OMERS
Plan for the Future

Employer Update

Number 33, October 2004

A newsletter for administrators of the OMERS pension plan

OMERS President and CEO on the Fund's financial forecast

A message from Paul Haggis about how the economic climate affects the Plan

OMERS, like most pension plans, is facing funding challenges. To help meet our obligations to plan members, there will very likely be a moderate increase in contribution rates in 2006. We'll give you more information as it becomes available, to give you as much lead time as possible to prepare.

The current climate

Despite an overall return of 12.7% in 2003 and a modest actuarial surplus of $509 million, the OMERS plan is expected to have a deficit of about $1 billion by the end of 2004. OMERS is not alone: more than half the pension plans in Canada currently have deficits.

Pension plans, including OMERS, are dealing with several factors that have had an impact on their funding positions, such as:

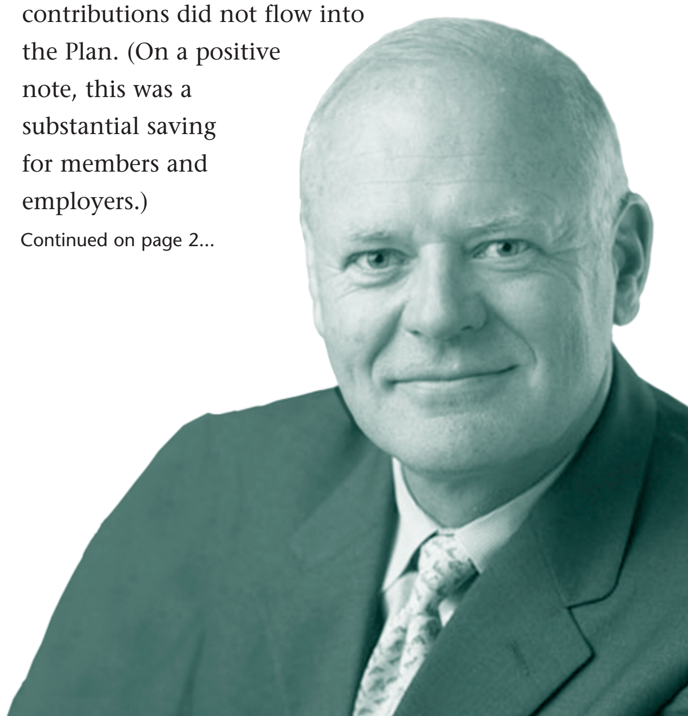
- under-performing capital markets in recent years that resulted in much lower returns and a drop in asset values;
- low interest rates that pushed future pension costs significantly higher; and
- an aging population, and a corresponding increase in the number of retired people and in the number of pensions being paid.

How we got here

The unusual combination of strong market returns, low inflation, and low wage growth in the late 1990s made it a very good time for pension plans. OMERS ended the nineties with a surplus of more than $5 billion, very much like most other plans.

Responding to our stakeholders, OMERS plan benefits were enhanced. Also, because the surplus was greater than federal tax legislation allowed, OMERS had to impose a contribution holiday. During that period more than $5.3 billion in contributions did not flow into the Plan. (On a positive note, this was a substantial saving for members and employers.)

Continued on page 2...



What's inside

...continued from page 1

OMERS President and CEO on the Fund's financial forecast

Then interest rates continued to decline and the stock markets collapsed. We are working our way out of this dilemma, and will be for a number of years to come.

Here's a brief look at how events unfolded:

1998	OMERS announces the federally mandated contribution holiday, expecting it to last from August 1998 to July 31, 1999, or as long as the Plan continues to be in a surplus position.
1999	The Fund is still in a surplus position, and due to tax regulations the contribution holiday must continue. OMERS announces that the holiday is extended until December 31, 2001.
2000	The Fund continues to be in a surplus position. OMERS announces that the contribution holiday is extended until December 31, 2002.
2002	The Board reviews the Plan's funding status; the surplus has been reduced. OMERS announces that contributions will resume at one-third the normal rate in January 2003.
2003	With the surplus continuing to decrease, OMERS announces that full contributions will return in 2004 at slightly increased rates to reflect the full value of future benefits.

What OMERS is doing

OMERS, along with other pension plans, successfully lobbied the federal government to change the *Income Tax Act* regulations that required a full contribution holiday once a plan's assets reached 110% of liabilities. Now a plan like OMERS in a surplus position no longer has to have a full contribution holiday, but can gradually reduce contributions instead.

The Board also implemented its new investment strategy this year, including a change in our asset mix to focus on alternative investments (see the May 2004 edition of *Member Update*, or our web site under *Investments/Assets*). About 70% of pension payments are funded by investment returns, with about 30% coming from contributions.

