

# CANADIAN WORKERS' COMPENSATION DIGEST

Volume 1 Issue 3

COVID-19  
Update Roundup



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# A MESSAGE FROM TEKSMED

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During this time of unprecedented global concern caused by the spread of the novel coronavirus, rapid access to accurate, up-to-date information is more important than ever. Here at TeksMed, we are committed to positively contributing to the awareness and overall well-being of our community.

This digest serves as a resource for workers, employers, our clients, and the general public to find information regarding COVID-19, and the ways it may affect us all.

If you still have any questions regarding COVID-19 and what it means for workers, employers, and workers' compensation boards, please email **[info@teksmed.com](mailto:info@teksmed.com)** or visit **<https://teksmed.com/covid-19-information/>**

Employers are raising many questions about workers' compensation coverage and reporting responsibilities – find answers here:

**<https://teksmed.com/covid-19-workers-compensation-coverage/>**

Answers to some of the questions our clients are asking during this COVID-19 pandemic relating to Short Term Disability (STD) coverage and sick leave:

**<https://teksmed.com/covid-19-short-term-disability-absence/>**



# NATIONAL



## **Sounding Board: When is Coronavirus Considered Work-Related?**

With the World Health Organization declaring the novel coronavirus a pandemic, Canadian employers should prepare for the worst and plan how to respond to various employment-related issues that could arise if the virus continues to spread.

<https://www.benefitscanada.com/news/sounding-board-when-is-coronavirus-considered-work-related-143814>



## **Remote Work: Maintaining our Health, Safety, and Distance**

The outside may be a lot quieter and the streets much emptier these days, but in homes throughout the country, people are busy working in an effort to keep organizations, governments and businesses going. The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has challenged employers to equip their workers with the tools they need in order to do their jobs safely at home, and it's important that this focus includes both mental and physical health.

<https://www.ccohs.ca/newsletters/hsreport/issues/current.html#hsreport-ontopic>





## Socially Bridge the Physical Distance

The COVID-19 global pandemic is a challenging time. Preparation, positivity and patience go a long way in protecting our collective health as we all navigate this unprecedented event together. However, feeling anxious along the way is understandable.



On the one hand, we are frequently reminded to keep a minimum 2m distance from one another in order to prevent the spread of infection. For many workers, this takes away the opportunity for many of their daily interactions. On the other hand, we still need to maintain social connection to prevent those feelings of isolation and loneliness. While it may be challenging, it is possible to stay connected.

<https://www.ccohs.ca/newsletters/hsreport/issues/current.html#hsreport-ontopic>

## Be Ready for New Strains on Worker Health

The identification of the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) in China in late 2019 has highlighted the need for workplaces in Canada to follow good practices to minimize the potential for infection. Coronaviruses are a large family of common viruses that are typically associated with mild illnesses. However, novel strains can develop into serious diseases, including Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV).

<https://www.ccohs.ca/newsletters/hsreport/issues/2020/02/ezone.html#hsreport-ontopic>



# BRITISH COLUMBIA

## Helping Employers Address COVID-19 in the Workplace

Orders from the Provincial Health Officer (PHO) and guidance to employers and businesses provided by the BC Centre of Disease Control represent the minimum standard that employers must meet to comply with obligations to ensure worker health and safety.

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/about-us/guides/preventing-exposure-to-covid-19-in-the-workplace?lang=en>

## COVID-19 and the Workplace

As information about COVID-19 develops, WorkSafeBC continues to monitor the progression of the virus and refer to the guidance of public health officials.

WorkSafeBC is advising employers and workers to follow the recommended personal hygiene practices like frequent hand washing, avoiding touching your face, and avoiding direct contact with others.

Worksafe BC has summarized the recommendations for some key workplace issues related to COVID-19.

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/news-events/announcements/2020/March/covid-19-and-the-workplace>

## Health and Safety Responsibilities When Working from Home

Employers are asked to consider having employees work remotely (i.e. work at home) where practicable, as part of efforts to slow the progression of COVID-19 (coronavirus) through social distancing.

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/news-events/announcements/2020/March/health-safety-responsibilities-when-working-from-home>



## COVID-19 Information for Workers and Employers

As we come together to fight the spread of illness, you may have questions about new claims, existing claims or WCB coverage. WCB-Alberta's COVID-19 information page and fact sheets explain what you can expect from them & what temporary changes to programs & services mean for you.

<https://www.wcb.ab.ca/about-wcb/news-and-announcements/covid-19.html>

## COVID-19 Update: Employee Fact Sheet

In some circumstances, your staff may be covered if they contract COVID-19 while at work. WCB-Alberta's employer fact sheet explains workers' compensation coverage and reporting if a member of your staff contracts the novel coronavirus while on the job.

