**COVID-19 EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION AND LEAVE FAQs**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Version** | **Date** | **What’s Changed** |
| v.1 | March 17, 2020 | First Release |
| v.2 | March 24, 2020 | Added information on the emergency isolation support, emergency care support, and emergency support benefit announced by the various levels of government. Changed vacation and leave information. |
| v.3 | March 27, 2020 | New Canadian Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) replacing Emergency Care Benefit and Emergency Support Benefit |
| V.4 | April 7, 2020 | Updates to Job Protected Leave information in accordance with Alberta Employment Standards changes |
| V.5 | April 15, 2020 | Added a (CERB) Canada Emergency Response Chart (CERB) |
| V.6 | May 5, 2020 | Added information on the use of a LOA when requested by an alternate employer to work for one employer. Updated use of COVID-19 codes in Kronos. Removed use of sick time for child care. Added ROE information. |

1. **What if I have symptoms consistent with COVID-19?**

Complete the [COVID-19 Self-Assessment](https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Journey/COVID-19/Pages/COVID-Self-Assessment.aspx) online right away. Based on the outcome of this assessment you may be directed to self-isolate and contact Health Link 811 for further instructions about testing if required.

1. **What if I test positive for COVID-19? If you have COVID-19 you can not attend work.**

For full-time, part-time or contract employees who work a minimum of 20 guaranteed awake hours per week, you will be paid with sick time, short term disability or EI depending on your benefits options for the duration of your illness. Your supervisor will be able to approve sick time for any regular work days missed for a period of up to 10 calendar days before a short-term disability or Employment Insurance application form is required. Long term disability may apply at the end of the 17 weeks.

Employees without sick time or short-term disability benefits can apply for Employment Insurance.

Contact [disabilitymanagement@cssalberta.ca](mailto:disabilitymanagement@cssalberta.ca) for additional information on the required forms to start the short term disability or Employment Insurance processes.

1. **What if I think I should self-isolate based on Alberta Health Services (AHS) recommendations (whether or not I have symptoms)?**

Complete the [COVID-19 Self-Assessment](https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Journey/COVID-19/Pages/COVID-Self-Assessment.aspx) online right away. Based on the outcome of this assessment you may be directed to self-isolate and contact Health Link 811 for further instructions about testing if required. If you are advised by AHS through this assessment process to self-isolate, immediately inform your program manager and the Vice President of your area will assess the ability for your position to work from home. Note: many of the positions in the organization are not able to be accommodated in terms of working from home. The Agency will be flexible where possible. If these arrangements are not possible, and if you are self-isolating in accordance with AHS protocols, you will be granted leave with the following options during the AHS prescribed self-isolation period.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Benefit Coverage or Leave Options** | **Key Information** |
| **Paid Sick Leave – only available if diagnosed with COVID19** | * Maximum of 10 paid working days per calendar year for full-time, part-time and contract employees who work a minimum of 20 guaranteed awake hours per week. Part-time and contract employees receive sick entitlement on a pro-rated basis. * Replacement workers or employees working less than 20 awake hours per week are not entitled to sick leave. |
| **Short-Term Disability (STD) – only available if diagnosed with COVID19** | * Staff who are on Flex 2 and 3 can apply for the STD through Sun Life. Sun Life covers 60% of your gross weekly income, up to a maximum of $1000 per week. STD coverage ends at age 70. * Sunlife, (our benefits provider), will consider total disability from the onset of the quarantine period, for plan members diagnosed with COVID-19 and who are not eligible to work from home. * Payments will be paid from the first day of quarantine. * For employees who have been traveling and then put into quarantine the payment of benefits will begin on the date the employee was originally scheduled to return to work if this is later than the date of quarantine. |
| **Long Term Disability (LTD)** | * Employees on Flex 1, 2, 3 and working a minimum of 20 guaranteed awake hours per week are eligible for LTD Benefits beginning at the end of the 17 week Unpaid Medical or STD Period. LTD coverage ends at age 65. * Flex 1: 70% of your guaranteed monthly earnings, to a maximum of $5,500. The maximum benefit period is 5 years * Flex 2 and 3: 60% of your guaranteed monthly earnings, to a maximum of $5,500. The maximum benefit period is 5 years for employees with less than 10 years of benefit coverage and a benefit period up to the age of 65 for employees with more than 10 years of benefit coverage. * Please note, approval and receipt of benefits depends on medical and contractual verification completed by Sun Life |
| **Employment Insurance Sickness Benefit (EI) – Unpaid Medical Leave** | * Employees who are on Flex 1 or who have no benefit coverage can apply for the Employment Insurance Sickness Benefit. EI Sickness Benefit provides up to 15 weeks of income replacement. * The current EI payment is 55 per cent of your earnings up to a maximum of $573 a week. * Employees will receive a record of employment (ROE) from Payroll to apply for the EI Sickness Benefit. * Employees claiming EI sickness benefits due to quarantine will not have to provide a medical certificate * Approval of benefit dependent on medical and contractual verification completed by E.I. * Contact the new dedicated toll-free phone number if you are in quarantine and seeking to waive the one-week waiting period so you can be paid for the first week of your claim: 1-833-381-2725   A Service Canada representative will determine your eligibility. The following are guidelines you need to demonstrate:   * you're unable to work for medical reasons * your regular weekly earnings from work have decreased by more than 40% for at least one week * you accumulated 600 insured hours\* of work in the 52 weeks before the start of your claim or since the start of your last claim, whichever is shorter * \*As an example, 600 hours are equivalent to 20 weeks of work at 30 hours a week. |
| **Vacation** | * Full time employees earn vacation each pay period. * Part-time and contract employees receive vacation entitlement on a pro-rated basis. * Replacement employees do not accumulate time off, instead vacation pay is paid out on every pay cheque. |
| **Personal Wellness Days** | * Maximum of 2 paid working days per calendar year for full-time, part-time and contract employees who work a minimum of 20 guaranteed awake hours per week. Part-time and contract employees receive vacation entitlement on a pro-rated basis. * Replacement workers or employees working less than 20 awake hours per week are not entitled to personal wellness days. |
| **Job Protected Leave** | * Employees with no benefit coverage or Flex 1 are eligible. Changes to the Employment Standards Code will allow employees to take job-protected leave if they are: * required to self-isolate * sick or caring for a loved one with COVID-19 * employees caring for children affected by school and daycare closures   The leave length is flexible and linked to guidance from the Chief Medical Officer.  To be eligible, employees:   * will not be required to have a medical note * do not need to have worked for an employer for 90 days |
| **Unpaid Leaves of Absence** | * All employees are eligible to take Personal and family responsibility leave of up to 5 unpaid days per year. The leave must be considered necessary for the health of the employee or for the employee to meet his/her family responsibilities in relation to the family member. * Staff who are working more than one job (and their employer is not allowing staff to work for more than one) can request a 2 month leave of absence with the option to extend. * Other unpaid leaves may be considered on a case by case basis. |
| **Emergency Isolation Support** | * Employees who do not have another source of pay or compensation while in self-isolation can apply for this one-time payment of $1,146 if you meet the Government of Alberta’s criteria for self-isolation. This includes persons who are the sole caregiver for a dependent who must self-isolate because they meet the public health criteria.   The program will be accessible by an online application through [Alberta.ca](https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-supports-for-albertans.aspx) |
| **NEW: CERB**  **Canada Emergency Response Benefit** | * **CERB** aid will replace the two announced benefits last week: *Emergency Care Benefit and Emergency Support Benefit*   The Canadian Government will provide $2,000 per month, up to 4 months, after which if they were laid off due to COVID-19 they will be switched-over to standard EI if they are still out of work.  People who qualify include:   * workers who are sick, * quarantined or have been laid off due to COVID-19, * parents with sick family members, * children or kids who must stay home because schools and daycares are closed, * Individuals who are self-employed and losing work or closing up shop due to the virus.   Please refer to the attached chart for more information.  Double click the icon to open the document. |
| **More Information on Government Supports** | <https://youcanbenefit.edmonton.ca/browse-programs/COVID19> Click on the details link. |

