



Governments of Canada and Alberta have recently announced wage and job protections, as well as, other measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The information below is focused on wage, job, and income supports. For full information, please visit the appropriate federal or provincial news release listed below.

Alberta

New measures following the federal government's announcement on March 18, 2020:

- Emergency Isolation Support: temporary provincial program for working adult Albertans in self-isolation who do not have another source of income, a one-time bridge funding program. \$572 available (one-time) available through the government of Alberta (www.gov.ab.ca)

More information on the province's response, plus additional information, see here:

<http://www.alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=698455D70096B-DF57-A62A-778266237F3241C8>

Cabinet approved (an Order in Council), a new *Employment Standards Regulation*, the "COVID-19 Leave Regulation"

- an employee is entitled to unpaid leave for 14 consecutive days, if the employee is under quarantine
- Quarantine includes self-isolation/self-quarantine, as recommended by the Chief Medical Officer
- no requirement to be with the same employer for 90 days
- no requirement for a medical certificate
- Does not affect the entitlement of 16 weeks unpaid for illness and injury in the Code

The Order in Council is here:

http://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Orders/Orders_in_Council/2020/2020_064.html

Federally

Changes to the Employment Insurance system include:

- Waiving of the mandatory one-week waiting period to access EI sick benefits for workers who are in imposed quarantine or have been directed to self-isolate, like Alberta's case. Waiting period is dropped.
- Waiving the requirement for a 'sick note' (medical certificate) to access EI sick benefits.

Wages and other income support(s):

- Emergency Care Benefit for workers who are not eligible for EI and do not have paid sick leave, \$900 every two weeks for up to 15 weeks. This is also available for parents at home with children. Administered through the Canada Revenue Agency.
- 10 per cent in wage subsidy for small businesses up to \$1,375 per worker, maximum of \$25,000 per employer.
- Top-up of the GST tax credit (GSTC), for low and middle-income Canadians, to double remaining payments in the fiscal year. Benefit increase is in the range of less than \$400 for individuals, \$600 for couples.

More information on the Federal government's response, plus additional information, see here: <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/news/2020/03/canadas-covid-19-economic-response-plan-support-for-canadians-and-businesses.html>

Additional Reading:

Canadian Labour Congress, "Canada's Unions welcome government aid for workers"
<https://canadianlabour.ca/canadas-unions-welcome-gov-aid-for-workers/>

Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, "Behind the Numbers: What to make of the federal COVID-19 federal aid package?"
http://behindthenumbers.ca/2020/03/18/what-to-make-of-the-federal-covid-19-aid-package/?fbclid=IwAR1_f2jLjbVo1_WTZtpK5EWdaA0AuTOW_L5Rb_fQtU0jtmivtJmj0rYxw0

CTV News, "How to apply for EI sickness benefits and the new emergency worker fund"
<https://www.ctvnews.ca/health/coronavirus/how-to-apply-for-ei-sickness-benefits-and-the-new-emergency-worker-fund-1.4858089>

CBC, "Trudeau unveils \$82B COVID-19 emergency response package for Canadians, businesses"
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/economic-aid-package-coronavirus-1.5501037>