



MAPLE RIDGE | LANGLEY
CHARTERED PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTANTS

CLIENT NEWS BULLETIN

March 20, 2020

EPR MAPLE RIDGE | EPR LANGLEY
22377 DEWDNEY TRUNK RD | 21542 48 AVE
MAPLE RIDGE, BC V2X 3J4 | LANGLEY, BC V3A 3M5
604-467-5561 | 604-534-1441
www.eprcpa.ca



COVID-19 - EI Sickness Benefits, Emergency Care Act and Work-Sharing

The impact of the COVID-19 virus is being felt by workers across the country. The Federal Government has announced changes to EI Sickness Benefits and introduced the Emergency Care Act for those who are self-employed, however the majority of these benefits are applicable only if the individuals involved are directly impacted by the virus.

At this time, employers that lay off their employees due a shortage of work, where no one is sick and/or caring for someone that is sick with the virus, must follow the traditional method of issuing ROE's. The reason for issuing the ROE would be shortage of work and the employee would follow the usual process of applying for benefits.

The new benefits currently available from the Federal Government are:

Individuals Without Paid Sick Leave:

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 in imposed quarantine that claim Employment Insurance (EI) sickness benefits, effective March 15, 2020
- Waiving the requirement to provide a medical certificate to access EI sickness benefits.

Emergency Care Benefit:

Introducing the Emergency Care Benefit providing up to \$900 bi-weekly, for up to 15 weeks (comparable to EI sickness benefit). This benefit would provide income support to:

- workers, including the self-employed, who are quarantined or sick with COVID-19 but do not qualify for EI sickness benefits;
- workers, including the self-employed, 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; and
- parents with children who require care or supervision due to school closures, and are unable to earn employment income, regardless of whether they qualify for EI or not.

Application for the Benefit will be available in April 2020, and require Canadians to attest (and continue to attest every two weeks) that they meet the eligibility requirements. Individuals can

apply through CRA's MyAccount, their My Service Canada Account, or by calling an automated toll-free number not yet released

Longer-Term Income Support

- An Emergency Support Benefit will provide up to \$5.0 billion in support to workers who are not eligible for EI and who are facing unemployment. The individual amounts and process will be disclosed shortly.
- Implementing changes to the EI Work Sharing Program, which provides EI benefits to workers who agree to reduce their normal working hour 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. This is intended to benefit both employees and employers as it may provide the ability for the employees to share their hours and receive benefits for the shortage and allow employers to keep people working.

The preceding information is for educational purposes only. As it is impossible to include all situations, circumstances and exceptions in a bulletin such as this, a further review should be done by a qualified professional.

No individual or organization involved in either the preparation or distribution of this bulletin accepts any contractual, tortious, or any other form of liability for its contents or for any consequences arising from its use.