1. **What if I need to be home to care for someone due to a school or child care closure?**

The first step is to consult with your program manager and Vice President to see if alternate hours of work or working from home is possible in your position, until alternative care for your dependant can be set up. Note: many of the positions in the organization are not able to be accommodated in terms of working from home. The Agency will be flexible where possible.

If alternative arrangements can’t be made, sick time, vacation, personal wellness days, or leave without pay may be used to provide a reasonable period of time for you to secure alternate care arrangements.

1. **What if I prefer to work from home because I’m concerned about contracting illness from others?**

The Agency is taking a proactive approach on working from home, to help prevent the spread of the virus. Specifically, anyone who can reasonably and appropriately conduct their work from home will be strongly encouraged to do so. Please work with your program manager and Vice President on determining whether your position is able to work from home. Note: Many of the positions in the organization are not able to be accommodated in terms of working from home. The Agency will be flexible where possible.

**For employees who are in positions where the nature of work is such that they are unable to work from home:** Consistent with Alberta Health Services' assessment, employees are asked to continue attending work and to practice social distancing and other preventative measures such as hand hygiene and using appropriate PPE where required. To ensure business continuity and workforce planning preparedness, it is essential we have sufficient staffing available to serve vulnerable clients in critical areas and to maintain agency operations. Accordingly, only vacation requests up to 3 days may be considered. Leaves will only be considered if there are extenuating circumstances and on a case by case basis, approved by the Vice President.

**How do I know how much vacation, sick time and personal wellness day balances I have?**

You can view your balances on your pay statements. Go to the Portal, click on Employee Profile E-statement on the menu on the left side, click on E-Statement on the top menu bar. Questions can be directed to Payroll.

**What do I tell staff who are inquiring how to get their Record of Employment (ROE)?**

A Record of Employment (ROE) will be electronically sent to Service Canada when the last pay is deposited. It is the staff responsibility to apply for government benefits.

If staff have not created an account or requested an access code, we strongly recommend that staff do so as soon as possible, to avoid any additional delays

To access your ROE, go to: [My Service Canada Account](https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/my-account.html). You can register for a My Service Canada Account by following the instructions in the “*New Users*” section of theweb page. This can be completed before your ROE is issued.

