GOVERNMENT SUPPORT AVAILABLE TO EMPLOYEES RE COVID-19

Federal

The federal government is proposing emergency legislation and is expecting cooperation across all parties to expedite the process. Assuming the legislation is passed, the following financial support will become available:

1. **EI Sickness Benefits**

   This is intended to provide up to 15 weeks of income replacement for eligible claimants who are unable to work because of illness, injury or imposed quarantine. The 1 week waiting period has been waived and claimants are not required to provide a medical certificate to access these benefits. The government is encouraging claimants to submit applications for EI before contacting the service office to prevent delays in establishing claims. Further information can be found here: [https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/notices/coronavirus.html](https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/notices/coronavirus.html).

2. **EI Emergency Care Benefits**

   This is intended to provide up to $900 on a bi-weekly basis for up to 15 weeks for workers who must stay at home and do not have access to paid sick leave, such as:

   - Workers who are sick, quarantined or who have been directed to self-isolate but do not qualify for EI sickness benefits;
   - Workers who are taking care of a family member who is sick with COVID-19, such as an elderly parent or other dependents who are sick, but do not qualify for EI sickness benefits; and
   - Working parents who must stay home without pay because their children require care and supervision due to school closures, irrespective of whether they qualify for EI.

   Self-employed workers, part-time workers, entrepreneurs and gig employees will be eligible for EI Emergency Care Benefits. Claimants need to attest they meet eligibility requirements and re-attest every 2 weeks to re-confirm eligibility.

   These benefits will be available starting in early April, subject to the legislation receiving Royal Assent. The federal government has pledged $10 billion towards this program.

3. **EI Emergency Support Benefits**

   This is intended to provide support for Canadians who lose their jobs or face reduced hours as a result of COVID-19. Individual entitlements and eligibility requirements are unclear, however the federal government has pledged up to $5 billion for this program.
4. Work-Sharing Program

This program provides EI benefits to workers who agree to reduce their normal working hours as a result of developments beyond the control of the employer. Eligibility has been extended from 38 weeks to 76 weeks, and there are now eased eligibility requirements and a streamlined application process. Further information can be found here: [https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/work-sharing.html](https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/work-sharing.html)

Ontario

The Ontario Government has indicated it will propose legislation providing job protection for employees unable to work for the following reasons:

- The employee is under medical investigation, supervision or treatment for COVID-19;
- The employee is acting in accordance with an order under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*;
- The employee is in isolation or quarantine;
- The employee is acting in accordance with public health information or direction;
- The employer directs the employee not to work; or
- The employee needs to provide care to a person for a reason related to COVID-19 such as a school or day-care closure.

The proposed legislation will not require employees to provide a medical note if they take the leave, and would be retroactive to January 25, 2020 (the date that the first presumptive COVID-19 case was confirmed in Ontario). There is no further information about individual entitlements, eligibility requirements and the cost of the program at this time.

British Columbia

The British Columbia government has indicated that it will resume briefly on Monday March 23, 2020 with limited numbers to pass legislation that will ensure continuity of government and make amendments to the Employment Standards Act to help workers in the province during the outbreak.