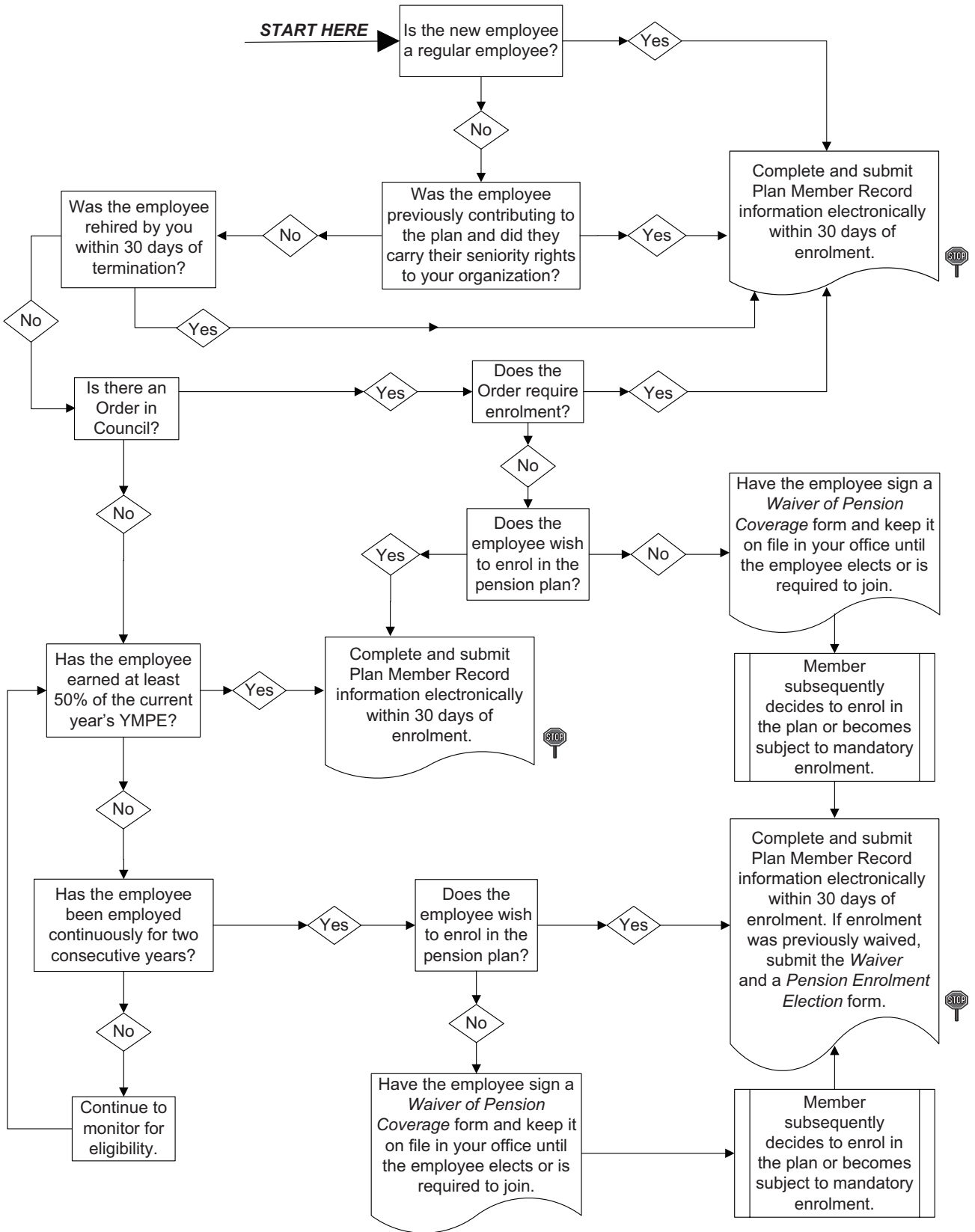
- Auxiliary, casual or temporary employees who have completed two years of continuous employment. That is, they have not been terminated and have had no break in employment of more than 52 weeks, which can include breaks in employment such as a layoff, during which the employee retains seniority in applying for other jobs but have not completed the eligibility requirements to contribute.
- As of July 1, 2011, existing employees of a newly enrolled employer in the plan, and who would otherwise be subject to mandatory enrolment. These employees have a one-time 90-day option to waive enrolment.
- Employees appointed by Order in Council, where the order does not require the employee to be enrolled in the plan. That is, the OIC does not state that the plan rules apply.

