

## British Columbia – COVID-19 – Employment Standards

On March 23, 2020, Bill 16, *Employment Standards Amendment Act (No. 2), 2020* was introduced and received royal assent. This bill implements a number of measures in response to the COVID-19 disruption.

The bill amends the *Employment Standards Act* to:

- add a new unpaid leave for personal illness or injury
  - after 90 days of continuous employment
  - up to 3 days unpaid leave per year
  - if requested by the employer, the employee must, provide “reasonably sufficient proof” that the employee is entitled to leave under this section
- add a new unpaid leave related to COVID-19:
  - if:
    - the employee has been diagnosed with COVID-19 and is acting in accordance with
      - ◆ instructions or an order of a medical health officer, or
      - ◆ advice of a medical practitioner, nurse practitioner or registered nurse
    - the employee is in quarantine or self-isolation in accordance with
      - ◆ an order of the provincial health officer
      - ◆ an order made under the *Quarantine Act (Canada)*
      - ◆ guidelines of the British Columbia Centre for Disease Control, or
      - ◆ guidelines of the Public Health Agency of Canada
    - the employer, due to the employer's concern about the employee's exposure to others, has directed the employee not to work
    - the employee is providing care to an eligible person, including because of the closure of a school or daycare or similar facility
    - the employee is outside the province and cannot return to British Columbia because of travel or border restrictions
    - a prescribed situation exists relating to the employee.

- if requested by the employer, the employee must provide reasonably sufficient proof that a circumstance described above applies to the employee (an employee is not required to provide a note from a medical practitioner, nurse practitioner or registered nurse for these purposes)
- the provisions related to COVID-19 are retroactive to January 27, 2020

Source: [Bill 16, Employment Standards Amendment Act \(No. 2\), 2020](#)

## British Columbia – COVID-19 – Income Support

On March 23, 2020, British Columbia announced the “First Steps” in its COVID-19 Action Plan.

Among other matters, the plan includes the following measures for individuals:

### BC Emergency Benefit for Workers

The plan introduces a new BC Emergency Benefit for Workers that will be provided to British Columbians who receive federal Employment Insurance (EI), or the new federal Emergency Care Benefit or Emergency Support Benefit as a result of COVID-19 impacts:

- one-time tax-free \$1,000 payment
- includes workers who have been laid-off, who are sick or quarantined, parents with sick children, parents who stay at home from work while child care centres and schools are closed, and those caring for sick family members, such as an elderly parent
- workers can be EI-eligible and non-EI eligible, such as the self-employed
- in addition to other federal income supports

### BC Climate Action Tax Credit

The plan increases and expands the B.C. Climate Action Tax Credit in July 2020. Eligible families of four will receive up to \$564 and eligible individuals will receive up to \$218 in an enhanced payment. This boosts the regular climate action tax credit payment of up to \$112.50 per family of four and up to \$43.50 per adult.

Source: [COVID-19 Action Plan: B.C.'s first steps to support people, businesses](#)  
[Factsheet](#)