

COVID 19 – BULLETIN #10 Federal and Provincial Updates

RELEASE DATE May 14, 2020

The purpose of this bulletin is to supply updated information provided by the Canadian government regarding the Federal Government's initiatives and advice, as well as supplying a province-by-province list of updated information on the measures being taken across Canada.

AS OF May 14, 2020:

*This bulletin is current to the morning of **May 14, 2020**. Please note that while we continue to monitor the situation, the circumstances remain very fluid as legislative and government rules and policies are ever changing. The responses of federal and provincial governments will continue to evolve, and this may impact the accuracy of the information in this bulletin and any information is subject to revision with the introduction of new or additional government guidelines.*

FEDERAL NEWS UPDATES

- On April 29th, Prime Minister and the Premiers announced a set of national guidelines that provide standards for provinces and territories when reopening their economies.
 - The guidelines can be found here, <https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2020/04/28/prime-minister-releases-joint-statement-first-ministers-restarting>
- Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (“CEWS”) will be extended beyond June 6, 2020, when it is currently set to end.
- Wage top-ups for essential workers continue to be negotiated with the provinces and territories. Some provinces have signed agreements with the Government
- Canada Emergency Student Benefit (CESB) has been implemented and starting tomorrow, Friday, May 15, students and recent graduates can start applying for the CESB by visiting the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) website.
- The creation of a Regional Relief and Recovery Fund will now allow money to flow to businesses through its six Regional Development Agencies (West, North, Atlantic, Quebec, and Northern and Southern Ontario) to help seasonal and regional businesses get through the crisis.
 - Trudeau encouraged businesses to reach out to the RDAs now for support.
- Discussions continue between Canada and the United States on the issue of the border closure.
 - Currently the Canada-US border closure order is set to expire on May 21. Trudeau said talks are productive, yet announcements are not ready to be made.
- To date, 500,000 businesses have received loans from the Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA).
- Over 120,000 employers have been approved to receive the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS).

BRITISH COLUMBIA

- The *Employment Standards Regulation*, B.C. Reg. 396/95 was amended to extend the length of a temporary layoff during the COVID-19 emergency.
 - Prior to this amendment, a temporary layoff was limited to 13 weeks in a period of 20 consecutive weeks.
 - As a result of this amendment, the temporary layoff period may now extend for up to 16 weeks in any period of 20 consecutive weeks where the COVID-19 emergency is a cause of all or part of the layoff.
 - The COVID-19 emergency temporary layoff provisions are temporary and will be repealed once they are no longer necessary.
- Premier John Horgan unveiled the provincial government's plan to safely restart British Columbia.
- The 'B.C. Restart Plan' outlines a process to gradually lift restrictions on social and economic activities, and allow for the safe reopening of various sectors and businesses closed or impacted by COVID-19.
 - Certain sectors will be asked to develop 'enhanced protocols' for operating safely and in accordance with public health and safety guidelines
 - Resources to assist businesses and sectors as they restart their activities including new Health Guidelines and Checklists will be available at WorkSafeBC.com.
- Employers will be required to:
 - Review the new Health and Safety Guidelines, best practices, and other resources at WorkSafeBC.com
 - Adapt these materials into appropriate COVID Safe Plans for each workplace.
- The Plan is broken down into four phases:
 - Phase 1
 - Essential services and others able to continue operations under existing public health orders and guidelines.
 - Phase 2 (Mid-May onward) Under enhanced protocols:
 - Restoration of health services, including rescheduling elective surgery
 - Medically related services (dentistry, physiotherapy, RMT, chiropractors, speech therapy, physical therapy, and similar services)
 - Retail
 - Hair salons/barbers and other personal service establishments
 - In-person counselling
 - Restaurants/cafes/pubs (with sufficient distancing measures)
 - Museums, art galleries, libraries
 - Office-based worksites
 - Recreation/sports
 - Parks, beaches, and outdoor spaces (parks that can accommodate physical distancing will be open for day use only beginning today, May 14, 2020)
 - Childcare
 - Small social gatherings (2-6 people)
 - Recalling the provincial legislature
 - Phase 3 (June-September, if transmission rate remains low or in decline) Under enhanced protocols:
 - Hotels and resorts (June)

