



Information Bulletin – last updated April 3, 2020

Government of Canada and Government of British Columbia information and resources for individuals and organizations supporting temporary foreign workers under the Temporary Foreign Worker Program in British Columbia during the COVID-19 pandemic

The Migrant Worker Support Network coordination team at Employment and Social Development Canada created this document for members and observers of the Migrant Worker Support Network pilot initiative in British Columbia. This document may be applicable for a wider audience.

This document provides an overview of publicly available resources and information available from the Government of Canada and Government of British Columbia on topics that may be of interest to temporary foreign workers as well as individuals and organizations that support temporary foreign workers under the Temporary Foreign Worker Program in British Columbia.

Please visit the gov.bc.ca and Canada.ca/coronavirus websites for the most up-to-date information.



Public Health and Healthcare	
Canada COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool	The online self-assessment tool will determine whether you may need further assessment or testing for COVID-19. Visit https://ca.thrive.health/covid19/en
Canada COVID-19 App (Health Canada)	Health Canada in partnership with Thrive Health has created the Canada COVID-19 app. This app is a central resource for accessing personalized, trusted, evidence-based information about the COVID-19 pandemic. For more information, visit https://www.thrive.health/canada-covid19-app
BC COVID-19 App (BC Ministry of Health)	Health Canada recommends that British Columbia users use the BC COVID-19 Support App as it is tailored to your province. For more information, visit https://bc.thrive.health/
Medical Services Plan – Temporary Coverage during the COVID-19 Pandemic (BC Ministry of Health)	<p>In response to the COVID-19 pandemic,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • individuals who are currently in B.C., who were previously enrolled in MSP as a deemed resident, and their MSP has expired, may be provided temporary MSP coverage • temporary foreign workers in B.C. with a permit of less than 6 months, who would otherwise not be eligible for coverage under MSP, will be provided temporary MSP coverage to July 31, 2020 or the end of your permit, whichever is sooner • Individuals should contact Health Insurance BC to request temporary MSP coverage. • The three-month MSP coverage wait period will be waived for eligible individuals effective March 1, 2020. <p>For more information, visit https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/health-drug-coverage/msp/bc-residents/msp-covid-19-response</p>



COVID-19 Awareness Resources (Public Health Agency of Canada)	Some resources are available in multiple languages. To access these resources, visit https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/awareness-resources.html?topic=tilelink
Phone line for non-medical information about COVID-19 (BC Centre for Disease Control)	Call 1-888-COVID19 (1-888-268-4319), 7:30am-8pm, 7 days a week (available in more than 110 languages). For more information, visit http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/about-covid-19
About COVID-19: Translated Content (BC Centre for Disease Control)	For handouts and videos about COVID-19 in multiple languages, visit http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/about-covid-19/translated-content
COVID-19 Factsheet (HealthLinkBC)	For a PDF available in 10 different languages, visit https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/health-feature/coronavirus-disease-covid-19



Immigration Status and Border Restrictions

Exemption to border restrictions for temporary foreign workers (IRCC)

All approved temporary foreign workers, who are traveling for an essential purpose, are exempt from travel restrictions and can travel to Canada by air or land. Temporary foreign workers travelling by air need to pass a health check conducted by airlines before they are allowed to board their flight. Anyone who shows symptoms of COVID-19 will not be allowed to enter Canada by air.

They will have to present the work permit or their POE Letter of Introduction or have their name on an approved list in order to board an aircraft.

Temporary foreign workers' health will be assessed when they arrive in Canada and before they leave the port of entry. Temporary foreign workers must isolate for 14 days even if they have no symptoms. This is mandatory. For more information, visit <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/coronavirus-covid19/visitors-foreign-workers-students.html#restrictions-workers>

Information for visitors, students, and temporary foreign workers regarding immigration status (Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada)

- If your visitor, study or work status has not expired, you can apply online to extend your stay in Canada.
- If your visitor, study or work status has expired and it has **been less than 90 days** since your status expired, you can apply to restore your status.
- If your visitor, study or work status has expired and it has been **more than 90 days** since your status expired, you may be eligible to apply for a temporary resident permit and remain in Canada with legal status.

