

Federal:

April 3, 2020 - The Canadian government has implemented additional measures for domestic air travel. Domestic flights will apply measures similar to that of international flights to protect travellers. Many provinces have taken a stand with entering travellers:

- Nova Scotia has declared anyone entering the province must self-isolate for 14 days, regardless of being asymptomatic;
- Alberta advises that passengers in affected seats from domestic flights are considered “close contacts” and are at risk of exposure and are legally required to self-isolate for 14 days and monitor for symptoms;
- Travellers entering Manitoba are strongly recommended to self-isolate for 14 days if they are from a different province, with a few exceptions.
- Quebec has implemented restrictions on travel between regions for non-essential purposes, in order to protect its population and try to flatten the curve. It is currently recommend to avoid all non-essential travel.

April 1, 2020 - Federal Government provided additional details pertaining to the administration of **Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy** (the 75% Wage Subsidy Program). Eligible employers who suffer a drop in gross revenues of at least 30% in March, April or May, when compared to the same month in 2019, will be able to access the subsidy.

An employer’s entitlement will be based entirely on the salary or wages actually paid to employees. Eligible employers will be able to access the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy by applying through the Canada Revenue Agency online portal, more details in how to apply will follow. The subsidy will cover up to 75% of wages on the first \$58,700 that an employee earns, up to a maximum of \$847 a week. The program will be in place for a 12-week period, from March 15 to June 6, 2020.

The **Canada Emergency Response Benefit** (“CERB”) is an income support payment payable to eligible workers for up to four (4) months within the period falling between March 15, 2020 and October 3, 2020 for workers who have ceased work and are not receiving income as a result of COVID-19. The Federal Government has announced that the amount of the benefit will be \$2000 per month.

To qualify for the CERB, a worker must be at least 15 years of age, and must have a total income of at least \$5000 (or such other amount as prescribed) for 2019 or in the 12 months prior to their application from employment, self-employment, EI benefits, or provincial pregnancy and parental benefits. The CERB will be available to the following workers, including self-employed individuals:

- who have lost their job or income due to COVID-19;
- who are unable to work as a result of sickness or quarantine; and
- who need to provide care of an individual who is sick or in quarantine, or who need to provide care or supervision to a child due to school or daycare closures

A worker must have ceased working for reasons related COVID-19 for at least 14 consecutive days within the 4-week period for which they apply for the benefit in order to be eligible. A worker is not eligible for the CERB if they quit their employment voluntarily. The CERB will not be payable to those who are in receipt of employment or self-employment income (subject to exceptions that may be made by regulation), EI benefits or provincial pregnancy and parental benefits for the days on which they have ceased working.

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March 30, 2020 - Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced further details of the amended wage subsidy program. Eligible businesses – now including non-profits, charities as well as large and small companies – whose revenues have decreased by at least 30% due to COVID-19 will apparently qualify for the subsidy. The subsidy will cover up to 75% of wages on the first \$58,700 that an employee earns, up to a maximum of \$847 a week.

March 27, 2020 - Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced that the initial 10% wage subsidy implemented to help businesses adversely affected by COVID-19 was insufficient and would be increased to a **75% wage subsidy** for qualifying businesses. The announced subsidy is intended to be backdated to March 15, 2020. While these same eligibility criteria are presumed to also be intended to apply to the new 75% wage subsidy, details of the program are still being worked out, and more information is expected to be released by Monday, March 30, 2020.

The Prime Minister also announced today the launch of a new **Canada Emergency Business Account** for qualifying small business loans. Under this program, small and medium sized businesses will be eligible for loans of up to \$40,000.

As well, businesses and self-employed individuals will be permitted to defer GST, HST and import duty payments to the end of June 2020. The deferral will apply to the following GST/HST reporting periods:

- **For monthly filers** – the February, March and April 2020 reporting periods;
- **For quarterly filers** – the January 1-March 31, 2020 reporting period;
- **For annual filers** – the amounts collected and owing for their previous fiscal year and installments of GST/HST in respect of the current fiscal year
- The deferral for GST and customs duty payments on imported goods will include amounts owing for March, April and May 2020.

