

18.3 PASSAGE BENEFIT SCHEME

- 18.3.1 The Passage Benefit Scheme provides for officers to earn and accumulate passage credits and use their accumulated benefit to meet the costs of travel for themselves and immediate members of their families; other expenses in connection with their travel; expenses incurred for spending vacation at inland hotels/recreational resorts; and to pay the fees in connection with School Certificate and Higher School Certificate examinations for their wards. Officers are allowed to cash in *toto* all passage benefit standing to their credit at the time of retirement.
- 18.3.2 Initially, the passage benefit scheme was meant for expatriates on a tour of service in Mauritius and they were provided free passages for sea travel to Mauritius and back to their homeland. Gradually, the scheme was extended to all government officers employed on permanent and pensionable establishment. Though, the scheme has undergone fundamental transformation in successive salary reviews, it is being maintained.
- 18.3.3 Presently, officers on permanent and pensionable establishment drawing a minimum monthly salary of Rs 19000 or reckoning at least eight years' service, earn passage benefit at the rate of 5% of their gross salaries annually or the equivalent cost of 3900 km of the Group Tour Air Fare Mauritius – London – Mauritius at off peak (low season) rate, whichever is the higher. Exceptionally, in case of medical emergency, the rate at the time of travel is applicable.
- 18.3.4 Officers do not earn passage benefit during vacation leave, vacation leave taken as casual leave, sick leave in excess of 21 working days in any calendar year, maternity leave, adoption leave, parental leave, study leave with or without pay, injury leave, interdiction period, accumulated sick leave taken prior to retirement, probationary period and leave without pay.
- 18.3.5 Officers are allowed to use their accumulated passage benefit provided that the balance to their credit stands at Rs 10000 or more. If both spouses are civil servants, they are allowed to use their passage benefit provided they have jointly accumulated an aggregate of not less than Rs 20000 except in certain instances where they are allowed to cash their accrued benefits though less than Rs 10,000.
- 18.3.6 The accumulated passage benefit may be used by officers:
- (i) for travel purposes for themselves and for the immediate members of their families namely spouses and dependent children below 21 years as well as for their dependent children aged up to 30 years old who are following full time course in a tertiary institution either locally or abroad;
 - (ii) for travel purposes in favour of their mother and/or father;

- (iii) to meet the costs of other expenses in connection with their travel or cash either partly or wholly any balance of their accumulated benefit at the time of travel; and
 - (iv) for medical treatment for themselves/immediate members of their family overseas.
- 18.3.7 Officers may cash part or the whole amount of their accumulated passage benefit for spending vacation at inland hotels/recreational resorts provided they produce documentary evidence to that effect and their accumulated passage benefit is not less than Rs 10000.
- 18.3.8 Officers serving in our missions abroad may cash part or the whole amount of their accumulated passage benefit for spending vacation abroad in hotels/recreational resorts provided they produce documentary evidence to that effect and their accumulated passage benefit is not less than Rs 10000.
- 18.3.9 Officers may use their accumulated passage benefit to meet the SC and HSC examinations fees for their wards, even if the balance standing to their credit may be less than Rs 10000.
- 18.3.10 Officers are allowed to cash in *toto* all passage benefit standing to their credit at the time of retirement.
- 18.3.11 On the demise of an officer while in service, the totality of the accrued benefit at that date is paid in *toto* to his/her heir/s.

Recommendation 1

18.3.12 We recommend that

- (a) **officers on permanent and pensionable establishment drawing a minimum monthly salary of Rs 23250 or reckoning at least eight years' service should earn passage benefit at the rate of 5% of the gross salaries annually;**
- (b) **officers should not earn passage benefit during vacation leave, vacation leave taken as casual leave, sick leave in excess of 21 working days in any calendar year, maternity leave, adoption leave, parental leave, study leave with or without pay, injury leave, interdiction period, accumulated sick leave taken prior to retirement, probationary period and leave without pay.**

Recommendation 2

18.3.13 We also recommend that beneficiaries be allowed to make use of their accumulated passage benefit:

- (i) **for travel purposes for themselves and for the immediate members of their families namely spouses and dependent children below 21 years as well as for their dependent children aged up to 30 years**

old who are following full time course in a tertiary institution either locally or abroad;

- (ii) for travel purposes in favour of their mother and/or father;
- (iii) to meet the costs of other expenses in connection with their travel or cash either partly or wholly any balance of their accumulated benefit at the time of travel; and
- (iv) for medical treatment for themselves/immediate member(s) of their family overseas.

Recommendation 3

18.3.14 We further recommend that:

- (a) officers should be allowed to use their accumulated passage benefit provided that the balance to their credit stands at Rs 11000 or more. If both spouses are civil servants, they would be allowed to use their passage benefit provided they have jointly accumulated an aggregate of not less than Rs 22000;
- (b) officers may cash part or the whole amount of their accumulated passage benefit for spending vacation at inland hotels/recreational resorts provided they produce documentary evidence to that effect and their accumulated passage benefit is not less than Rs 11000;
- (c) officers serving in our missions abroad may cash part or the whole amount of their accumulated passage benefit for spending vacation abroad in hotels/recreational resorts provided they produce documentary evidence to that effect and their accumulated passage benefit is not less than Rs 11000;
- (d) officers should be allowed to make use of their accumulated passage benefit to meet the fees in connection with SC and HSC examinations for their wards even if the balance standing to their credit may be less than Rs 11000;
- (e) officers are allowed to cash *in toto* all passage benefit standing to their credit at the time of retirement; and
- (f) on the demise of a beneficiary, the outstanding benefit should be paid *in toto* to the heirs.