Each year an independent actuary reviews the Plan's funding position and reports to the Board. First and foremost, OMERS has a responsibility to plan members. It is our fiduciary responsibility—if our actuaries determine that raising contribution rates is the best option for maintaining plan funding and security, we will do it.

In closing...

We believe that OMERS is well funded for the future and will remain healthy over the long term. We continue to deliver competitive, secure benefits that provide good value at reasonable cost.

OMERS launches e-Form 165a import and batch processing

We've added some new features to the *e-Form 165a – Leave period reporting/election*

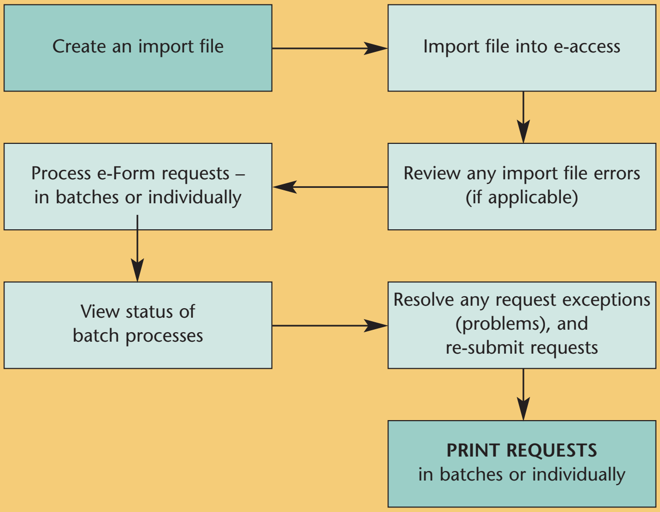
Until now, you had to enter information for individual leave periods in e-access, and submit them one at a time. Now, you can import member leave information directly into e-access, and submit leave requests in batches – which is faster and more efficient. You can also track processes you have underway.

The new features build on what you already know about e-access. They use similar screens and navigation aids, and there are help and validation screens to help you through the process.

"It saves a lot of time compared to doing each e-Form 165 individually."

Overview

e-access new file importing and batch processing features streamline leave period reporting.



Ralph Caughell, City of Hamilton, discusses e-access issues with Evelynn Funston, Vice President, Pension Systems, and Melanie Blair, Service Coordinator, Employer Services.

Lemira Dandan (standing), Service Coordinator, Employer Services, talks with Sylvia Smith, Lakehead District School Board at the launch.

What our pilot employers say about e-Form 165a import and batch processing...

"It took less than a day to complete the 165s for a group of over 300 members…The batch printing feature was good – it saved having to print each record [individually]."

Kathy Lees, Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board

"It saves a lot of time compared to doing each e-Form 165 individually."

Lianne Kunath, Regional Municipality of Durham

"It checks everything you input, and the results are immediate."

Ann Daniels, City of Mississauga

"We can upload the [leave period] information from our Payroll/Personnel system and then generate an electronic 165a leave form. This method of reporting is easier and less time consuming."

Sylvia Smith, Lakehead District School Board

More information?

We've prepared a brochure about the e-Form 165a file importing and batch processing utilities. You'll find it in *Employers/e-access* at **www.omers.com**.

As always, if you have any questions, please contact OMERS Client Services.

www.omers.com You'll find many helpful e-access information pages online. Visit *Employers/e-access* on our web site.

Getting ready for e-Form 119

Easier annual reporting is just around the corner. The next member of the e-access family, *e-Form 119 – Annual reporting of membership information*, goes live December 20, 2004.

As we told you in the April 2004 *Employer Update*, there isn't much you need to do to prepare for e-Form 119, but there are some things you can do to help make your transition a smooth one.

Before e-Form 119 goes live...

Here are some helpful points our staff recommends to employers to prepare for e-Form 119. (Also, have a look at **Your e-Form 119 checklist**, below, right.)

1. **Get comfortable using e-access**
   e-Form 119 will use the import and batch processing utilities introduced in e-Form 165. So, practice using them (and other e-access utilities), and you'll find the transition to e-Form 119 much easier.
2. **Report all outstanding 2004 leave periods before you report your 2004 Form 119**
   This is critical in ensuring that all your membership data is as up to date as possible before the switch to e-Form 119.

   Many employers used to report leave periods through their Form 119. This option will not be available for the 2004 reporting year. Instead, you can use e-Form 165 to report leave periods throughout the year. Reporting leaves throughout the year will reduce the amount of information you report through – and the time it takes you to complete – your Form 119.

We can't stress this enough: we designed the new e-Form 119 for and with you.