March 25, 2020 - Federal Government announced that the Emergency Care Benefit and Emergency Support Benefit previously announced on March 18, 2020 as part of the Federal Economic Response Plan were being eliminated and replaced by the amalgamated **Canada Emergency Response Benefit**. The Canada Emergency Response Benefit will provide \$2000 per month for four (4) months for workers who are not receiving income as a result of COVID-19. This is a taxable benefit, but taxes will not be deducted at source. The government announced that this will include workers, including self-employed individuals:

- who have lost their job or income due to COVID-19;
- who are unable to work as a result of sickness or quarantine; and
- who need to provide care of an individual who is sick or in quarantine, or who need to provide care or supervision to a child due to school or daycare closures.

It is currently unclear whether this benefit, like the Emergency Care and Emergency Support Benefits which it replaced, will only be available to individuals who do not qualify for EI or EI sickness benefits. The Federal Government is creating an online portal to receive applications for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit and indicates that the goal is for first payments to be issued in April. Additional details to follow as they become available.

March 20, 2020 - While Canada has not defined what is considered “essential” travel, the United States has defined “essential” as:

- U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents returning to the US
- individuals traveling for medical purpose
- individuals travelling to attend education institutions

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- individuals travelling to work in the US
- individuals travelling for emergency response and public health purposes
- individuals engage in lawful cross-border trade (i.e. truck drivers), etc.

The land border between Canada and the US will be closed for all non-essential travel for the next 30 days, to April 30, 2020.

The Deputy Prime Minister of Canada announced that temporary foreign workers and students with valid visas to enter Canada will be allowed to re-enter. As with anyone re-entering Canada, these foreign workers will be required to self-isolate for 14 days on their return.

March 18, 2020 – Government of Canada has closed the US-Canada border, with exceptions only for trade, commerce and essential services. They also announced an [Economic Response Plan](#):

EI Sickness Benefits - provide up to 15 weeks of income replacement and is available to eligible those who are unable to work because of illness, injury or quarantine, to allow them time to restore their health and return to work. Canadians quarantined can apply for EI sickness benefits. The one-week waiting period for EI sickness benefits has been waived for claimants who have been quarantined, as has the requirement for a medical certificate.

Regular EI Benefits - there have not been changes made to regular EI benefits. Employees who are laid off may apply for regular EI benefits if they qualify under existing guidelines. If Employees are not eligible for EI, they may be eligible for Emergency Support Benefits.

Tax Flexibility Measures for Individuals - The CRA has deferred the filing due date for 2019 tax returns for individuals to June 1, 2020. Individuals who may be entitled to receive enhanced benefits under the GST credit or Canada Child Benefit are encouraged to file their returns as soon as possible. The CRA will also allow taxpayers to defer the payment of any income tax amounts that become owing on or after March 18, 2020 and before September 2020 until after August 31, 2020, without the accrual of interest or penalties. The CRA will also recognize electronic signatures for the purposes of the *Income Tax Act* on a temporary basis in order to reduce the necessity of meeting between taxpayers and tax preparers as a result of COVID-19.

Tax Flexibility Measures for Businesses - The CRA will allow all businesses to defer the payment of any income tax amounts that become owing on or after March 18, 2020 and before September 2020 until after August 31, 2020, without the accrual of interest or penalties. The CRA will not initiate any post assessment GST/HST or Income Tax audits in the four weeks commencing on March 18, 2020 for small or medium businesses and will temporarily suspend audit interactions for the vast majority of businesses.

Business Credit Availability Program - Business Development Bank of Canada and Export Development Canada will be permitted to provide more than \$10 billion of additional support targeted predominantly to small and medium-sized businesses.

March 17, 2020 - Mortgage and Credit Support - Canada's big six banks announced 6-month payment deferrals would be available for mortgages, to be assessed on a case-by-case basis. The big six banks also announced that other flexible solutions and opportunities for relief would be available to customers facing financial disruptions as a result of COVID-19. The Federal Government, through the Canada

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Mortgage and Housing Corporation (“CMHC”), will provide increased flexibility by permitting lenders to allow payment deferral on homeowner CMHC-insured mortgages.

March 16, 2020 - anyone, including Canadian citizens and permanent residents, who exhibit symptoms abroad will be restricted from returning to Canada. Employers should be prohibiting international travel at this time as well as any non-essential travel within Canada.

Persons returning to Canada from international travel travelling, including the USA, have been requested to self-isolate on their return for 14 days.

March 15, 2020 – the Federal Government will waive the one-week waiting period for EI sickness benefits for absences from work caused by COVID-19 quarantine. No medical certificate is required for individuals claiming EI sickness benefits due to quarantine.