If staff require assistance registering or using My Service Account, call Service Canada at **1-800-206-7218.**

**Additional Information For Supervisors**

COVID-19 pay codes have been created in Kronos in order to track all expenses related to managing through this COVID-19 period. These pay codes are not in addition to normal accruals. Program Managers please report all absences to your Vice Presidents. The codes are COVSIC (Sick), COVWEL (Wellness) and COVVAC (Vacation).

Future updates will be communicated on the [COVID-19 Staff Resources](https://covid.cssalberta.ca/) website as the situation evolves.

**What should I do if an employee is sick, or is requesting leave or accommodation relating to COVID-19?**

The following table outlines how supervisors should respond to employees requesting leave or accommodation in different situations. Please be advised that this direction is based on the current state; as the situation evolves, the direction may change. Any updates to this information will be communicated to employees.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Situation in which employee is requesting leave and/or accommodation** | **Direction to Supervisors** |
| Employee has been diagnosed with COVID-19 | For full-time, part-time or contract employees who work a minimum of 20 guaranteed awake hours per week, enter sick time and start the processes for short term disability or EI depending on your employee’s benefits options. Employees without sick time or short-term disability benefits can apply for Employment Insurance.  Contact [disabilitymanagement@cssalberta.ca](mailto:disabilitymanagement@cssalberta.ca) for additional information on the required forms to start the short term disability or Employment Insurance processes. |
| Employee is under a government-directed quarantine | The program manager and Vice President will review whether work from home arrangements can be provided. If yes – employees will be paid regular salary while the employee is self-isolating and working from home. If working from home is NOT possible, individual cases will be managed to determine continued eligibility for leave with pay during the quarantine period. Employees will be encouraged to follow the Government of [Canada’s travel advisories](https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/latest-travel-health-advice.html). While the Agency cannot prevent an employee from making a personal trip, an employee’s decision to travel may impact the employee’s ability to gain future access to work in any Agency location or worksite.  Each employee must make this decision and the Agency will not bear the costs associated with decisions to cancel personal travel unrelated to work or any quarantine period required after the travel has occurred. Case by case exceptions may be granted by the employee’s Vice President or a member of the C-Team.  Please review the options listed above such as sick-time, vacation, personal wellness days, etc for employees who have been quarantined for all other reasons other than personal travel. |
| Employee is self-isolating in accordance with AHS protocols - may be showing symptoms or not showing symptoms (no COVID-19 diagnosis) | The program manager and Vice President should review whether work from home arrangements can be provided. If yes – employees will be paid regular salary while the employee is self-isolating and working from home. If working from home is NOT possible, inform employee of the other options as described above. |
| Employees with known COVID-19 risk factors such as high blood pressure, heart disease, lung disease, cancer, diabetes or 60+ years of age. | The program manager and Vice President should review whether a work condition puts the employee at risk, and if so, alternative work and/or work from home arrangements can be provided.  If alternate arrangements are not feasible, the program manager may approve the use of sick time, vacation, personal wellness days. If the employee does not have sick time, vacation or personal wellness days, the supervisor may approve leave without pay, subject to operational requirements. |
| Full time employee is requesting leave to care for their dependants as a result of school and/or child care closure | The program manager and Vice President should review whether short-term alternative work and/or work from home arrangements can be provided. Alternative work arrangements could include amending hours of work. If alternate arrangements are not feasible, the program manager in consultation with the Vice President, may decide that vacation or personal wellness days may be used. If the employee does not have vacation or personal wellness days, the employee may be able to access unpaid Personal and Family Responsibility leave or job protected leave, if they have any days remaining for this year. Leaves without pay may be approved subject to operational requirements. The intent of this leave period is for the employee to arrange alternate child care and is not intended to be for a long duration.  CSS staff are considered essential workers and are eligible for day care support. |
| Contract or Replacement employee is requesting leave to care for their dependants as a result of school and/or child care closure | The program manager and Vice President should review whether short-term alternative work and/or work from home arrangements can be provided. Alternative work arrangements could include amending hours of work. If alternate arrangements are not feasible, the program manager in consultation with the Vice President may be able to access Personal and Family Responsibility leave or job protected leave, if they have any days remaining for this year. Leaves without pay may be approved subject to operational requirements. The intent of this leave period is for the employee to arrange alternate child care and is not intended to be for a long duration. |
| All other cases of employees requesting leave | Vacation up to 3 days may be considered. To ensure business continuity and workforce planning preparedness, it is essential we have sufficient staffing available to serve vulnerable clients in critical areas and to maintain agency operations. Accordingly, and with the exception of those on leave for self-quarantine purposes, any new requests for leave of absence will be denied. For employees with extenuating circumstances, exceptions may be made with the approval of the Vice President. |
| Staff requesting a leave due to working a second job and their alternate employer is not allowing them to work more than one job | Staff can choose between a unpaid leave of absence for 2 months, (with the option to extend) use of vacation or a combination of both.  Staff may be asked to share notice from their second employer. |