

Should I Convert My Group Life Insurance?

Things You Should Know

When the group life insurance available through your employer either terminates or reduces for you or your spouse, you will usually be able to convert this coverage into an individual policy of insurance. For those eligible, this conversion privilege is guaranteed regardless of your state of health, provided you make application within 31 days of the termination of your group coverage. This is a very valuable option for some, particularly if you are uninsurable for reasons of ill health. But for others it may be too expensive or unnecessary. Here are some things to consider.

Cost

All conversion policies are special individual policies of insurance which are much more expensive than the group policy available through your employer. Premium rates vary and will depend on the type of policy you choose and such things as your age, sex and smoking status. Further, when you apply for an insurance policy under the Conversion Privilege, the insurer may limit the types of policies available to the more costly varieties because they assume you to be uninsurable.

Need

How much life insurance do you really need or want? For many, the answer is little or none. For example, if you are retiring you may have concluded that your financial affairs are in order, you have no major obligations and therefore little need for life insurance. You may have other policies that you deem adequate under the circumstances. Some may conclude the opposite. A desire to leave an estate or outstanding debt may precipitate a need for life insurance after your group coverage terminates.

How Should You Decide

First, remember you only have 31 days following the termination of your group insurance coverage, to make application for the guaranteed issue policies that are available under the Conversion Privilege. You can always make an application and then decide not to proceed if the coverage is too costly or if you later decide you have no need for life insurance. But if you are in good health, it may cost you less to buy a regular individual life insurance policy (as opposed to the limited offerings of the Conversion Privilege). Many of you however, may not know if you are in good enough health to be accepted for a regular policy. In these circumstances, the best way to proceed is to apply for both: a regular policy where you must provide evidence of good health and a conversion policy where you are guaranteed coverage regardless of your state of health. If you are accepted for the regular policy, this likely will be the less expensive way to proceed, but if you are declined, you will not have missed the application deadline for the

conversion policy. You might even decide, after you have all the information, that neither approach is right for you. It is also a good idea, that when you search for a regular individual policy, you see what might be available from several different insurers.

How Should I Proceed?

If you would like to explore the issues and cost of converting your group life insurance into an individual policy, contact the Payroll Department of your school division. They will have information brochures and contact points with the insurer to assist you through the process. You may have your own insurance agent who can also give you quotes on alternative regular individual policies. Many of you will also want to talk to a financial advisor to seek their advice on what might be necessary to compliment your personal financial plan. But remember, the responsibility to make application for a conversion policy is yours, and you must do so within 31 days of the termination of your group insurance coverage.

Additional Assistance

If you decide you want to proceed with conversion, or if you need more advice on the subject before deciding, two Great West life agents are available to help. Please contact either one at the contact points shown below.

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