March 13, 2020 - Government of Canada has requested Canadians to avoid any travel outside of Canada.

Ontario:

April 3, 2020 – Following the advice of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, the Ontario government reduced the list of businesses classified as essential and ordering more workplaces to close. These non-essential businesses will be required to close as of 11:59pm on April 4, 2020. This closure will be in effect for 14 days, with the possibility of an extension as the situation evolves. Teleworking, online commerce and other innovative ways of working remotely are permitted at all times and are strongly encouraged for all businesses. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/list-essential-workplaces#section-10>

April 2, 2020 - Ontario’s Workplace Safety & Insurance Board (WSIB) formalized its adjudicative approach related to COVID-19, including information related to claims of potential exposure incidents at work. As a means of determining whether a COVID-19 claim is work-related, the decision-maker will assess whether:

1. the nature of the worker’s employment created a risk of contracting COVID-19 that the public at large was not normally exposed to; and
2. the WSIB is satisfied that the worker’s COVID-19 condition has been confirmed.

If the two conditions above are established, they will be considered persuasive evidence that the worker’s employment contributed significantly to the worker’s illness. However, claims which do not meet the conditions will be reviewed on their own merit, having regard to the circumstances of each case.

April 1, 2020 - In an effort to ensure that residents are maintaining physical distancing as a means of slowing the outbreak of COVID-19, municipalities across Ontario have begun imposing hefty fines to promote compliance. The imposition of these fines follow the Government of Ontario’s physical distancing orders made under the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*, whereby gatherings of more than five (5) people were prohibited.

March 29, 2020 – The Ontario government has stepped up measures to limit the spread of COVID-19 on construction sites. These measures include:

- providing better on-site sanitation, including a focus on high-touch areas like site trailers, door handles and hoists
- communicating roles, responsibilities, and health & safety policies, by, for example, posting site sanitization schedules and work schedules
- enabling greater distances between workers by staggering shifts, restricting site numbers and limiting elevator usage
- protecting public health by tracking and monitoring workers

Full details can be found at - https://www.ontario.ca/page/construction-site-health-and-safety-during-covid-19?_ga=2.6300466.1042988516.1585499296-2024361983.1555443934

March 25, 2020 – Premier Doug Ford announced Ontario's *Action Plan: Responding to COVID-19*. This \$17 billion response is a critical first step to ensure our health care system, communities and economy are positioned to weather the challenges ahead. Key initiatives in the government's plan to support people, families, workers and employers include:

- A one-time payment of \$200 per child up to 12 years of age, and \$250 for those with special needs, including children enrolled in private schools.
- Providing approximately \$5.6 billion for electricity cost relief programs in 2020-21, which is an increase of approximately \$1.5 billion compared to the *2019 Budget* plan.
- Setting electricity prices for residential, farm and small business time-of-use customers at the lowest rate, known as the off-peak price, 24 hours a day for 45 days to support ratepayers in their increased daytime electricity usage as they respond to the COVID-19 outbreak, addressing concerns about time-of-use metering.
- Cutting taxes by \$355 million for about 57,000 employers through a proposed temporary increase to the Employer Health Tax (EHT) exemption.
- Providing \$9 million in direct support to families for their energy bills by expanding eligibility for the Low-income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP) and ensuring that their electricity and natural gas services are not disconnected for nonpayment during the COVID-19 outbreak.
- Providing six months of Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) loan and interest accrual relief for students, leaving more money in people's pockets.

The government's plan also includes measures that will make available \$10 billion in support for people and businesses through tax and other deferrals to improve their cash flows over the coming months, including:

- Providing five months of interest and penalty relief for businesses to file and make payments for the majority of provincially administered taxes.
- Deferring the upcoming June 30 quarterly municipal remittance of education property tax to school boards by 90 days, which will provide municipalities the flexibility to, in turn, provide property tax deferrals to residents and businesses, while ensuring school boards continue to receive their funding.
- The Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) allowing employers to defer payments for up to six months. They will not be required to opt in to receive this benefit.