3. **Sign up for e-Form 119 training (coming soon)**
   We'll have training sessions for employers beginning in January, and carrying on through to March 2005. So there'll be ample opportunity for you to find out how to use e-Form 119. These training sessions are designed for you and your staff who work on your Form 119.

   We'll send you more details soon about the available training sessions.

After e-Form 119 goes live...

Here's another change to the Form 119 process to keep in mind after e-Form 119 goes live.

Report your Form 119 data before February 28, and we'll calculate the PAs

If you were using the PC Form 119 before, we would calculate your members' pension adjustments (PAs) for you. You'd leave the PA field blank, click the "Calculate PA button," and we'd fill it in.

With e-Form 119, if you submit your member data before February 28 without PAs, we'll calculate them for you. After your members' data is validated, you extract (import) your members' PAs from OMERS. Simple.

After February 28, we won't calculate your PAs, but we'll still check them and let you know if there are any problems. Remember, if needed, you can always use our PA calculator at **www.omers.com**.

Your e-Form 119 checklist

Have you...

- ☐ submitted your 2003 Form 119? You have until **November 15, 2004**. This is the last date we can accept and upload your PC119 information. Please contact your OMERS service coordinator or Employer Services if you need help to meet this deadline.
- ☐ resolved any outstanding Form 119 audits you have for 2003 or earlier?
- ☐ requested e-access accounts for your Form 119 staff?
- ☐ practiced using all e-access features – especially the new e-Form 165a import and batch processing utilities?
- ☐ reported all your 2004 leave periods (before you report your 2004 Form 119) – ideally, using e-Form 165a import and batch processing?
- ☐ encouraged your Form 119 staff to sign up for e-Form 119 training sessions? (We'll let you know the places, dates and times soon.)

Congratulations! You're as well prepared as you can be. And remember, we'll do everything we can to make your transition to e-Form 119 as smooth as possible.

e-Form 119 is for you

We can't stress this enough: we designed the new e-Form 119 for and with you.

In our Service Partnership Review, you told us you wanted a program that would make it easier for you to do your annual reporting. So we began the process of integrating annual reporting into e-access. Along the way, we had the help of a small, dedicated group of OMERS "pilot" employers, who gave us invaluable feedback based on real-world experience. This combined effort has helped us to ensure that e-Form 119 meets your needs.

We remain committed to working with you and your administration staff to make sure you have the training and support you need to take full advantage of e-Form 119. If there's anything we can do to help, please contact your OMERS service coordinator or Employer Services.

Sign up for e-access (if you haven't already)

Join the majority of OMERS employers who now enjoy the benefits of online administration.

It doesn't matter how big or small your employer group is. Getting an e-access account gives you secure web access to up-to-date membership information, and enables you to do an increasing number of OMERS administration tasks online. It makes your job faster and easier, and improves the service you and we provide your members.

Call OMERS Client Services to get your account today!

NEW "post-close adjustments"

As you may know, sometimes you have to change some member information in your Form 119 after it's been completely processed. In these instances, you write to us to let us know about anything that affects the contributions you've remitted. In August 2004, we started a new process: we'd send you a report called *Form 119 Adjustments for Closed Years* (what we call an ANR126 report). This report shows how the information changes you've reported affect your remitted contributions: either we'll invoice you for the amount owed or refund you the difference.

There's another change with this new process: we'll add interest to these adjustments, calculated from January 1st two years after the reporting year, at investment fund rates. For example, if we owed you a refund of contributions for the 2004 reporting year, interest would begin accruing from January 1, 2006, until we gave you your refund. Conversely, if we invoice you for the amount you owe, we'll charge interest in the same way.

Elimination period purchase deadline

The deadline for remitting elimination period contributions to OMERS is usually the earlier of:

- the end of the year in which all or part of the elimination period occurred; or
- the date an application for a benefit is made.

NEW! While we encourage employers to stick to the deadline, we appreciate that some need extra time to remit elimination period contributions. To help, we will now accept contributions up to the end of February in the year following the year all or part of the elimination period occurred.

Background

An elimination period is normally the time between the date a member's disability occurs and the date any OMERS disability benefit begins. This is usually the first day of the fifth month following the date of disability, but it could last longer if the member continues to make regular contributions.

To purchase an elimination period, the member pays the contributions they would normally have made during the elimination period. Their employer pays a matching amount.

The purchase deadline is usually the end of the year in which the elimination period occurred. For example, if a member were disabled October 21, 2003, and became eligible for a disability benefit March 1, 2004:

- the period from October 22 to December 31, 2003 would have to be purchased by **December 31, 2003**; and
- the period from January 1 to February 28, 2004 would have to be purchased by **December 31, 2004**.

