

Resources for BC 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:

- Roper Greyell (<https://ropergreyell.com/>) is a BC based law firm with expertise in labour and employment law. They have posted a bulletin for employers regarding COVID-19: <https://ropergreyell.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/COVID-19-March-18-2020-Update-01336129xC0FD8.pdf>
- Harris & Company (<http://harrisco.com/>) is a BC based law firm with expertise in labour and employment law. They have a section of their website dedicated to COVID-19: <http://harrisco.com/category/covid-19/>

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

Employment Standards

The BC *Employment Standards Act* addresses topics such as:

- Taking time off, including vacation and leaves of absences (<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/employment-standards-advice/employment-standards/time-off>)
- Temporary layoffs and termination (<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/employment-standards-advice/employment-standards/termination>)

In BC it is important to note that temporary layoff can only occur if:

- The layoff is part of an employment contract
- The layoff is a normal part of the industry
- The employee agrees to the layoff

The Roper Greyell update dated March 18 (see link above) provides a more detailed analysis of the issue of temporary layoffs in BC.

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>