- Parks – broader opening (overnight camping to reopen June 1)
 - Film industry, beginning with domestic productions (June/July)
 - Select entertainment – movies and symphony, but not large concerts (July)
 - Post-secondary education – mix of online and in-class (September)
 - K-12 education – partial return in June; full return in September (further announcements expected in the coming weeks)
 - Phase 4 (TBD) – conditional on at least one of wide vaccination; community immunity or broad successful treatments
 - Large gatherings, such as conventions, live audience professional sports and concerts
 - International tourism
- Employers are advised in the B.C. Restart Plan to:
 - Create clear workplace policies that ensure people with cold or flu symptoms do not come to work
 - Implement sick day policies that allow people to be off or work safely from home when they are ill or have symptoms of a cold or flu
 - Provide work from home options, when possible, to reduce contact intensity. When it's not an option, consider measures such as staggered shifts and virtual meetings accommodation.as much as possible
 - Implement strategies that reduce the number and intensity of contacts – from greater use of non-medical masks to more checkouts and increased shopping hours
 - Clean “high-touch” areas in workplaces and retail outlets frequently and provide hand sanitizer at entrances
 - Focus on higher-risk employees including those 60+ and those with underlying medical conditions – from more flexible hours, to work from home options and workspace
- More information and resources regarding the Plan are available on the British Columbia government website here, <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support/bc-restart-plan>.
- According to BC's Provincial Health Officer Dr. Henry, gatherings of two to six guests will be OK starting this weekend, if there's a strict understanding that no one will socialize if they have any symptoms of COVID-19. Dr. Henry stressed that people should not feel pressured into making changes to their day-to-day lives before they are personally ready.
- Vancouver city council has voted to push back the deadline for both residential and commercial property taxes this year from July 3 to Sept. 30.

ONTARIO

- The Ontario government released ‘A Framework for Reopening our Province’, which outlines the criteria on the loosening of emergency measures, as well as guiding principles for the safe, gradual reopening of businesses, services and public spaces.
 - Stage 1:
 - For businesses ordered to close or restrict operations, opening select workplaces that can immediately modify operations to meet public health guidance.

- Opening some outdoor spaces and allowing for a greater number of individuals to attend some events.
 - Hospitals will also begin to offer some non-urgent health care services and scheduled surgeries.
 - Stage 2:
 - Opening more workplaces, which may include some service industries and additional office and retail workplaces.
 - Some larger public gatherings would be allowed, and more outdoor spaces would open.
 - Stage 3:
 - Opening of all workplaces responsibly and further relaxing of restrictions on public gatherings.
- To reopen the economy, the government will measure:
 - A consistent two-to-four week decrease in the number of new daily COVID-19 cases
 - Sufficient acute and critical care capacity, including access to ventilators and PPE
 - Approximately 90 per cent of new COVID-19 contacts are being reached by local public health officials within one day
 - Ongoing testing of suspected COVID-19 cases to detect new outbreaks quickly.
- The Province released more than 60 guidelines for various business sectors to help steer the safe reopening and operation of specific workplaces.
 - Sector guidelines contain recommendations and tips for employers on how to keep workers safe on the job.
 - https://www.ontario.ca/page/resources-prevent-covid-19-workplace?_ga=2.258615434.1461890914.1588269926-1610310933.1584035138
- The following businesses and workplaces were able to reopen last week:
 - Garden centres and nurseries, as well as hardware stores and safety supply stores reopened to foot traffic under strict public health measures.
 - The same health and safety requirements that apply to grocery stores and pharmacies will apply, such as physical distancing, contactless payment options, and sanitizing surfaces regularly.
 - The list of allowable construction projects has been expanded to include demolition work related to essential construction projects and multi-unit residential projects such as condos and apartments (below grade work can continue; existing above-grade projects can continue).
 - Non-essential retail stores with a street entrance will be permitted to offer curbside pickup. Public health measures and workplace safety guidelines will have to be followed.
- Premier Doug Ford announced today that the following workplaces will re-open as of Saturday, May 16, 2020:
 - Golf courses will be able to open, with clubhouses open only for washrooms and restaurants open only for take-out.
 - Marinas, boat clubs and public boat launches may open for recreational use.
 - Private parks and campgrounds may open to enable preparation for the season and to allow access for trailers and recreational vehicles whose owners have a full season contract.

