

BC Relief Plan – COVID-19 Provincial Support and Information

From: The Government of British Columbia

Date modified: 2020-03-26

Backgrounder

On March 23, 2020, the BC government announced a \$5 billion relief plan for BC residents and businesses affected by the current situation. This plan includes \$2.8 billion in support for individuals to weather the crisis and \$2.2 billion in relief for businesses and economic recovery. This alert summarizes the key support measures.

For complete coverage of the BC COVID-19 Provincial Support and Information, please refer to the following website

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support>

Get help with BC government services

Service available 7:30am – 8PM Pacific Time

Canada: 1-888-268-4319

International: 1-604-412-0957

Text: 1-604-630-0300

Talk to a Service BC agent about **non-health related information and services** such as

- Child care
- Travel restrictions
- Business and funding support

Taxes, Finances or Employment related key support measures

<p>BC Emergency Benefit for Workers</p>	<p>The BC Emergency Benefit for Workers will provide a one-time \$1,000 payment to people who lost income because of COVID-19</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BC residents who receive federal Employment Insurance, or the new federal Canada Emergency Response Benefit are eligible • Applications for the one-time payment will open soon • The one-time payment will be paid in May 2020
<p>Employee – New COVID-19 Leave</p>	<p>An employee can take unpaid, job-protected leave related to COVID-19 if they are unable to work for any of the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They have been diagnosed with COVID-19 and are following the instructions of a medical health officer or the advice of a doctor or nurse • They are in quarantine or self-isolation and are acting in accordance with an order of the provincial health officer, an order made under the Quarantine Act (Canada), guidelines from the BC Centre for Disease Control or guidelines from the Public Health Agency of Canada • Their employer has directed them not to work due to concern about their exposure to others • They need to provide care to their minor child or a dependent adult who is their child or former foster child for a reason related to COVID-19, including a school, daycare or similar facility closure • They are outside of BC and unable to return to work due to travel or border restrictions <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 Employment Standards Act.</p>
<p>Climate Action Tax Credit</p>	<p>A one-time enhancement to the climate action tax credit will be paid in July 2020 for moderate to low-income families:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An adult will receive up to \$218.00 (increased from \$43.50) • A child will receive \$64.00 (increased from \$12.75)

<p>Renters, Homeowners and People Experiencing Homelessness</p>	<p>Funding for housing supports are increased to ensure people can maintain their housing in the event of job or income loss</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The BC Government is offering a new temporary rental supplement to renters up to \$500 a month for the next three months to ensure BC residents affected by COVID-19 crisis can keep paying for their home. The support will be distributed through BC Housing and paid directly to landlords <p><i>The application process is under development. Information on basic eligibility will be available on BC Housing’s website in the next day or two, and the Application process will be available online in early April</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BC Housing has temporarily suspended evictions of tenants in subsidized and affordable housing due to non-payment of rent The BC Government is also applying a rent freeze effective April 1
<p>BC Student Loans</p>	<p>Starting March 30, 2020, BC student loan payments are automatically frozen for 6 months until September 30, 2020</p>
<p>Monthly Bills</p>	<p>BC Hydro</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers can defer bill payments or arrange for flexible payment plans with no penalty through the COVID-10 Customer Assistance Program https://www.bchydro.com/news/press_centre/news_releases/2020/bill-relief-covid-19.html Customers experience job loss, illness or lost wages due to COVID-19 can access grants up to \$600 to pay their hydro bills through the Customer Crisis Fund https://app.bchydro.com/accounts-billing/bill-payment/ways-to-pay/customer-crisis-fund.html <p>ICBC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers on a monthly payment plan who are facing financial challenges due to COVID-19 may defer their payment for up to 90 days with no penalty
<p>MSP Coverage</p>	<p>The MSP coverage wait period is waived for those returning from COVID-19 impacted areas, also for those who return to BC and it is found that they were outside of the province for longer than the allowance time period to maintain MSP coverage</p>

Support to businesses

<p>Deferred Tax Payments</p>	<p>Effective immediately, BC is extending filing and payment deadlines for the following taxes until September 30, 2020:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer health tax • Provincial sales tax (including municipal and regional district tax) • Carbon tax • Motor fuel tax • Tobacco tax
<p>Delayed PST Budget 2020 Tax Changes</p>	<p>The following tax changes announced in Budget 2020 will be postponed until further notice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminating the PST exemption for carbonated beverages that contain sugar, natural sweeteners or artificial sweeteners • Expanded registration requirements for Canadian sellers of goods, along with Canadian and foreign sellers of software and telecommunication services
<p>Delayed Carbon Tax Increase</p>	<p>Carbon tax rates will remain at their current levels until further notice. The tax measure announced in Budget 2020 aligning the carbon tax rates with the federal carbon pricing backstop is also postponed until further notice</p>
<p>Reduced School Tax Rates for Businesses</p>	<p>School tax rates for commercial properties (Classes 4, 5 and 6) will be reduced by 50% for the 2020 tax year</p>
<p>Enhance BC Climate Action Tax Credit</p>	<p>An additional one-time payment will be made in July 2020 on top of the regular climate action tax credit amount for qualifying individuals and families.</p> <p>The previously scheduled credit increase effective July 2020 remains the same.</p>
<p>Handling Absences & Other Disruptions</p>	<p>What you must do if employees fall ill, are absent from work or your business is unexpectedly disrupted</p> <p>https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/employment-standards-advice/employment-standards/handling-disruptions</p>

Funding for Child Care Providers	On 20 March 2020, the BC government announced emergency funding to help support licensed child care providers that wish to stay open in order to support families and front-line workers as well as those that are closed due to the current situation. Those centres that are closed will receive support to help cover fixed costs.
---	---