Now, if an employer couldn't remit the contributions in time, they could remit as late as:

- February 29, 2004 for the 2003 portion; and
- February 28, 2005 for the 2004 portion

(unless the member applies for a benefit before this).

For more information about OMERS disability benefits, please contact OMERS Client Services.

Incentive pay – broadening the definition of contributory earnings

Some OMERS employers offer their members incentive pay, such as annual performance bonuses. To date, all incentive pay has been included in OMERS contributory earnings.

The OMERS Board wants to standardize the way incentive pay is reported throughout the OMERS plan, to ensure this is done consistently and fairly.

With this in mind, the OMERS Board has asked the Ontario government to change the definition of "contributory earnings" to set standards (guidelines and limits) for the reporting of incentive pay. The new standards would require an amendment to the *OMERS Regulation*, which must be approved by the government.

When will the new standards take effect?

When we begin to apply the standards depends on when the government approves them:

- **If the government approves them <u>before</u> April 2005**, they would be effective January 1, 2005.
- **If the government approves them <u>after</u> March 2005**, they would be effective January 1, 2006 – to make them easier to administer.

Note: The new standards will apply only from their effective date forward. Incentive pay in 2005 that applies retroactively to 2004 or earlier years is not covered under the new standards.

There will be a cap on the amount of incentive pay that you can include…up to 50% of the member's contributory earnings.

What are the new standards?

The Board has recommended the following incentive-pay standards to the government. Once the standards are approved…

- You must apply to the OMERS Board to include incentive pay as part of your members' contributory earnings (see **How do I apply?**). Once the Board has reviewed your incentive-pay program, your program must remain in effect for a **minimum of five years** – that is, it can't be changed or cancelled.
- There will be a cap on the amount of incentive pay that you can include: **up to 50%** of a member's regular (pre-incentive pay) contributory earnings. Any incentive pay over this amount can't be included. (Overtime can't be considered incentive pay.) This means the member's total earnings can't be more than 150% of regular earnings.

Here are some examples of how the new rules will affect the reporting of contributory earnings:

	Regular pay	Incentive pay	Total earnings	Amount reported as contributory earnings
Alex	$30,000	$3,000	$33,000	$33,000
Kim	$80,000	$12,000	$92,000	$92,000
Karen	$130,000	$70,000	$200,000	$195,000

Note: Karen earned a total of $200,000, which exceeded the 150% limit. So, her contributory earnings were capped at $195,000 ($130,000 x 150%).

How do I apply?

You must apply to the OMERS Board to include incentive pay as part of your members' contributory earnings.

We are accepting applications before the government approves the new standards. We will hold applications until the legislation is passed, and then forward them immediately to the OMERS Board.

Call us if you'd like to apply, and we'll send you the application form when it's ready, which will be soon.

The application form will ask you such things as:

- the class(es) of employees you want to cover;
- confirmation that your incentive program is ongoing, and not a one-time event;
- when you want to begin including incentive pay (the effective day); and
- what percentage of pay is available under the program, and what portion you want included.

Stay tuned…

We'll let you know when we have any further news about this proposed change.

In the meantime, check our online *Employer Administration Manual* for details about contributory earnings (Section 3.1.1, Contributory earnings defined).

Commuted value calculation update

In the April 2004 issue of *Employer Update*, we told you about upcoming new Canadian standards for calculating commuted values of pensions.

The Ontario government must revise the Ontario *Pension Benefits Act* before OMERS can implement the new standards.

Important change

Originally, we were told that the new calculation standards – set by the Canadian Institute of Actuaries – would come into effect for members leaving their employer on or after September 1, 2004. The effective date has since been revised to **February 1, 2005**. This will affect all termination calculations (or recalculations) done on or after this date.

And…

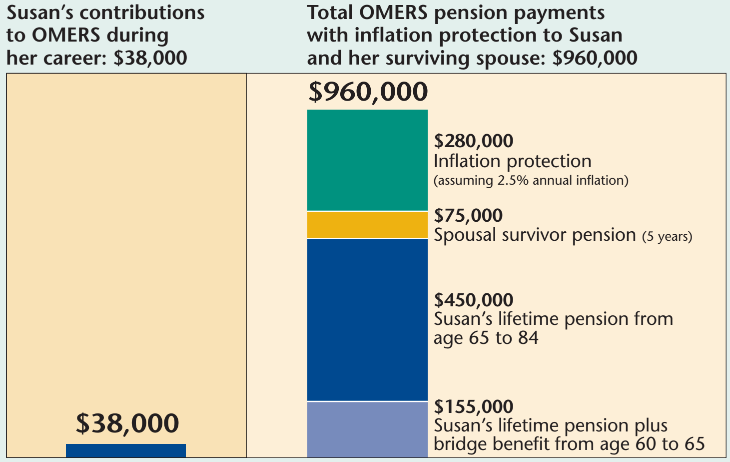
The OMERS Board has set the period during which commuted values are guaranteed at **six months from the date the member's election form is issued**. Currently, the guarantee period is the later of this deadline or one year from the date the member terminates employment. This change, which will take effect within the next two months, is designed to ensure that a member's commuted value more accurately reflects current interest rates.