[https://www.wcb.ab.ca/assets/pdfs/employers/EFS\\_COVID-19.pdf](https://www.wcb.ab.ca/assets/pdfs/employers/EFS_COVID-19.pdf)



## Premium Relief for Employers

In March 2020 the Alberta government announced new measures to provide immediate financial support to private sector employers during the COVID-19 outbreak:

- All private sector employers will have their 2020 WCB premiums deferred to 2021.
- When WCB Alberta resumes invoicing for 2020 premiums in 2021, small and medium-sized private sector employers will have 50 per cent of their 2020 premiums waived.

[https://www.wcb.ab.ca/assets/pdfs/employers/EFS\\_Premium\\_relief.pdf](https://www.wcb.ab.ca/assets/pdfs/employers/EFS_Premium_relief.pdf)



# SASKATCHEWAN

## When COVID-19 May Be Work-Related

A worker may be entitled to compensation if there is a confirmed link between the workers' exposure and their employment, and they contract COVID-19. Based on WCB policy, Injuries – Communicable Disease (POL 02/2010), the following conditions must be met:

- There is confirmed exposure to the disease in the workplace.

PLUS

- The time period that the illness is contracted is in close proximity to the confirmed workplace exposure.

PLUS

- The nature of employment creates a greater risk of exposure for the worker than to the general population.

<http://www.wcbsask.com/information-for-workers-on-covid-19/>

## Managing Your Mental Health Through COVID-19: Tools to Help You Cope

COVID-19 has many people anxious about their personal safety and many are worried about their safety at work as well. Some amount of anxiety is normal and can help to keep us safe, but it's important to keep it at a manageable level.

<http://www.worksafesask.ca/managing-your-mental-health-through-covid-19-tools-to-help-you-cope/>







# MANITOBA

## Information for Workplaces and Employees

Employers are urged to direct employees to use good hygiene to prevent the spread of COVID-19. This includes washing your hands frequently, practising good cough and sneeze hygiene, and staying home when they are sick.

Under The Workplace Safety and Health Act, workers have the right to refuse work that they reasonably believe constitutes a danger to their safety and health, or that of another person should they perform the task.

<https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/infomanitobans/workplaces.html>

## WCB Manitoba's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the state of emergency declared by the Province of Manitoba, businesses are experiencing dramatic changes as they attempt to apply social distancing strategies in the workplace, and in some circumstances, have extended continuance pay or issued temporary lay-offs.

Given the economic uncertainties, businesses may be challenged with cash flow and require temporary relief from their WCB payment obligations.

<https://www.wcb.mb.ca/wcb%E2%80%99s-response-to-the-covid-19-pandemic>

## Q and A for Workers on Coronavirus (COVID-19) Claims

Work-related injuries and illnesses, in some cases including COVID-19, have always been and continue to be covered by WCB Manitoba and are determined on a case-by-case basis.

Most instances of COVID-19 are not work-related. However, the nature and type of work you do may put you at greater risk of contracting the virus than the general public. Nurses, health care aides and other direct care providers in hospitals or long-term care facilities are some examples of workers who may be at greater risk.

<https://www.wcb.mb.ca/q-and-a-for-workers-on-coronavirus-covid-19-claims>



# ONTARIO

## **WSIB Announces \$1.9 Billion in Financial Relief for Ontario Businesses**

The Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB), in conjunction with the Government of Ontario, has developed a financial relief package worth \$1.9 billion to help employers reduce the financial burden of the rapidly evolving COVID-19 situation.

<https://www.wsib.ca/en/news-release/wsib-announces-19-billion-financial-relief-ontario-businesses>

## **Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update**

WSIB is continuing to pay all wage-loss benefits and they have ensured all loss-of-earning (LOE) benefits are up to date. They also have staff in place to help manage any new claims as quickly as possible.

If your workplace shuts down temporarily, you will continue to receive the same benefits that you were receiving at the time of the shut-down.

<https://www.wsib.ca/en/novel-coronavirus-covid-19-update>

## **Ontario Extends Working-at-Heights Certifications During COVID-19**

The working-at-heights training of more than 120,000 Ontario workers is set to expire over the next six months.

This training is mandatory, but many training providers have shut down due to the COVID-19 outbreak, according to a news release issued by the provincial government.

<https://www.ohscanada.com/ontario-extends-working-heights-certifications-covid-19/>





## Ontario Introduces \$17B COVID-19 Package, More Than Doubles Deficit

Ontario introduced a \$17-billion package to support the province through the COVID-19 outbreak, including an influx of cash for the health sector, direct payments to parents, and tax breaks for businesses.



<https://www.ohscanada.com/ontario-introduces-17b-covid-19-package-doubles-deficit/>

## Ontario Ordering Non-Essential Businesses to Close

Ontario Premier Doug Ford ordered the closure of all non-essential businesses in the province to help curb the spread of COVID-19.