If a newly-appointed employee chooses not to contribute to the plan by signing a *Waiver of Pension Coverage*, the subsequent OIC should be silent regarding the application of the plan rules.

Once an employee appointed by OIC has been enrolled, they cannot waive in the future under a new OIC. That is, they must remain a member until they terminate.

The optional enrolment rules require that all eligible employees must be enrolled in the plan, unless the employee signs a written waiver.

# Enrolment



### 1.1.2 Once a contributor, always a contributor

Once a contributor,  
always a contributor.

Once employees begin to contribute to the plan, they must continue to contribute regardless of any change in their employment status (regular or auxiliary) until termination of employment for pension purposes. The following conditions do not result in a termination of employment for pension plan purposes:

- approved leaves of absence (including sick leave)
- under an LTD plan, or
- layoff while retaining seniority rights under the collective agreement and has made a contribution within 335 days.

We will provide a reasonable administrative window for you so that your new employees may exercise their option to waive enrolment. We are prepared to reverse the enrolment of a new member if we receive a copy of the written waiver within 30 days of the member's initial enrolment eligibility date. If this occurs, you must contact Employer Operations through the message board providing an explanation and attaching a copy of the signed waiver. See section 7.2.1.1 for further information on using the message board.

Outside of this administrative window, the normal "once a contributor, always a contributor" rule applies and enrolment cannot be reversed.

If employment is terminated the employee must re-qualify to become an active plan member again. If the employee is rehired by the same employer within 30 days, contributions must recommence.

A member is not eligible to receive a retirement benefit if, within 30 days after the retirement benefit has started, the member becomes an employee again and the employer is required to deduct contributions.

### 1.1.3 Employee elects to enrol after waiving

Eligible employees who elect not to participate in the plan may later elect coverage under the plan by applying to you for coverage. Enrolment in such cases cannot be backdated. Election of pension coverage is effective the first pay period following the date of application to become a member, and it cannot be cancelled.

Send us copies of the election and waiver forms when notifying us of your employee's election to enrol in the plan. As with any enrolment, you must complete and submit Plan Member Record information electronically within 30 days of enrolment. See section 7 for more information on reporting.

If employees who had previously waived enrolment later become subject to mandatory enrolment, you must enrol them, and provide their previously signed waiver forms to us, along with the Plan Member Record. This would occur, for example, when an auxiliary employee becomes a regular employee.

Crown: Enrolment is automatically created by our electronic database through your CHIPS interface. Check the CHIPS user guide for more information.

#### **1.1.4 Employer obligation to provide information**

The [Guide for plan members](#) contains valuable information that will help your employees learn about plan membership and their pension, which is a provincial legislative requirement of the *Pension Benefits Standards Act (PBSA)*.

To meet this legislative requirement, you must provide a paper copy of the guide to your employees on or before their employment date, or at least 30 days before they become eligible to join the plan. A print icon can be found at the bottom of each web page.

Alternatively, you may provide an electronic copy of the guide to your employees. If you choose to do so, you must provide clear, written instructions, which includes the following information:

- where your employees can access the guide (as noted below), and
- if, at any time, they request a paper copy, you must provide it to them.

You can access the guide on the plan's website at [pspp.pensionsbc.ca](http://pspp.pensionsbc.ca) by entering the search term "guide for plan members" and then clicking Guide for plan members.

You can also find the guide in the Employer Portal. Click *Employer Reporting > Plan Member Record Electronic Form* and select the plan.



As a Public Service Pension Plan employer, it is your responsibility to:

- use the Member Validation tool to determine if a new employee is already an active plan member, meaning the employee must commence contributing to the pension plan as of the hire date;
- explain and provide information to all employees who are not already active members of the pension plan on how to qualify for membership; and,
- track each employee's service and earnings as an employee of your organization to determine when an employee qualifies for enrolment in the plan based on earnings and service with you.

In accordance with section 80 of the plan rules, employers must provide us with complete, accurate and timely enrolment information about members. This is necessary for us to properly administer the plan in accordance with the PBSA.

The Pension Corporation sends *Welcome to the Plan* enrolment packages to new plan members whom you have enrolled in the plan. Sometimes, these packages are returned to us by Canada Post because of an incorrect address. Twice a month, the returned packages will be bundled and sent to you. You must distribute the returned packages to the respective employees and provide us with their correct addresses.

You can update employee contact information using the *Plan Member Record (PMR) Electronic Form* or any of the other electronic methods detailed in section 7.5.