- Businesses that board animals, such as stables, may allow boarders to visit, care for or ride their animal.
- It was also announced today that retailers, seasonal businesses and health and community service providers who will be permitted to open or expand their services on Tuesday, May 19.
 - This is an extensive list with specific parameters, for a full view of these businesses and boundaries, please visit <https://toronto.ctvnews.ca/full-list-of-businesses-that-can-reopen-in-ontario-1.4921154>
- The Ontario government is providing frontline staff with a temporary pandemic payment.
 - The increase will provide four dollars per hour worked on top of existing hourly wages, regardless of the qualified employee's hourly wage.
 - Employees working over 100 hours per month would receive lump-sum payments of \$250 per month for each of the next four months.
- The governments of Canada and Ontario are investing up to \$2.5 million to help the agri-food sector expand online, providing \$5,000 to establish an online e-business and marketing presence or \$75,000 in cost-share funding to implement high-impact projects.
- The Ontario government is deferring a portion of Global Adjustment (GA) charges for industrial and commercial electricity consumers that do not participate in the Regulated Price Plan.
- The Ontario government is launching the COVID-19: Tackling the Barriers website to help businesses overcome the unique challenges created by the global pandemic.
- Ontario is offering a new free 511 app which will provide truck drivers immediate access to the information they need to stay safe, fed and rested while delivering essential goods.
- The province is further expanding the list of essential workers eligible to receive free emergency care. Those who will benefit include people who work in the food supply chain, retirement homes, grocery stores and pharmacies, and certain federal employees, including the military.
- The Ontario and federal governments are jointly investing \$2.25M in provincially-licensed meat processing plants to better protect employees and ensure the continued supply of healthy products for consumers during COVID-19.
- The Ontario government is protecting licensed childcare in Ontario during COVID-19 by ensuring parents retain access to all local licensed childcare, as well as EarlyON Child and Family Centres.
- As of May 11, the province is allowing retail stores with a street entrance to offer curbside pickup and delivery.

ALBERTA

- Alberta has set mid-May for when some nonessential businesses can reopen, so long as infection rates remain stable.
 - As in other jurisdictions, restrictions on mass gatherings and non-essential travel will remain in place
 - <https://www.alberta.ca/alberta-relaunch-strategy.aspx>
- Early actions leading up to the Stage 1 reopening included:
 - May 1: Reopen vehicle access to public lands and parks
 - May 4: Resumption of some scheduled, non-urgent surgeries; additional health care services, such as dentistry restored

- Today, May 14, the following services are permitted to reopen with proper social distancing guards in place:
 - Dine-in restaurants, lounges, cafes, and bars at 50 per cent capacity
 - Retail businesses such as clothing, furniture, and bookstores
 - Farmers' market vendors
 - Personal hygiene services like hairstyling and barber shops
 - Additional health services, such as optometry and physiotherapy
 - Daycares with limited occupancy
 - Retail businesses like clothing, furniture, and bookstores
 - Museums and art galleries
 - Summer camps, with occupancy limits
- To help businesses and non-profits navigate the reopening period, the government launched Alberta Biz Connect
 - The online resource is a portal that hosts guidance, requirements and policies that will help reopenings proceed safely.
- Calgarians who work outside the home but are not displaying symptoms are now eligible to be tested for coronavirus. The first-come, first-served tests will be limited to 1,000 per day.

QUÉBEC

- The Province of Quebec is undergoing the gradual reopening of three sectors of the province; retail, manufacturing and construction.
- Quebec Premier Francois Legault announced phase one of Quebec's economic reopening.
 - Throughout the month of May, preschools and elementary schools are beginning to reopen along with the retail, construction, and manufacturing industries.
 - As of May 11, preschools and elementary schools began to open to students in all regions of Quebec with the exception of those located in the Montreal metropolitan community (MMC). Schools located in the MMC will reopen on May 19.
 - Schools, school daycare services and educational childcare services are open for school staff to prepare for children's return to school. **The return to school is not compulsory.**
 - Retail stores that are not inside a shopping mall or are part of a shopping mall but have a door that leads directly outside are able to open.
 - On May 11, manufacturing companies in all regions of Quebec were permitted to resume working with certain restrictions.
 - For each shift there will be 50 employees permitted, plus 50% of remaining employees beyond the initial 50 staff.
 - Starting on May 25, manufacturing companies in Quebec can resume their operations with no restriction on the number of employees.
 - The complete reopening of construction and the supply chain for construction will also resume. Administrative staff in this sector must continue to work from home.
 - The government is prolonging the closure of all retail stores on Sundays until May 31 apart from pharmacies, depanneurs, restaurants and grocery stores, with certain restrictions.
- Full guidelines for the reopening of authorized businesses will be on the CNESST website.

- All businesses and employees who can work from home are encouraged to do so.
- Businesses who open will need to set up the proper protective measures for employees and clients.
- Following the implementation of the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy, Québec will give employers a credit on contributions to the Health Services Fund for employees on forced leave. This additional aid will compensate for costs not covered by the federal measure
- Premier Legault has strongly recommended all Quebeckers wear a mask when leaving their homes, especially when taking public transportation.
- The province has increased testing capacity and encouraged residents in red zones to get tested, whether they have symptoms or not.
- Premier Legault is asking healthcare professionals who are not otherwise engaged in the response, such as dentists, to help administer tests in order to increase testing capacity.