For more information, visit <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/coronavirus-covid19/visitors-foreign-workers-students.html#restrictions-workers>



<p>Open Work Permit for Vulnerable Workers (Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada)</p>	<p>The Open Work Permit for Vulnerable Workers continues to be processed and is considered an essential service to be maintained. IRCC has adjusted its procedures in light of the COVID-19 impact on offices, which may affect processing times.</p> <p>For more information, visit https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/work-canada/permit/temporary/vulnerable-workers.html</p>
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Income Supports and Employment Protection	
<p>Employment Insurance – Regular Benefits and Sickness Benefits (Employment and Social Development Canada)</p>	<p>Temporary foreign workers are subject to the same eligibility criteria for Employment Insurance (EI) as Canadians and Permanent Residents (e.g. minimum insurable hours, work permit, etc.). EI sickness benefits are available to people who are unable to work due to illness, injury or quarantine, but who would be available to work if it were not for their medical condition.</p> <p>For more information on Canada’s Employment Insurance Program, visit https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei.html. For information on changes to Employment Insurance sickness benefits for those affected by COVID-19, visit: https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/notices/coronavirus.html</p>



Canada Emergency
Response Benefit
(Canada Revenue
Agency)

The Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) will provide temporary income support to workers who have lost income because of COVID-19. The CERB will provide workers with \$500 a week for up to 16 weeks. To be eligible for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit, a worker must reside in Canada and have a valid Social Insurance Number.

Please note that we are researching if individuals with implied status are eligible to apply for and/or receive the CERB.

Workers who are not Canadian citizens or permanent residents – including temporary foreign workers and international students – may be eligible to receive the Benefit if they meet the other eligibility requirements

The benefit will be available to workers:

- Residing in Canada, who are at least 15 years old;
- Who have stopped working because of COVID-19 or are eligible for Employment Insurance regular or sickness benefits;
- Who had income of at least \$5,000 in 2019 or in the 12 months prior to the date of their application; and
- Who are or expect to be without employment or self-employment income for at least 14 consecutive days in the initial four-week period. For subsequent benefit periods, they expect to have no employment income.

For more information, please visit:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/cerb-application.html>

Important information on how to prepare to apply for the CERB can be found here:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/benefits/apply-for-cerb-with-cra.html>



<p>British Columbia Emergency Benefit for Workers Program</p>	<p>The B.C. Emergency Benefit for Workers program provides a one-time \$1,000 payment to people who lost income because of COVID-19.</p> <p>Applications will open in April 2020, and the one-time payment will be made in May 2020.</p> <p>B.C. residents who receive federal Employment Insurance or the new federal Canada Emergency Response Benefit are eligible.</p> <p>For more information, visit https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/covid-19-financial-supports#BCEBW</p>
<p>Job-protected leave related to COVID-19 for employees in workplaces regulated by the Province of British Columbia</p>	<p>Employees working in a British Columbia-regulated workplace can take “COVID-19 Leave”, an unpaid, job-protected leave, if they are unable to work for a number of reasons relating to a COVID-19. These reasons are specified at the following link: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/employment-standards-advice/employment-standards/time-off/leaves-of-absence#covid19</p> <p>The COVID-19 leave is retroactive to January 27, 2020, the date that the first presumptive COVID-19 case was confirmed in British Columbia. During this public health emergency, employees can take this job-protected leave for the reasons above as long as they need it, without putting their job at risk. Once it is no longer needed, this leave will be removed from the <i>Employment Standards Act</i>.</p>
<p>Job-protected leave related to COVID-19 for employees in federally regulated workplaces</p>	<p>Employees working in a federally regulated workplace are entitled to up to 16 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave if they are unable or unavailable to work due to COVID-19. For example, employees may take this leave if they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• being quarantined or asked to self-isolate as a result of COVID-19



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• being required to provide care to a family member as a result of COVID-19, or• otherwise unable to work for reasons related to COVID-19 <p>In response to the COVID-19 emergency, as a temporary measure, employees are not required to provide a medical certificate to take medical leave, compassionate care leave, or leave related to critical illness. Employees are also not required to provide documentation in support of the reasons for the leave or change in the length of the leave. On September 30, 2020, medical certificate requirements will be reinstated.</p> <p>For more information, visit https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/notices/coronavirus.html#h2.4.1</p>
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Other resources and information	
Social insurance number applications (SC)	Service Canada is still accepting SIN applications but will no longer be accepting them at in person Service Canada Centers. Please visit the following link for instructions and more information: https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/notices/coronavirus.html#social-insurance