### **1.1.5 Concurrent Employment**

If you have an employee who is currently employed with another Public Service Pension Plan employer, or working in more than one position with the same employer, you must report all service and salary and deduct contributions accordingly. If a member accrues more than one year of pensionable service in a calendar year, you must report all pensionable service, including service in excess of 12 months. Continue to deduct contributions once the member has accrued one year of service.

The plan will cap service at one year for members who accrue more than 12 months of service. There will be no adjustment to the reported salary and contributions.

### 1.1.6 *Waiver of Pension Coverage form*

If you are a new employer, as of July 1, 2011, and your existing employee exercises the one-time offer to opt out, they must sign the *Waiver of Pension Coverage* within 90 days of you just joining the plan.

If your employee becomes eligible to contribute under optional enrolment, you must notify and advise them of their options.

An employee who becomes eligible to enrol in the plan, but chooses not to, must complete the *Waiver of Pension Coverage* form. **The signed form is not sent to the Pension Corporation at this time**—it is kept on the employee’s file. A copy goes to the employee.

Contributions are not deducted for employees who waive their right to contribute.

### 1.1.7 *Pension Enrolment Election form*

Make sure you have obtained waivers signed after April 1, 2000 from eligible employees who waived enrolment prior to April 1, 2000, as well as from new, eligible employees.

If your employee waives their right to contribute and later chooses to begin contributions, they must complete a *Pension Enrolment Election* form. You must submit the *Pension Enrolment Election* form and a copy of the previously signed *Waiver of Pension Coverage* to us. Contributions cannot be retroactive—they must begin no earlier than the date the *Pension Enrolment Election* form is signed. Members cannot later purchase service for which they waived enrolment on or after April 1, 2000 (see section 2 for information on purchasing service.) Failure to obtain a waiver signed on or after April 1, 2000 may result in enrolment arrears.

You should have the employee read both sides of the form and you and your employee should complete it together. Make copies for you and your employee. Submit the original to us. Once an employee elects to join the plan, they must continue to contribute until they terminate employment.

### 1.1.8 Plan Member Record (PMR)

You must complete and submit Plan Member Record information electronically within 30 days of enrolment for every employee who becomes eligible and begins contributing to the pension plan. Plan Member Records must be submitted electronically through the Employer Portal. Click *Employer Reporting > Plan Member Record Electronic Form*. Please see section 7.5.1, Reporting Plan Member Record information, for more information about submitting your PMRs.

A PMR (as well as a *Pension Enrolment Election* form and a copy of the *Waiver of Pension Coverage* form) must be completed and submitted for a member who previously waived their right to contribute and has now asked to be enrolled.

Occasionally, you may have an employee who is eligible and contributes to two different pension plans within your organization (this can happen if you have an employee who works at two jobs covered by different pension plans, such as the Public Service and Municipal plans). In this event, you will need to apply the appropriate plan's enrolment rules (i.e., service in the Public Service Pension Plan would not be used to determine eligibility for enrolment in the Municipal Pension Plan, and vice versa). Submit separate PMRs for the employee's enrolment in each of the pension plans.

If you are enrolling a group of employees, you have the option of using a report instead of submitting an individual PMR for each employee. Please see section 7.5.1, Reporting Plan Member Record information, for more information.

Crown: Enrolment is automatically created by our electronic database through your CHIPS interface. Check the CHIPS user guide for more information.

### 1.1.9 Member Validation tool

The Member Validation tool is available through the Employer Portal. Click *Employer Reporting > Plan Member Record Electronic Form*. By entering the employee's SIN, you can check if a new employee is an active pension plan member through another plan employer and whether they should be enrolled. If you have existing employees that are not contributing, you can also check if they are contributing through another employer.

### 1.1.10 Employee “declaration of employment”

To avoid a possible arrears situation, employers should provide plan information to employees when they are hired so they can determine when they might qualify for membership.

It is strongly recommended that all new hires—full-time, part-time, auxiliary or casual—be required to sign a declaration indicating that the employee understands their responsibility to inform the employer should they qualify for plan membership through service with another plan employer.

To collect this employee information and signature, you may wish to create a form such as the one below.

