

## **Resources for Alberta Based Employers Re: COVID-19**

### **Legal Resources**

There are many law firms publishing information on their websites to provide guidance to employers for issues related to COVID-19. I recommend the following resources:

- McLennan Ross (<https://mross.com/law/>) is an Alberta based law firm with expertise in labour and employment matters. They have a number of valuable resources on the “Recent Publications” section of their Labour and Employment page:  
[https://mross.com/law/Practice\\_Areas/Labour\\_And\\_Employment](https://mross.com/law/Practice_Areas/Labour_And_Employment)
- Neuman Thompson (<http://neumanthompson.com/>) is also an Alberta based law firm with expertise in labour and employment matters. They are posting regular updates regarding COVID-19 that includes employment related information: <http://neumanthompson.com/news>

### **Government Support**

The federal government has announced a number of financial supports for both employers and employees: <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/economic-response-plan.html>

The provincial government has also announced support for employers: <https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-support-for-employers.aspx>

### **Employment Standards**

The Alberta *Employment Standards Code* addresses topics such as:

- Temporary layoffs (<https://www.alberta.ca/temporary-layoffs.aspx>)
- Job protected leaves (<https://www.alberta.ca/job-protected-leaves.aspx>)
- Illness and injury leave (<https://www.alberta.ca/long-term-illness-injury-leave.aspx>)
- Termination (<https://www.alberta.ca/termination-pay.aspx>)
- Vacation (<https://www.alberta.ca/vacation-pay.aspx>)

If you are considering temporary layoffs, please note that your notice to employees must be in writing and include specific content as outlined in the *Code*. The *Code* also provides opportunity for employers to seek agreement of an employee to extend the temporary layoff beyond the standard 60 days if the employer provides some form of continued wages or employer contribution to a benefit or pension plan. In the current uncertainty, you may want to consider this option because an employee who does not return to work after a temporary layoff of 60 days is deemed to be terminated. An employee whose continuing employment relationship with their employer is terminated is entitled to notice under the *Code* as well as common law notice that is typically paid as severance in lieu of a reasonable notice period.

### **Employment Insurance (EI)**

The federal employment insurance program provides income replacement benefits to eligible employees who are sick, terminated, or laid off: <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei.html> The government has also announced an expansion of the Work-Sharing program that provides EI benefits to eligible employees who agree to reduce their normal working hours and share the available work while their employer recovers: <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/work-sharing/guide-applicant.html>