The new non-essential business order follows the declaration of a state of emergency, which ordered the closure of all facilities providing indoor recreation programs, all public libraries, all private schools, all licensed childcare centres, all theatres, cinemas and concert venues, and all bars and restaurants except to provide takeout food and delivery.



<https://www.ohscanada.com/ontario-ordering-non-essential-businesses-close/>



## Quebec to Close Non-Essential Businesses as COVID-19 Cases Spike



Quebec Premier Francois Legault hit the “pause” button on his province’s economy ordering all non-essential businesses to close as the number of COVID-19 cases more than doubled to 628.

<https://www.ohscanada.com/quebec-close-non-essential-businesses-april-13-covid-19-cases-spike/>

## CNESST Flexibility Measures For Employers and Workers in the Context of COVID-19

In order to help clients during this period related to coronavirus (COVID-19), the Commission des normes, de l’équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CNESST) is implementing exceptional measures of flexibility.

The CNESST intends, among other things, to be flexible towards clients and will be tolerant in regards to deadlines for fulfilling obligations as set by law. This measure does not, however, affect obligations regarding compliance with occupational health and safety rules, which will continue to apply, particularly in the current context.

Full French Article: <https://www.cnesst.gouv.qc.ca/salle-de-presse/communiqués/Pages/20-mars-2020-quebec.aspx>



# NEW BRUNSWICK

## Staying Safe at Work & Personal Protective Equipment (COVID-19)

It is recommended that workplaces adopt an employee screening process for staff and visitors before they enter the workplace.

WorkSafeNB also recommends that workers who must enter homes or offices, other than their own, to perform their work (such as contractors, plumbers, appliance repair etc.) should use a screening process to ensure their safety. Ideally, the screening would take place when the homeowner or business requests a service call.

<https://www.worksafenb.ca/about-us/news-and-events/news/2020/staying-safe-at-work-personal-protective-equipment-covid-19/>



## Managing Anxiety and Worry During COVID-19

We are currently experiencing unprecedented times. Virtually every part of daily life is being upended or disrupted in some way.

The emotions of anxiety and fear in confronting a threat like COVID-19 are part of the survival instinct. Anxiety might become problematic when it becomes persistent or impairs day-to-day tasks, rational decision-making, and maintaining healthy relationships.

<https://www.worksafenb.ca/about-us/news-and-events/news/2020/managing-anxiety-and-worry-during-covid-19/>

# NEW BRUNSWICK

## New COVID-19 Prevention Tool for Workplaces



The Public Health Agency of Canada, in collaboration with Canadian public health experts, has issued 12 preventive measures for slowing the spread of COVID-19 in workplaces. WorkSafeNB supports these measures and has developed an interactive document to help New Brunswick workplaces evaluate and monitor their activities and responses to these measures.

<https://www.worksafenb.ca/safety-topics/covid-19/new-covid-19-prevention-tool-for-workplaces/>

## Working Safely from Home

As workplaces try to prevent the spread of COVID-19, employees may find themselves unconventionally working from home. While working from home has clear advantages, it's important to remember that new work spaces can pose concerns.



<https://www.worksafenb.ca/safety-topics/covid-19/working-safely-from-home/>

# NOVA SCOTIA

## Working Safely During the Coronavirus Pandemic

Adjusting to the new realities brought on by the coronavirus pandemic has meant big changes for just about every workplace in Nova Scotia. Public health requirements aimed at reducing risk and flattening the curve have limited social gatherings, and encouraged heightened levels of hygiene such as hand-washing and frequent cleaning for high-touch surfaces. They also mandate self-isolation for returning travellers and their contacts, and social distancing for everyone else.



<http://www.worksafeforlife.ca/Home/About-Us/Safety-Matters-Blog/PostId/299/working-safely-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic>

## Increased Number of Screening Tests for COVID-19; Health System Preparations



Premier Stephen McNeil, Dr. Robert Strang, Nova Scotia's Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Brendan Carr, President and CEO of the Nova Scotia Health Authority, and Dr. Krista Jangaard, President and Executive Director of the IWK Health Center, provided an update on the health care system and efforts to help Nova Scotians cope with COVID-19.

<https://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20200326004>



# PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

## WCB PEI Defers Employer Assessment Due Dates

As the global pandemic of Covid-19 evolves, WCB PEI has taken many steps to support Island workers and employers.

While their building is closed to the public, WCB PEI has maintained services and supports for employers and workers by phone and email. Also, any new employer payroll audits have been deferred, and benefit payments for eligible workers are continuing to be processed as quickly as possible. They are supporting opportunities for telehealth/rehabilitation to support injured workers and local service providers. As well, the independent offices of the worker and employer advisor continue to offer services via phone and email.