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March 23, 2020 – Premier Doug Ford announced that all non-essential business will be required to close as of 11:50pm on March 24, 2020. The mandatory closure will be in effect for a minimum of 14 days, with the possibility of a further extension. Details surrounding what compensation or relief, if any, will be made available to business arising from this mandatory closure should be made available on March 25, 2020. The list of essential Workplaces can be found here:

<https://s3.amazonaws.com/files.news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2020/03/list-of-essential-workplaces-2.html>

March 19, 2020 – New Infectious Disease Emergency Leave (Bill 186 – passed) provides for a new **unpaid**, job-protected **emergency leave** to any employee who is not performing the duties of his or her position due to:

- being under medical investigation, supervision or treatment related to a designated infectious disease
- acting in accordance with a relevant order under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* related to a designated infectious disease
- being in quarantine isolation or subject to a control measure (which can include self-isolation) implemented as a result of information or direction related to a designated infectious disease which has been issued to the public by a public health official, a qualified health practitioner, Telehealth Ontario, the provincial or federal governments, or a municipal council or board of health
- being directed by their employer not to work due to a concern that the employee may expose other individuals in the workplace to a designated infectious disease
- providing care or support to any one of a defined group of individuals related to a designated infectious disease which “concerns” that individual (including school and daycare closures); or
- being directly affected by travel restrictions related to the designated infectious disease and who cannot reasonably return to Ontario.

Length of Leave: may last for as long as the employee is not performing their position for any one of the mandated reasons related to the designated infectious disease. An employee who takes COVID-19 Leave in order to remain in self-isolation may only require a 14-day leave. An employee who is caring for a child as a result of a COVID-19-related school closure may require a significantly longer leave if those closures are extended. An employee who is suffering from the effects of COVID-19 may require a lengthy leave of unknown duration.

Who’s covered - includes all categories of employees, whether they are full-time, part-time, students, assignment employees or casual workers.

Employment Entitlements - The general provisions in the *ESA* concerning other types of statutory leaves, such as pregnancy/parental leave or family medical leave, also apply to COVID-19 Leave. This includes:

- The right to reinstatement (subject to the caveat that if an employer has dismissed an employee for legitimate reasons that are totally unrelated to the fact that the employee took COVID-19 Leave, the employer does not have to reinstate the employee)
- The right to be free from penalty or “reprisal”
- The right to continue to participate in benefit plans (provided any applicable employee contributions are made) and
- The right to earn credits for length of employment, length of service and seniority (as applicable).

Employer Obligations - employers have the following reporting obligations:

- to report all occupational illnesses, including COVID-19, to the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development in writing within four days and

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- to notify their workplace's joint health and safety committee or a health and safety representative and a trade union, as applicable.

One aspect of COVID-19 Leave that is unique is the apparent ability of an employer to “trigger” an unpaid statutory leave of absence by directing the employee not to work due to COVID-19 related concerns. This provides some helpful clarity regarding the employer's right to exercise control over the issue of COVID-19 in the workplace.

March 17, 2020 – Ontario Emergency Declaration ordered the closure of all facilities that provide indoor recreation programs, private schools, public libraries, licensed childcare centres, theatres, cinemas and concert venues. There is also a ban on public events with over 50 people, which includes services within places of worship. These orders are in place until March 31, 2020.

March 16, 2020 - Ontario government announced its intention to introduce legislation that will amend the *Employment Standards Act* by protecting jobs for employees who are unable to work due to COVID-19. If passed, the legislation would provide job protection to employees who cannot work due to COVID-19.

Alberta:

April 6, 2020 – Confirmation of temporary rules in place to provide job protection for workers and flexibility for employers during this pandemic. The changes take effect immediately and will be in place as long as government determines it is needed and the public health emergency order remains.

Changes for employees

- Employees caring for children affected by school and daycare closures or ill or self-isolated family members due to COVID-19 will have access to unpaid job-protected leave. The 90-day employment requirement is waived and leave length is flexible.

Changes for employees and employers

- Increasing the maximum time for a temporary layoff from 60 days to 120 days to ensure temporarily laid off employees stay attached to a job longer. This change is retroactive for any temporary layoffs related to COVID-19 that occurred on or after March 17.

Changes for employers

- Improving scheduling flexibility by removing the 24-hour written notice requirement for shift changes, and the two weeks' notice for changes to work schedules for those under an averaging agreement.
- Removing the requirement to provide the group termination notice to employees and unions when 50 or more employees are being terminated.
- Streamlining the process for approvals related to modifying employment standards so employers and workers can respond quicker to changing conditions at the workplace due to the public health emergency.