Background

The new standards – the first update since 1993 – have been approved by the Canadian Institute of Actuaries (CIA) to reflect interest rates in effect when a member leaves their employer, and also to reflect updated life expectancy tables.

As we mentioned in the last *Employer Update*, the Ontario government must revise the Ontario *Pension Benefits Act* before OMERS can implement the new standards. We hope this will happen before the February 1, 2005 effective date. (You may get questions from your members, who we'll advise in their next *Member Update*.)

"Being an OMERS member gives me **great value**: guaranteed pension benefits, retirement security and inflation protection."



- Susan retires at age 60 with 32 years of service.
- As an OMERS member, Susan's contributions were matched by her employer.
- Susan's best-five consecutive earnings used to calculate her pension are $48,000 per year.
- Following Susan's death, her husband is entitled to a lifetime survivor benefit. In this example, he lives for five years after her death.

The OMERS difference

OMERS provides a solid financial benefit at a reasonable cost. It's unbeatable value, and the total benefits paid can be substantial.

To find out how your OMERS pension will pay off when you retire, try our Retirement Income Estimator at ***www.omers.com****, or call OMERS Client Services at 416-369-2444 or 1-800-387-0813.*

OMERS
Plan for the Future

Last call! Early retirement window closing December 31, 2004

One last chance for eligible members to take advantage of enhanced early retirement factors

The last part of our early retirement window – the 85/80 early retirement factors – will close December 31, 2004, and our early retirement provisions will return to normal January 1, 2005 (see table).

While this doesn't affect many of our members, we still want to make sure that anyone who is eligible and interested takes advantage of the window before it closes.

Who qualifies?

Members who can still take advantage of the 85/80 age + service factors must be **within 10 years** of their normal retirement age **on or before December 31, 2004**.

This means...

- the 85 Factor is available to normal retirement age 65 members who will be at least age 55; and
- the 80 Factor is available to normal retirement age 60 members who will be at least age 50.

For further qualifying age and service details, please refer to the **OMERS early retirement window** table below.

Forecasting report

If you want to find out which of your members are eligible to retire under the remaining window, we can supply you with an early retirement forecasting report. Just contact your OMERS Employer Representative.

Eligible service

Our early retirement factors and the 30-year provision take into consideration a member's credited service and any eligible service they have. Eligible service is service with any OMERS employer that is not credited service.

We encourage members to check their latest *Pension Report*, and to let us know if they have any eligible service we don't know about. This could help them to retire early without a pension reduction.

Pension estimates

We also encourage members who are considering retiring before the window closes to get a pension estimate. There are two ways to do this:

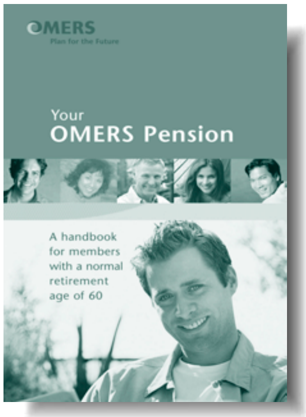
- **our online Retirement Income Estimator**
  This is the quickest way for a member to get an estimate. Members can get as many estimates as they need, but we usually recommend they get one for the end of this year (with the window) and for one or more years ahead (after the window closes). This will give them a good idea of potential differences in pension amounts related to the window.
- **using the online** *Form 190 – Request for a pension estimate* (Better for members who are about to retire.) Complete it, send it to us, and we'll prepare the estimate for the member. **Tip:** Remember, the Form 190 is also available as an e-Form in e-access.

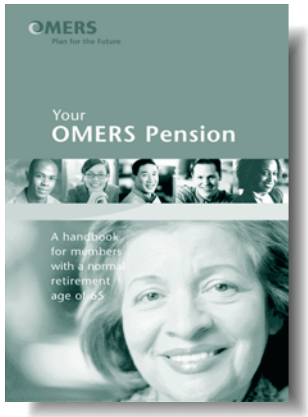
OMERS early retirement window

For the year…	Members can retire if they are…	and, if they meet the minimum age requirement, members can retire without a reduction if they have 30 years of service, or…	or, with the following reduction per year they're short of the least of their normal retirement age, 30 years of service, or their age + service factor…
2004 (window)	within 10 years of normal retirement age	an 85 Factor* (for normal retirement age 65 members) an 80 Factor (for normal retirement age 60 members)	5.0%
2005 (back to normal)	within 10 years of normal retirement age	a 90 Factor (for normal retirement age 65 members) an 85 Factor (for normal retirement age 60 members)	5.0%

*Age plus service

New member guide





There's a new tool in our OMERS communications family: our newly revised member guide, *Your OMERS Pension*.