#### Employee “declaration of employment”

1. Are you currently an active member of the Public Service Pension Plan?  
An active member can be on a leave of absence, long term disability, or on a recall list. You do not have to be currently contributing to be considered an active member. Y/N
2. Have you been in the last 30 days? Y/N
3. Are you currently receiving a retirement benefit from the plan? Y/N
4. I have been provided with an explanation or summary of the pension plan, and of the relevant entitlements and obligations under the pension plan. Y/N
5. I understand how I may combine service and earnings with more than one plan employer to qualify for membership in the plan. Y/N
6. I understand that I must inform my employer if I begin contributions with another plan employer. If I do not inform my employer, enrolment arrears will be billed to me and my employer. I understand I have five years from receiving the notice of arrears or until termination of employment (whichever is earlier) to apply to purchase the arrears period. Y/N

Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## 1.2 Determining a member’s beneficiary or beneficiaries

The plan pays benefits to a plan member’s beneficiary(ies) when the member dies prior to receiving a benefit from the plan. Known as a “pre-retirement death benefit,” the benefit is payable to the beneficiary(ies) of a member who dies:

- while an active plan member, or
- after terminating employment, but without having received a benefit from the plan (i.e., does not take a termination benefit and has not started receiving a retirement benefit). See section 5 for more information.

### ***With a spouse***

The benefit payable is determined in part by the identity of the beneficiary(ies). If the plan member has a spouse, the spouse is automatically the member’s beneficiary. The plan member does not have to nominate a beneficiary.

A member’s spouse can waive entitlement to the preretirement death benefit on the *Spouse’s Waiver of Beneficiary Right to Benefits in a Pension Plan, Locked-In Retirement Account, Life Income Fund or Annuity Before Payments Start* form and the member can then designate other beneficiary(ies). To nominate a beneficiary(ies) other than their spouse, the member should sign in to My Account at [pspp.pensions.ca](https://pspp.pensions.ca).

See section 5 for more information on pre-retirement death benefits.

### ***Without a spouse***

Members without a spouse (or a spouse who waives entitlement by completing a *Spouse’s Waiver of Beneficiary Right to Benefits in a Pension Plan, Locked-In Retirement Account, Life Income Fund or Annuity Before Payments Start* or who have a separation agreement, a divorce decree or court order) can nominate

- a person other than the member’s spouse,
- a trust,
- an organization such as a charity or society, or
- the member’s estate.

A member can nominate multiple beneficiaries with designated shares, and alternates.

Members can change their beneficiary(ies) at any time, either through My Account or by filing a new *Nomination of Beneficiary* form.

If we haven't received any beneficiary information, the benefit will be paid to the member's estate.

For more information about nominating beneficiaries before and after retirement, visit the plan website:

- [Nominating beneficiaries before retiring](#)
- [Nominating beneficiaries after retiring](#)

### 1.3 Transferring pension rights

See section 2.9 for more information on pension transfer agreements.

If your employee worked for an employer covered by a pension transfer agreement, the plan may contact them directly about transferring their pension rights, including their contributions and years of service, to their current plan (see section 2.6). These members should be treated as new employees and subject to plan enrolment rules.

### 1.4 Enrolment in the wrong pension plan

A number of employers who participate in pension plans administered by the Pension Corporation have membership in more than one pension plan.

Occasionally, an employer may enrol an employee in a pension plan and find out later that the employee should have been enrolled in a different plan. This can happen, for example, when an employee who should be enrolled in the Public Service Pension Plan is enrolled in the Municipal Pension Plan. In most cases, the correction can be completed through the remittance process. However, in cases where data has been posted to an account, there will be arrears owing in the plan the member **should** have been enrolled in and an ineligible refund payable from the plan they were incorrectly enrolled in.

After you have advised us of this situation, we will contact the plan member to explain what has occurred and provide them with the following options:

1. A refund of their ineligible contributions, with interest, from the incorrect plan. The member will receive an invoice for the arrears owing for the applicable period in the correct pension plan and will have the option of paying for the enrolment arrears. If the member chooses to pay, they will be credited with full pensionable and contributory service (see Arrears in section 2).

Or

2. We will calculate the amount of the refund of ineligible contributions plus interest from the incorrect pension plan and the amount of the arrears owing in the correct pension plan. If the amounts are equal, we will automatically transfer the funds from the incorrect pension plan to the correct pension plan. If the amounts are unequal, the member will either receive a cheque for the excess contributions plus interest or receive an invoice for the arrears shortfall.

We will indicate clearly to the member whether or not the amounts of the refund and arrears are equal.

We will ask the member to respond within 60 days from the date of the letter. Once the member has selected an option, we will proceed according to the member's instructions.

For both options, you are required to pay the employer portion for the arrears period, which could be paid from the employer refund of ineligible contributions with interest in either (1) or (2). Any excess contributions will be refunded to you with interest.