March 27, 2020 – To protect the health and safety of Albertans, mass gatherings will be limited to 15 people. Alberta has also announced its list of essential services. Workplaces that have not been ordered to close can continue to have more than 15 workers on a worksite as long as those business maintain

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public health measures, including two metre social distancing, hygiene enforcement and processes that ensure that any person who is ill does not attend these spaces. List of essential services can be found here: <https://www.alberta.ca/essential-services.aspx>

March 25, 2020 – Public health orders will now be enforced by law to protect the health and safety of Albertans. Fines for violating an order have increased to a prescribed fine of \$1,000 per occurrence. Courts will also have increased powers to administer fines of up to \$100,000 for a first offence and up to \$500,000 for a subsequent offence for more serious violations.

- Public health orders will include mandatory self-isolation for travellers returning from outside of Canada for 14 days, plus an additional 10 days from the onset of any symptoms should they occur, whichever is longer.
- This legal requirement also applies to close contacts of confirmed COVID-19 cases, as well as to any individual with COVID-19 symptoms, which consist of a cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose, or sore throat.
- Orders regarding restrictions around mass gatherings, public recreational facilities, private entertainment facilities, and visitations to long-term care and other continuing care facilities are also enforceable, along with any future public health orders.

March 23, 2020 – Additional Financial Support for Albertans and employers:

- Effective immediately, the government will defer education property tax for businesses for six months.
- Private sector employers will have immediate financial relief by deferring WCB premiums until early 2021, effectively for one year.
- For small and medium businesses, the government will cover 50 per cent of the premium when it is due.

March 20, 2020 - Job Protection Measures announced to allow full and part-time employees to take 14 days of job-protected leave if they are required to self-isolate, and/or they are caring for a child or dependent adult that is required to self-isolate. This legislation is retroactive to March 5, 2020. At this time, this new job-protected leave is meant to cover the 14-day self-isolation period recommended by Alberta's Chief Medical Officer. The duration of this leave could be extended as the virus continues to unfold and medical recommendations are adjusted accordingly. Where this leave is not appropriate or insufficient for the employee's particular circumstances, employees can request to use their vacation pay or banked overtime, but employers are not required to grant the request. Similarly, employers may request that employees voluntarily take vacation leave and/or use their vacation pay or banked overtime, however, the employer cannot unilaterally enforce this on employees under provincial employment standards.

March 19, 2020 - To ease pressure on businesses in Alberta, corporate income tax balances and instalment payments will be deferred until August 31, 2020. This measure provides an estimated \$1.5 billion in available access to cash to enable employers to focus on continuing to pay employees, address debts, and sustain operations during this pandemic period. Employees may also benefit from a six-month interest free moratorium on student loans and mortgage payments beginning March 30, 2020. Individuals will not need to apply for the repayment pause.

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March 18, 2020 – As a supplement to the Federal government’s EI measures, the Alberta government will launch an Emergency Isolation Support program meant to bridge employees until the federal Emergency Benefit Care payments are available in early to mid-April. The Emergency Isolation Report is budgeted to provide \$1,146 as a one-time payment to employees in self-isolation, who are also not eligible for, and not receiving EI benefits during this time. The \$1,146 one-time payment matches two normal maximum EI payments, equivalent to approximately \$573 each.

March 16, 2020 - Premier Kenney announced the Government of Alberta’s intention to introduce paid (through EI) leave during the 14 day isolation period recommended by Alberta’s Chief Medical Officer (CMO), as a means of managing, in part, the effect of the pandemic on employers, their employees, and their workplaces. This 14 days of paid job-protected leave for any employees who are required to self-isolate, or those who are sick or caring for a loved one with COVID-19, will be implemented under the Alberta *Employment Standards Code* (the “Code”). Employees will not be required to produce a medical note, nor do they need to have worked for their employer for more than 90 days to be eligible for the new leave.

British Columbia:

April 2, 2020 - Government is taking steps to protect those providing essential services by ensuring they cannot be held liable for damages caused by exposure to COVID-19 while continuing to operate, so long as they are complying with orders from the provincial health officer and other authorities. The order is being introduced because a number of essential service business owners identified challenges with their insurance as a result of the pandemic. The changes government is implementing are intended to assist with some of these concerns. <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020AG0029-000616>

April 1, 2020 - BC Hydro will offer new, targeted bill relief to provide immediate help to those most in need. Residential customers who have lost their jobs or are unable to work as a result of COVID-19 will receive a credit to help cover the cost of their electricity bills. The credit will be three times their average monthly bill over the past year at their home and does not have to be repaid.