<http://www.wcb.pe.ca/Information/NewsItem/499>

## COVID-19: Workplace Health and Safety Information

The following provides workplace health and safety information for Island workers and employers during COVID-19. Please check here frequently for updated information.

The Workers Compensation Board (WCB) urges all employers and workers to follow the recommendations of the PEI Chief Public Health Office during the COVID-19 crisis.

<http://www.wcb.pe.ca/Information/NewsItem/497>





# NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

## COVID-19 Client Service Updates

WorkplaceNL wants to reassure clients that all wage-loss benefits associated with an active work-related injury claim will continue. Issuing payments to injured workers is a priority for them as they operate at reduced capacity in order to practice social distancing.

Any worker in receipt of benefits who is not yet set up for direct deposit is urged to do so by submitting a Direct Deposit Authorization form.

<https://workplacenl.ca/article/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/>

## WorkplaceNL Reassures Injured Workers That Benefits Will Continue

WorkplaceNL wishes to reassure its injured worker clients that all wage-loss benefits associated with an active work-related injury claim will continue.

Issuing payments to injured workers remains a priority for WorkplaceNL as it operates at reduced capacity in order to practice social distancing.

They understand if clients are not able or not comfortable attending health care appointments relating to their claim during the COVID-19 pandemic. They do not need to notify their case manager and it will not affect their benefits.

<https://workplacenl.ca/article/workplacenl-reassures-injured-workers-that-benefits-will-continue/>

# NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

## **COVID-19 and the Workplace: Guidance and Risk Assessment Tool for Employers in the Northwest Territories.**

The Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission (WSCC) has developed a risk assessment tool to guide employers in determining if a worker can safely be on the worksite or not under the current direction of the Chief Public Health Officers.

The guidance (available on the WSCC website) includes recommendations from the Office of the Chief Public Health Officer in NT and practical tools for conducting a risk assessment and establishing a protocol to prevent the risk of transmission by an essential service worker.

<https://wsc.nt.ca/news/media-release-covid-19-and-workplace-guidance-and-risk-assessment-tool-employers-northwest>

## **Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Update for Employers and Workers**

WSCC NT knows that employers and workers in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories are concerned about the risk of exposure to COVID-19.

Employers have a responsibility to develop policies and procedures to protect their workers and to keep them informed. Employers should develop or review business continuity or emergency response plans, and prepare proactively for the possibility that COVID-19 could impact their workplace.

In order to prepare, they recommend plans are made to protect the health and safety of workers, limit spread in workplaces, and ensure continuity of critical services if staff are ill or self-isolating.



<https://www.wsc.nt.ca/news/coronavirus-covid-19-%E2%80%93-update-employers-and-workers>



## **Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board Proud to Participate in COVID-19 Economic Stimulus Package**

Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board (YWCHSB) congratulates the Government of Yukon on its economic stimulus package that is designed to support local workers and businesses impacted by COVID-19. YWCHSB is proud to participate in this important initiative. The challenges facing employers and workers around the world as a result of COVID-19 necessitate actions that will help safeguard businesses' financial stability as well as promote health and safety measures in workplaces.

<https://wcb.yk.ca/PG-0042/News-Releases/NEWS-0092.aspx>

## **New Financial Support for Yukon Businesses and Workers**

The Government of Yukon announced economic supports related to COVID-19.

A new rebate program for Yukon employers to benefit workers and self-employed individuals in response to the economic impacts of COVID-19 was announced by Minister Pillai.



<https://yukon.ca/en/news/new-financial-support-yukon-businesses-and-workers>

# MORE ABOUT TEKS**MED**

Thousands of businesses across Canada trust us with their disability management. Call us and start saving money. Our program literally pays for itself! For more information on our services, contact us today:

**TeksMed.com**

**T: 1-844-835-7253 (TEKSALE)**

**E: [info@teksmed.com](mailto:info@teksmed.com)**

## WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAY ABOUT US:

“We've successfully reduced our WorkSafeBC costs by 18.25% from last year! This represents approximately \$100,000 in direct savings for the province of BC. A big thank you to the TeksMed team for their efforts and the day-to-day guidance that has helped On Side achieve such great strides.”

- On Side Restoration | Director of Human Resources

“With guidance from Teksmed on managing our claims, we were able to develop a comprehensive modified duty program that allowed our workers to remain at work doing light duty while they healed. Our company went from 26 lost time accidents in a year to zero. Thank Teksmed, for your help and support.”

- Van Kam Freightways Ltd. | Health & Safety Officer

“In less than two years, TeksMed has reduced our claim costs by 67.5%. TeksMed's team of professionals has achieved its objective of reducing our claim costs and our administration. I would highly recommend TeksMed to anyone considering professional claims management services.”

- Wendy's | Safety & Security Manager



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