

CME GUIDE

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE AND COVID-19 EMERGENCY BENEFITS

Guidance for manufacturing companies on the Employment Insurance (EI) system and the new measures announced, to date, to combat the COVID-19 crisis.

ABOUT COVID-19 EMERGENCY BENEFITS

As part of its response to the COVID-19 outbreak, the Government of Canada has enhanced eligibility for Employment Insurance (EI). This temporary measure is in effect as of March 15, 2020. For Canadians without paid sick leave (or similar workplace accommodation) who are sick, quarantined or forced to stay home to care for children, the government is:

- Waiving the one-week waiting period for those individuals in imposed quarantine that claim EI sickness benefits.
- Waiving the requirement to provide a medical certificate to access EI sickness benefits.
- Allowing people that cannot complete their claim for EI sickness benefits due to quarantine to apply later and have their EI claim backdated to cover the period of delay.

These benefits will provide up to 15 weeks of income replacement to eligible claimants.

Besides these temporary changes, all the other regular criteria still apply—whether an employee qualifies for EI depends upon regional

unemployment rates and the number of hours worked in the last 52 weeks.

The government recommends that workers apply as soon as possible to find out if they qualify. Waiting more than four weeks after the last day of work could result in being denied access to these benefits.

WHAT EMPLOYERS NEED TO KNOW

- To facilitate an employee's access to EI benefits, an employer should promptly complete a Record of Employment (ROE). The "Reason for Issuing" the ROE (Block 16) should be marked as "D" (illness or injury)

WHAT EMPLOYEES NEED TO KNOW

1. Employees should submit their application before contacting Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC). Applications can be [filled out online](#).
2. Once they have completed their application, employees should call 1-833-381-2725 to have the one-week waiting period waived.
3. Applicants can also apply in person at a Service Canada office, though those who are experiencing symptoms, or are in self-isolation or quarantine are instructed not to visit.

OTHER RELATED MEASURES

EMERGENCY CARE BENEFIT

To help those that do not qualify for EI, the aid package also includes the Emergency Care Benefit, a temporary income support program. This program will provide up to \$900 bi-weekly, for up to 15 weeks, and will be administered through the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) and provide income support to:

- Workers who are quarantined or sick with COVID-19 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, but do not qualify for EI sickness benefits.
- Parents with children who require care or supervision due to school closures, and are unable to earn employment income, irrespective of whether they qualify for EI or not.

Applications for this benefit will be available in April 2020. Applicants will be able to select one of three channels to apply for the Benefit:

1. by accessing it on their CRA MyAccount secure portal
2. by accessing it from their secure My Service Canada Account
3. by calling a toll-free number equipped with an automated application process

EMERGENCY SUPPORT BENEFIT

Similarly, the Emergency Support Benefit, which will also be delivered through the CRA, will provide up to \$5.0 billion in support to workers who are not eligible for EI and who are facing unemployment.

EI WORK SHARING PROGRAM

The EI Work Sharing Program provides EI benefits to workers who agree to reduce their normal working hours as a result of developments beyond the control of their employers, by extending the eligibility of such agreements to 76 weeks, easing eligibility requirements, and streamlining the application process

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For additional information, review Sherrard Kuzz's [COVID-19 FAQ for Employers](#)

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