Small businesses that have been forced to close due to COVID-19 will have their power bills forgiven for three months. BC Hydro is waiving bills for these customers from April to June 2020.

Major industries, like pulp and paper mills and mines, will have the opportunity to defer 50% of their bill payments for three months.

March 27, 2020 - Adrian Dix, Minister of Health, and Dr. Bonnie Henry, B.C.’s provincial health officer, strongly discourage any in-person gathering of any size at this time, but rather encourage using the many online options we have available today to stay connected to friends, family, customers and clients.

New guidelines for school leaders and a new website are being introduced to support B.C.’s K-12 students while in-class education is suspended to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Every student in K-12 will receive a final mark for the 2019-20 school year, and all students who are on track to move to the next grade will do so in the fall. Every student eligible to graduate from Grade 12 this school year will also graduate. On average, about 45,000 students graduate every year. The Ministry of Education is also

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working across government to ensure all students graduating high school will have a smooth transition to post-secondary education.

March 26, 2020 – BC announced its list of essential services. Currently, any business or service that has not been ordered to close by provincial order, and is not on this list, may stay open if it can adapt its services and workplace to the orders and recommendations of Provincial Health Officer, Dr. Bonnie Henry. The list of essential services can be found here:

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020PSSG0020-000568>

March 24, 2020 – BC announced its COVID-19 Action Plan to include:

- A one-time, tax-free B.C. Emergency Benefit of \$1,000 will be available for workers whose ability to work has been affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. This payment will be available to individuals who are eligible for federal Employment Insurance as a result of the impact of COVID-19, including the new federal Emergency Care Benefit and the Emergency Support Benefit. This means workers that are typically not EI-eligible, such as self-employed workers, will be able to access the B.C. Emergency Benefit, which is expected to become available by May 2020.
- The Province will also provide a “top-up” to the B.C. Climate Action Tax Credit in July 2020. This payment will go to 86% of individuals and families, in amounts of up to \$218 for adults and \$64 per child.
- \$2.2 billion dedicated to providing relief to businesses in BC and help them recover following the COVID-19 pandemic. Details as to the exact allocation of that money are presently not clear.
- Targeted tax relief will be offered as well, including deferrals of tax filing and payment deadlines.

Further details are available here: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020PREM0013-000545>

March 23, 2020 - BC government introduced amendments to the *Employment Standards Act*, creating two new unpaid statutory leaves:

COVID-19-related Leave - Employees meeting the following criteria are entitled to an unpaid leave of absence:

- Employees diagnosed with COVID-19 and acting in accordance with advice from a medical health officer, or a medical practitioner, nurse practitioner or registered nurse;
- Employees in quarantine or self-isolation in accordance with an order of the provincial health officer, an order made under the *Quarantine Act*, or the guidelines imposed by the British Columbia Centre for Disease Control, or the guidelines of the Public Health Agency of Canada;
- Where an employer has directed an employee not to work due to concerns of exposure to others;
- Employees providing care to their child, or other persons (over the age of 19) unable to obtain the necessities of life for whom the employee is a parent or former guardian; or
- Employees outside of the province and unable to return due to travel or border restrictions.

The length of the COVID-19 protected leave will be for so long as the circumstance which causes the need for the leave exists. Employers are also prohibited from requiring medical notes associated with these circumstances, although other forms of proof may be requested. The new leave period does not prevent employers from laying off employees for business-related reasons, including loss of business related to COVID-19 or business closures/shutdowns.

Illness or Injury Leave - Employees are entitled to three days of unpaid statutory leave where they are suffering from personal illness or injury. If requested by an employer, the employee must

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provide reasonably sufficient proof of their personal illness or injury. This amendment and new leave is not specifically related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

March 18, 2020 - BC Declares Public Health Emergency. This declaration provides Dr. Bonnie Henry, the B.C. Provincial Health Officer, with the power to issue verbal orders which have immediate effect and can be enforced by the police. Dr. Henry can also amend the *Public Health Act* without the legislature's consent. All bars and clubs have now been ordered to close, and restaurants and cafes that cannot maintain appropriate social distancing measures must either close or immediately move to takeout or delivery services.