This completely updated member guide covers all aspects of OMERS membership – from enrolment through to survivor benefits, and it includes all the current plan rates, figures, limits and early retirement window provisions.

We went way beyond the facts in this update, however. Your members will find "friendlier" plain language and simpler pension terms, such as those used in our new "lifetime plus bridge" pension formula. We've also streamlined the information, and structured it along a member's enrolment timeline – it gives them the information *they* need.

Available online and in print!

Please give any new members a copy of *Your OMERS Pension* for them to find out more about their plan. Or, better still, ask them to look it up at **www.omers.com**. The online version will always be the most up to date, and it's even easier to use because it's searchable!

If you'd like print copies (normal retirement age 65 or 60), please contact OMERS Client Services.

www.omers.com The new member guides are just two of the many publications available on our web site.

Web site grows in "age and stage"

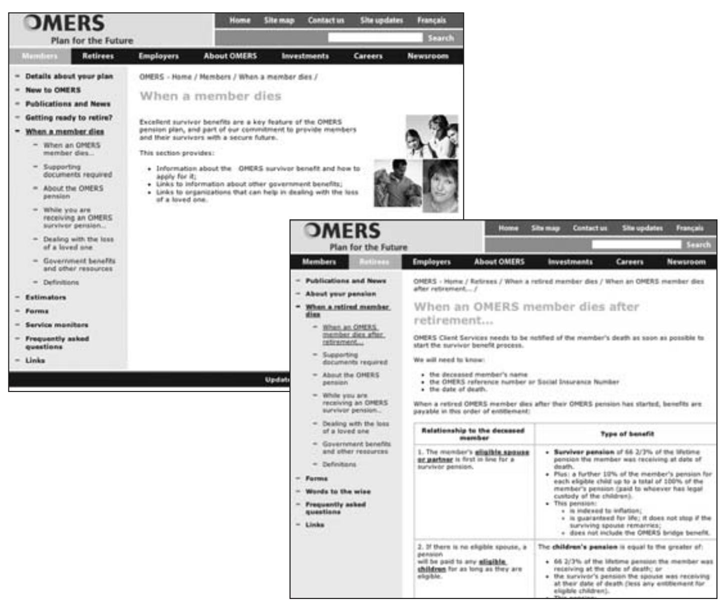
We've recently added two member-focused sections to our web site: *When a member dies* and *When a retired member dies*. These two new sections join *New to OMERS* and *Getting ready to retire?* as the latest instalments in our move towards more "age and stage"-type information for our active and retired members.

It's hard to define what is a typical OMERS member. Our membership stretches from those who are still in their teens to a few who are over 100! The one thing we know for certain is that the information needs at both ends of the spectrum are different. Young members want to know about contributions and benefit portability. Members nearing retirement want to know about pension options, while retired members want to know more about pension inflation protection and survivor benefits.

With this in mind, the new *When a member dies* and *When a retired member dies* sections include:

- information about the OMERS survivor benefit and how to apply for it;
- links to information about other government benefits; and
- links to organizations that can help in dealing with the loss of a loved one.

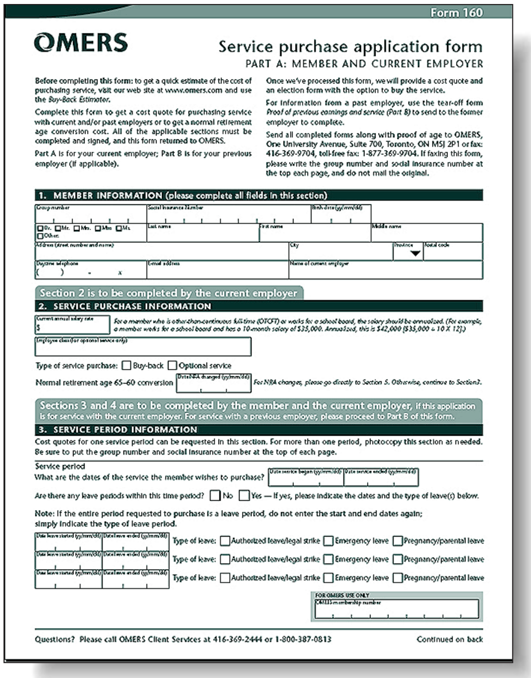
These new sections, which you'll find under the *Members* and *Retirees* tabs at **www.omers.com** are designed both to inform members and to let them know what OMERS can do to help.



www.omers.com Check out all our "age and stage" sections in the *Members* and *Retirees* sections on our web site.

