

Human Resources Legislative Update

Federal Government Waives EI Waiting Periods for Workers Affected by COVID-19

Date: March 11, 2020

On March 11, 2020, the [federal government announced](#) the establishment of a \$1 billion COVID-19 Response Fund.

As part of this initiative, the government will be waiving the mandatory one-week waiting period for Employment Insurance (EI) sickness benefits for those workers who are in quarantine or who have been directed to self-isolate as a result of the COVID-19. The announcement did not specify what evidence will be necessary in order to qualify for the waiver, and appears not to cover voluntary self-isolation.

Among other things, additional initiatives include:

- enhancements to the Work-Sharing program for applicable employers and workers by extending the period during which the program can be used from 38 weeks to 76 weeks
- increased funding to the Public Health Agency of Canada to support its COVID-19 communication and public education initiatives
- funding to the provinces and territories for their critical care health care systems and mitigation efforts
- funding for federal public health countermeasures, research initiatives, ongoing support for preparedness for First Nations and Inuit communities
- ensuring adequate supplies of personal protective equipment.