## 1.5 Re-employment of retired members

If a retired member—in this case, a person who retired from Public Service Pension Plan employment and is receiving a Public Service retirement benefit—returns to work, they continue receiving their pension and do not enrol in or contribute to the plan.

If an employee is receiving a retirement benefit from a different pension plan, or is receiving a retirement benefit as a survivor of a deceased member, regular plan enrolment rules apply.

## 1.6 Concurrent employment

If a member works for more than one employer or in more than one position with the same employer, and accrues more than a year of pensionable service in a calendar year, you must report all pensionable service, including service in excess of 12 months. Do not stop deducting contributions once the member has accrued one year of service. The plan will cap service at one year, but member and employer contributions related to pensionable service that exceed 12 months will not be refunded. All pensionable salaries earned by the member in the calendar year will be retained for highest average salary (HAS) calculation.

## 1.7 Proof of age and identity

Before receiving a benefit, a plan member must supply the Pension Corporation with proof of age and identity documents. Any spouse or person beneficiary who receives a benefit must provide proof of age and identity as well. A CRA number must be provided for an organization beneficiary.

These documents can be provided at any time prior to receiving a benefit, but we recommend that they be provided at the time of enrolment for the member and the member's spouse.

If documents are in a foreign language, translation may be required. The cost of translation is the member's responsibility. The translator must not be a member of the member's family, and must sign and date the translated document.

Copies of documents no longer have to be certified.



## Gender identity

Pension Corporation collects gender information for plan administration. Gender information is fundamental as actuaries use this data to help determine the life expectancy of members and whether a pension plan is sufficiently funded.

Members who do not identify as female or male may identify as X. Both the provincial and federal governments allow individuals to change their gender designation to X on government-issued identification such as BC birth certificates, BC driver's licenses, passports and permanent resident cards. In other provinces and territories, individuals may also indicate their gender as X on government identification.

The X gender designation recognizes that sex and gender are different concepts that aren't interchangeable.

A member updating their gender identity is not required to provide documentation.

- “Sex” refers to a person's biological and physiological characteristics, such as male.
- “Gender” refers to how a person feels internally (e.g., a man), and/or the gender a person publicly expresses in their daily life (e.g., at work, while shopping, at home). A person's current gender may differ from the sex they were born and may differ from what is indicated on their current legal documents. A person's gender may change over time.

## Providing the documents

Clear and legible copies of original documents must be provided. Both physical and electronic copies are acceptable.

Note that foreign passports and driver's licences must be certified true copies.

**Original documents must not be submitted** because of the risk of loss or damage and the cost of returning the documents by registered mail.

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### **EXAMPLE**

A clear, legible copy of one of these documents is acceptable:

- current Canadian driver's licence
- *BC Driver's Licence and Services Card*
- BC identification card
- *BC Services Card*
- Birth certificate
- Canada Border Services Agency Nexus membership card
- Canadian passport (must be valid and unexpired)
- Canadian citizenship or immigration papers
- Certificate of Indian Status card
- Certificate of Registration of Birth Abroad (RBA)—*document issued by Citizenship and Immigration Canada to Canadian Parents of children born abroad between 1947 and 1977*
- Marriage certificate (if the date of birth is recorded on the document)
- Ontario Health Card
- Permanent Resident Card (PRC) (must be valid and unexpired)
- **Foreign passport or driver's licence** (must be a certified true copy of a valid, unexpired document)

If the member's name has changed, we require a clear copy of one of the above documents showing the member's current name, or all of their legal change of name documents or marriage certificates.

Contact us for acceptable alternative documents if the member's original documents are unavailable. There will be a delay in processing the member's retirement benefit payment if their forms are not completed fully or if documents are missing.

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## Enrolment checklist

### Did you remember to...

- Provide your employee with access to a copy of [Guide for Plan Members](#).
- Advise your optional employee about the enrolment rules? Have them sign a waiver if they choose not to enrol.
- Ask your employee if they are already retired and receiving a Public Service retirement benefit? (see section 1.5)
- Use the Member Validation tool to confirm if a new employee is a member of the plan.
- Complete and submit Plan Member Record information electronically within 30 days of enrolment.
- Ask your employee to sign in to My Account at [pspp.pensionsbc.ca](https://pspp.pensionsbc.ca) and upload documents to establish proof of age and identity.
- Ask your employee if they wish to nominate a beneficiary(ies) other than their current spouse. If they do, they can nominate beneficiaries by signing in to My Account at [pspp.pensionsbc.ca](https://pspp.pensionsbc.ca).