Enhanced forms online

In our ongoing efforts to make OMERS administration easier, we've streamlined some more online forms…


Form 160

OMERS

Service purchase application form

PART A: MEMBER AND CURRENT EMPLOYER

1. MEMBER INFORMATION (please complete all fields in this section)

Section 2 is to be completed by the current employer

2. SERVICE PURCHASE INFORMATION

Sections 3 and 4 are to be completed by the member and the current employer, if this application is for service with the current employer. For service with a previous employer, please proceed to Part B of this form.

3. SERVICE PERIOD INFORMATION

Questions? Please call OMERS Client Services at 416-369-2444 or 1-800-387-0813

Continued on back

Forms 160/161/162 combined into new Form 160

Previously, there were Forms 160 – 162 for buy-backs and optional service. We have merged these into a new, revised *Form 160 – Service purchase application form*.

The new Form 160 includes a space for NRA conversions (previously employers had to use a hand-written note or jot a note on *Form 106 – Changing member information*).

Important! *Form 162 – Proof of previous earnings and service* is no longer available. If you used this form to report eligible service, please use *Form 168 – Proof of eligible service* instead.

Use online and e-access forms

Whenever you need an OMERS form, check online – you'll always find the most up-to-date versions.

- All our employer forms (as well as active and retired member forms) are online.
- Some are "typeable" – you can enter information directly into them, then print them.
- Some are available through e-access.

Check for them in the *Employers* section of **www.omers.com**.

www.omers.com You'll find all the latest OMERS forms online – in the *Employer/Forms* section on our web site.

OMERS administration seminars

There is still space available in our remaining 2004 Employer Administration Seminars (see table).

If you're new to the OMERS plan, or just need a refresher, you'll find these one-day sessions are for you.

The sessions have two parts: an OMERS administration "basics" session in the morning, followed by an in-depth look at leave periods and disabilities in the afternoon.

Our seminars are free of charge (and lunch is on us). Travel and accommodation costs are up to you.

You can register for a seminar at **www.omers.com** or by contacting OMERS Client Services.

2004 Employer Administration Seminar schedule

Date	City	Location
November 4	Brockville	Quality Hotel Royal Brock 100 Stewart Boulevard
November 9	Ottawa	Chimo Hotel 1199 Joseph Cyr Street
November 18	Kitchener	Four Points Sheraton 105 King Street East
December 9	Toronto	OMERS One University Avenue, Suite 700

www.omers.com To see which administration seminars still have space, and to register, visit *Employers/Training/Employer Administration Seminars and other meetings…* on our web site.

Service when you need it

In August 2004, OMERS Client Services had a busy but typical month. They:

- answered 7,060 phone calls, and resolved issues in 92% of cases in that first call;
- received 749 e-mails from members and employers.

The web site logged 1,200 visits per day, or 37,206 visits for the month.

"That's what we're here for: to answer questions and help solve problems for our members and employers," said Ian Kinross, Manager, Client Services. "And our efforts are appreciated."

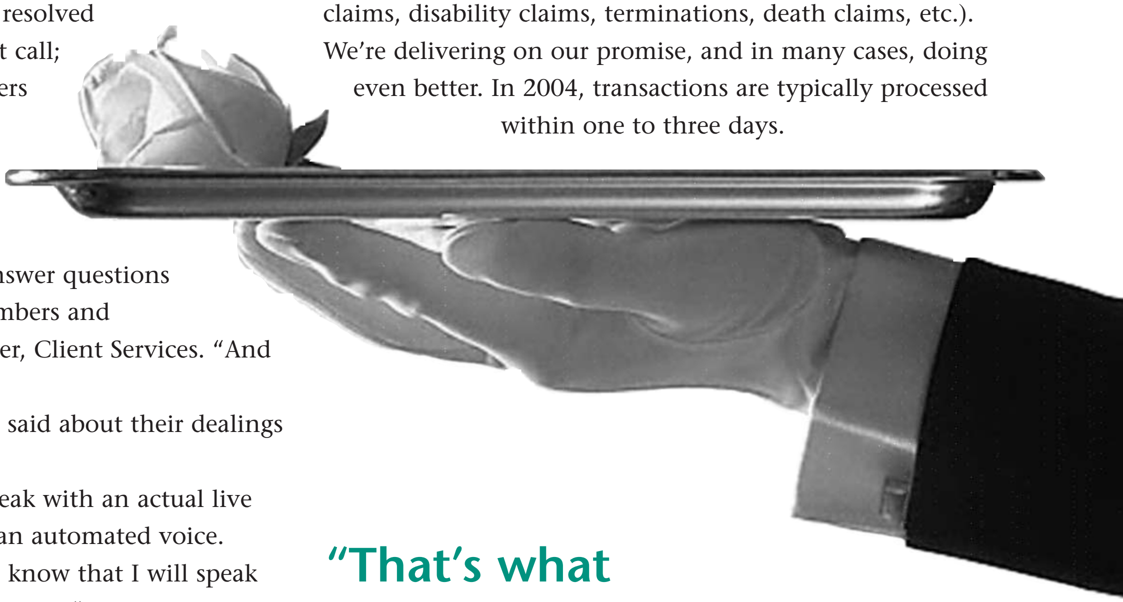
Here's what some callers recently said about their dealings with OMERS:

