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

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| **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 13, 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. Added ROE information. |
| V.7 | Sep 9, 2020 | Update to the Job Protected Leave information and removed reference to the Emergency Isolation Support benefit as this is no longer available. |
| V.9 | Sep 28, 2020 | Added the three (3) new Recovery Benefits introduced by the Federal government, updated the changes that have been made to Employment Insurance (EI) requirements. Removed reference to the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) |

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.

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| **Benefit Coverage or Leave Options** | **Key Information** |
| **Paid Sick Leave** | * 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. * Please note, approval and receipt of benefits depends on medical and contractual verification completed by Sun Life |
| **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. Taxable Benefit). * 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 (Non-Taxable Benefit). * 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**  **Employment Insurance (EI)** | Employees on Flex 1 or those that do not qualify for STD/LTD benefits  Employment Insurance (EI) sickness benefits can provide up to 15 weeks of financial assistance if an employee cannot work for medical reasons. Employees could receive 55% of their earnings up to a maximum of $573 a week.  The employee must get a medical certificate to show that he/she is unable to work for medical reasons. Medical reasons include illness, injury, quarantine or any medical condition that prevents an employee from working.  As of September 27, 2020, there are some temporary changes to the EI program to help Canadians access EI regular benefits. The following changes will be in effect for one (1) year (These benefits will replace the previous CERB payments):  Regular EI Eligibility:   * Applicants may receive at least 26 weeks of regular benefits. * 120 insured hours of work is required to qualify for EI in the previous 52 weeks. A one-time credit of 300 insured hours will be provided to help meetthe required 420 insured hours of work as follows: * stopped working through no fault of your own * have not quit your job voluntarily * are ready, willing and capable of working each day (EI regular benefits) * are temporarily unable to work while you care for someone else or yourself (EI maternity, parental, sickness, compassionate care, and family caregiver benefits) * If an applicant is eligible for EI benefits they will receive a **minimum** taxable benefit of $500 per week, or $300 per week for extended parental benefits. For most applicants, the basic rate for calculating EI benefits is 55% of their average insurable weekly earnings, up to a maximum amount. As of January 1, 2020, the maximum yearly insurable earnings amount is $54,200. This means that an applicant can receive a maximum amount of $573 per week. * For those who applied to CERB, the 52-week period to accumulate insured hours will be extended. * This is a taxable benefit |
| **New Recovery Benefits as of September 27, 2020** | * **The Canada Recovery Benefit (CRB**) will provide $500 per week for up to 26 weeks, to workers who are self-employed or **are not eligible for Employment Insurance (EI)** and who still require income support and who are available and looking for work. * Applicants may be eligible for this benefit if they:   + are not eligible for EI   + reside and are present in Canada for their application period   + earned a minimum of $5,000 in 2019, in 2020, or in the 12 months preceding their first application for this benefit from one or more of the following sources: employment income, self-employment income, Employment Insurance (EI) maternity or parental benefits   + have stopped working due to the COVID-19 pandemic and are available and looking for work; or are working and have had a reduction in their employment/self-employment income for reasons related to COVID-19   + have had a reduction of at least 50% in your employment/self-employment income for reasons related to COVID-19   + have not quit their job voluntarily   + are not receiving the Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit (CRCB), the Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit (CRSB), short-term disability benefits, workers’ compensation benefits, any Employment Insurance (EI) benefits for the week for which they are applying.   + To encourage claimants to return to work, they would be able to earn income from employment and/or self-employment while receiving the benefit, as long as they continue to meet the other requirements. However, to ensure that the benefit targets those who need it most, claimants would need to repay some or all of the benefit through their income tax return if their annual net income, excluding the Canada Recovery Benefit payment, is over $38,000. In other words, claimants would need to repay $0.50 of the benefit for each dollar of their annual net income above $38,000 in the calendar year to a maximum of the amount of benefit they received.   + This is a taxable benefit * **The Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit (CRSB**) will provide $500 per week for up to two weeks, **for workers who are sick or must self-isolate for reasons related to COVID-19**.   Applicants may be eligible for this benefit if they:   * + reside and are present in Canada for their application period   + have earned at least $5,000 in 2019 or in 2020 or in the 12 months preceding their first application for this benefit from one or more of the following sources: employment income, self-employment income, Employment Insurance (EI) maternity or parental benefits   + have been unable to work for at least 50% of their normally scheduled work within a given week because of being sick or required to self-isolate for reasons related to the COVID-19 pandemic   + are not in receipt of paid leave from an employer in respect of the same week   + are not in receipt of the CERB, the EI Emergency Response Benefit (ERB), the Canada Recovery Benefit, the Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit, short-term disability benefits, workers’ compensation benefits in respect of the same week   + Workers would not be required to have a medical certificate to qualify for the benefit. Workers would need to have missed a minimum of 60% of their scheduled work in the week for which they claim the benefit.   + This is a taxable benefit. * **The Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit (CRCB)** will provide $500 per week for up to 26 weeks per household, for eligible applicants unable to work because they must care for:   + a child under age 12 due to the closures of schools or daycares because of COVID-19   + a family member with a disability or a dependent because their day program or care facility is closed due to COVID-19   + a child, a family member with a disability, or a dependent who is not attending school, daycare, or other care facilities under the advice of a medical professional due to being at high-risk if they contract COVID-19.   Applicants may be eligible for this benefit if they:   * are the only individual from their household claiming this benefit for the week in which they are applying * individuals need to reside in Canada * are not in receipt of paid leave from an employer in respect of the same week * are not in in receipt of the CERB, the EI Emergency Response Benefit (ERB), the Canada Recovery Benefit, the Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit, short-term disability benefits, workers’ compensation benefits, or any EI benefits in respect of the same week * This is a taxable benefit   Find more information on the eligibility criteria and how to apply by contacting the Canadian Government’s automated telephone service at **1-833-966-2099 or at** [**https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei.html**](https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei.html) |
| **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. 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 leave of absence with the option to extend. * Other unpaid leaves may be considered on a case by case basis. |
| **More Information on Government Supports** | [https://youcanbenefit.edmonton.ca/browse-programs/COVID19](https://youcanbenefit.edmonton.ca/browse-programs/COVID19/details/x5ifl7j8p614c26xohEfHw6DPK)  Click on the link for details |

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. Leaves will only be considered if there are extenuating circumstances and on a case by case basis, approved by the Vice President.

1. **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.

1. **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.

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| **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.  Contact [disabilitymanagement@cssalberta.ca](mailto:disabilitymanagement@cssalberta.ca) so we can support the employee with additional information and track the COVID cases. |
| 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.  Contact [disabilitymanagement@cssalberta.ca](mailto:disabilitymanagement@cssalberta.ca) so we can support the employee with additional information and track the COVID cases. |
| 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 sick time, vacation or personal wellness days may be used. If the employee does not have sick time, vacation or personal wellness days, the employee may be able to access unpaid Personal and Family Responsibility leave or job protected leave. 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 | 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 an unpaid leave of absence, (with the option to extend) use of vacation or a combination of both.  Staff may be asked to share notice from their second employer. |