

The Fund Office Report

Important News About Your Employee Benefit Programs in the
Metal Trades Branch of Steamfitters' Local 638

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Special Meeting Held

There was a Special Meeting of the Metal Trades Branch Local Union 638 held on June 20, 2017 in Long Island City. Parties agreed to a four year agreement effective July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2021 and voted in favor of a wage increase totaling \$7.00 over the four year contract period. The July 1st increase of \$1.00 per hour will go entirely to wages.

24-Hour Nurse Line



Did you know that you have free access to the 24/7 NurseLine?

By simply calling the toll-free number found on the back of your health insurance card, you have the option of speaking with a registered nurse or utilizing the Audio Library. Nurses will speak with you regarding your health concerns, symptoms, medications and side effects. They may recommend that you go to a doctor or emergency room, and can help with various other health and medical conditions. The Audio Library provides you with access to over 200 recordings concerning various health-related issues.

To speak with a nurse, call the 24/7 NurseLine at 1-877-TALK-2-RN (1-877-825-5276), and press 1. For the Audio Library, press 2, followed by the tape number. Tape numbers can be found in the Metal Trades Health and Welfare Benefits Summary Plan Description, or online at www.empireblue.com.

Disability Status Program



The Disability Status Program (DSP) allows participants to maintain eligibility if they are unable to work due to a medical condition. To apply for the DSP, you must be covered under the Welfare Fund at the time of your injury or illness. You must also have a minimum of 10 Years of Credited Service in the Pension Fund at the time of injury or illness, and be covered under the Welfare Fund for no less than 48 of the 60 months prior to the date of injury or illness.

Please note that as a rule of the Welfare Fund, you must report any injury on or off the job which will effect your ability to work to the Fund Office as soon as possible. Your completed DSP application **must be received within 30 days of the injury or illness** and must be accompanied by a letter from the attending physician detailing the injury or illness. Proof of your disability may include copies of Disability or Workers' Compensation payments and/or an Independent Medical Examination (IME) conducted by the Professional Evaluation Group (PEG).

Participation in the DSP cannot exceed 12 months and includes coverage for all dependents. Upon returning to work (or being deemed physically able to return to work), you would remain covered for 2 months under the DSP (when regular eligibility rules would normally reestablish welfare coverage).



Notary services are available to our members at the Fund Office. Make sure to have proper identification items with you in order to take advantage of these services which are specific to Fund Office forms. Acceptable identification items are state driver's licenses and non-drivers ID, passports, federal ID's such as military identification cards, state, county and local government ID's.

Remember Keep Your Pay Stubs

Please review your pay stubs against your Statement of Earnings. Should a discrepancy ever arise upon reviewing posted hours on your Statement of Earnings against your pay stubs, contact the Cash Department at (212) 465-8888, option 5. Please be prepared to provide copies of your pay stubs to the Fund Office.

The Metal Trades Branch
c/o The Steamfitters'
Industry Fund Office
27-08 40th Avenue
2nd Floor
Long Island City, NY
11101-3725

Telephone:
(212) 465-8888
E-mail:
FundOffice@steamny.com
Website:
www.steamfitters.com



Thinking About Retirement?



If you are thinking about retirement, we encourage you to schedule an interview with the pension department to find out about the process. If you know when you would like to retire, be sure to contact the pension department at least 3 months in advance so that we can send you the necessary application materials. The application must be completed at least 30 days, but no more than 180 days, prior to the effective date.

Upon applying for retirement, the Pension Fund must verify your age and legal marital status. You must be able to provide documentation for you and your spouse. Acceptable documents for date of birth and/or marriage include: birth certificates, passports, marriage certificate and/or a marriage license, baptismal certificates, naturalization or immigration papers. If you do not have any acceptable documentation, you should obtain copies of these prior to submitting your retirement application.

Please call the Fund Office at (212) 465-8888, menu option 3 for the Pension Department.

Retiree Disability Pension Benefits

The Pension Fund's Annual Pension Audit will be mailed to retired members who receive a Disability Pension benefit by early November. You will be required to provide proof of your continued receipt of Social Security (SS) disability benefits by submitting a copy of your most recent SS Disability check or a copy of "Your New Benefit Amount" notice from the SS Administration. If your check is electronically transferred into your bank account, you may submit your most recent bank statement, provided that the transfer is in your name. Should you have any questions regarding this matter, feel free to contact the Fund Office at (212) 465-8888, choose menu option 3 for the Pension Department.

Member Self-Service Website

Have you accessed the Fund Office member self-service website? The website provides you with past and the most recently posted information regarding your work history, distributions, eligibility and beneficiaries. If you haven't logged in yet, go to member login and click register to obtain access. All you need is your username and password for access. Should you have any questions concerning our website and/or log-in information, please feel free to contact the Fund Office at (212) 465-8888, extension 231.



Steamfitting Industry Assistance Program (SIAP) We're Here to Help!

Please contact the Steamfitting Industry Assistance Program (SIAP) **prior** to seeking admission to an in-patient facility. There seems to be a trend starting to emerge where some in-patient facilities, while they accept our benefits, will then try to access ancillary payment for out of network charges for services beyond what is initially anticipated by our members. Our Plan does not provide any out-of-network coverage. This means the expenses charged by out of network facilities, providers and services would be your full responsibility.

The SIAP department is here to help you make the decision to which facility, provider or services best suits your situation and family needs. Please contact the SIAP department with questions concerning alcohol, drug, prescription drug, pain medications and or mental health issues at (212) 563-0342 and (212) 562-0378.

Rest assured all calls are completely confidential.