"It's always nice to call in and speak with an actual live person on the phone as opposed to an automated voice. Whenever I contact OMERS I always know that I will speak with a live person. This means a lot to me."

"Thank you for your kind assistance. You have been one of the most helpful people I've contacted of late."

"We've been dealing with OMERS, CPP, and the LTD carrier and you're the best of the bunch by far. Your customer service is fantastic and I really appreciate all the help we've gotten. Everyone we've dealt with has been extremely helpful and you always take the time to help us understand everything we need to know."

OMERS promised that in 2004, most transactions would be processed within three days (these include retirement claims, disability claims, terminations, death claims, etc.). We're delivering on our promise, and in many cases, doing even better. In 2004, transactions are typically processed within one to three days.



"That's what we're here for: to answer questions and help solve problems for our members and employers."

Letter of credit for associated employers

OMERS has updated the participation rules for "associated employers." Associated employers are those who wouldn't normally be allowed to participate in the OMERS plan.

To participate in OMERS, eligible associated employers must provide OMERS with documents to guarantee their participation and their remittance of contributions – such as a letter of credit **every year**. (There may be some exceptions.)

These requirements, which were designed to protect the OMERS plan, have slightly changed:

- Eligible associated employers that are completely (100%) owned by a municipality can send OMERS either a letter of credit from a financial institution, **or a letter of guarantee from their municipal owner**. Previously, only a letter of credit was acceptable.
- Traditional OMERS employers that became eligible associated employers due to restructuring may continue their participation without a letter of credit or guarantee. (OMERS will periodically review their participation.)

For more information on associated employers and their rules of participation in the OMERS plan, please contact OMERS Client Services.

OMERS market research continues

As part of our ongoing commitment to improving communications and services to plan participants, OMERS has contracted a firm to do some research on our behalf.

In October and November, Millward Brown will be conducting telephone and/or online interviews with employers and active and retired members across the province. These interviews are designed to ask members about their perceptions of OMERS, what they need from the plan, how effective we are in communicating to them, and other issues. Some active and retired members will also be invited to take part in focus groups.

We appreciate the cooperation of all plan participants in completing this research. We hope that if you are contacted you will be able to participate. If you have any questions, please contact OMERS Client Services.

Service-purchase processing made easier

OMERS is moving towards helping employers process their members' service purchases.

One of the recommendations our employers made in our Service Partnership Review was to improve and simplify OMERS service-purchase reporting. In response, here's what we have done and will do...

- **e-Form 165 importing and batch processing**
  Elsewhere in this issue we announce the introduction of these new *e-Form 165a – Leave period reporting/election* features. Both the importing and batch processing utilities are a direct response to employers' requests for a more efficient and simpler way to report member leave periods.
- **Processing service buy-backs at OMERS**
  In 2005, OMERS will begin to collect service buy-back contributions directly from members. This will also involve preparing members' tax slips for these contributions, if required. Currently, the member pays the employer, who then remits the contributions to OMERS. (Employers can continue to do this, however, if they wish.)

OMERS
Plan for the Future

The OMERS pension plan provides secure, guaranteed retirement income to municipal employees at more than 900 employers across Ontario.

Employer Update keeps our employer representatives up to date on plan administration, news and benefits.

We value your views and comments. Send us an e-mail at **employer@omers.com**, or write to us at the address below.

For more information on the OMERS plan, please contact Client Services at 416-369-2444 or 1-800-387-0813.

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Disponible en français Print ISSN 1499-3007 (Online ISSN 1499-3015) Publications Mail Agreement No.: 40010368 Printed in Ontario on recycled paper