

OHS/ES eNews

During the current COVID-19 pandemic, you will receive special editions of eNews with the latest developments in Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) and Employment Standards (ES).

COVID-19: a workplace health and safety concern

COVID-19 is a respiratory virus that can be spread either directly or indirectly.

- Direct infection can happen if:
 - Someone coughs or sneezes on you.
 - You shake hands with someone who is sick and then touch your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Indirect spread can happen from contaminated surfaces, tissues, cloth or paper.

The OHS Resource Portal has a [COVID-19 coronavirus](#) section with bulletins related to minimizing risk from respiratory viruses.

Mental health at work

Canadian Mental Health Association: Alberta

- [COVID-19 outbreak: Protecting your mental health](#)

Government of Canada

- [COVID-19 and mental health @ work](#)

COVID-19 information

Employers, supervisors and workers can visit [Guidance for workplaces](#), [Supports for businesses](#), [Open to public businesses](#) and [Restrictions on businesses](#) for up-to-date information.

- [COVID-19 Chief Medical Officer health care PPE guidelines](#)
- [Guidance for managers and operators of industrial work camps \(UPDATED\)](#)
- [Working from home during a pandemic](#)
- [Workplace guidance for business owners](#)

Alberta Health Services

- [Frequently asked questions](#)
- [Novel coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Mental Health Help Line](#)

Contact OHS

1-866-415-8690 (toll-free)
780-415 -8690 (Edmonton)
TTY: 1-800-232-7215
TTY: 780-427-9999 (Edmonton)
[Report a serious incident](#)
[Online incident reporting service](#)

Contact ES

1-877-427-3731 (toll-free)
780-427-3731 (Edmonton)
[Ask an Employment Standards question](#)

Health and safety associations

Alberta Construction Safety Association (ASCA)

- [Your ACSA's response to COVID-19](#)
- [Introduction to respiratory protective equipment](#) (free on-line course, login required)

Information for training providers and certificate holders

OHS will be flexible regarding expirations for workplace [first aid](#), [audiometric technician](#) and [pulmonary function technician](#) certificates. This [letter](#) provides further guidance and information.

Certificate of Recognition (COR)

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the COR program has temporarily restricted audits to documentation-only. This allowed auditing to safely continue while respecting physical distancing and has been adopted by all certifying partners.

Documentation-only audits processed for COR certification or maintenance purposes will be eligible for PIR refunds from WCB-Alberta for 2020. For more information, contact your [certifying partner](#).

Employment Standards

Temporary workplace rules are in effect as of March 17, 2020, to help employers and employees manage rapidly changing conditions. These changes will be in place as long as government determines they are needed and the public health emergency order remains due to COVID-19. We have:

- Created an unpaid job-protected leave for employees caring for children affected by school and daycare closures or ill or isolated family members.
 - 90-day employment requirement is waived.
 - Leave length is flexible and linked to guidance from the Chief Medical Officer.
 - Medical note is not required.
 - Regular personal and family responsibility leave rules apply for all other circumstances.
- Removed the 24-hour written notice requirement for shift changes.
- Removed the requirement for two weeks' notice for changes to work schedules for those under an averaging agreement.
- Removed the employer requirement to provide group termination notice to employees and unions when 50 or more employees are being terminated.
 - Individual termination entitlements remain in effect.
 - Employers must still give group termination notices to the Minister of Labour and Immigration as soon as is practical.
- Increased the maximum time for temporary layoffs from 60 days to 120 days.
 - This change is retroactive for temporary layoffs related to COVID-19 that occurred on or after March 17.
- Streamlined approvals for modifying employment standards (variances and exemptions).

Learn more [here](#).

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If in doubt with respect to any information contained within this material, or for confirmation of legal requirements, please refer to the current edition of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, *Occupational Health and Safety Regulation* and *Occupational Health and Safety Code*, *Public Health Act Order*, or other applicable legislation. Further, if there is any inconsistency or conflict between any of the information contained in this material and the applicable legislative/*Public Health Act Order* requirement, the legislative/*Public Health Act Order* requirement shall prevail.

This material is current to May 1, 2020. The information, law, requirements, and policies are constantly changing during this unprecedented global pandemic. It is important that you keep yourself informed of the current requirements.

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Quick links

- [COVID-19 info for Albertans](#)
- [Alberta OHS legislation](#)
- [Employment Standards](#)
- [Partnerships in Injury Reduction](#)
- [Alberta Queen's Printer](#)

Workers' Compensation Board - Alberta (WCB)

Only report COVID-19 cases to WCB when a worker, who is at greater risk of contracting the virus while at work, loses time from work after contracting the virus. There is no need to report cases where a worker is exposed to the virus but does not develop symptoms. For more detailed information about reporting COVID-19 to WCB, see their [worker](#) and [employer](#) fact sheets.

To protect the safety of staff and stakeholders, all in-person workshops, seminars and events continue to be on hold until the end of May.

If you have questions about COVID-19 and WCB, visit the WCB [COVID-19 web page](#).

North American Occupational Safety and Health (NAOSH)

[NAOSH Week](#) is an annual event recognized across Canada, the United States and Mexico. The goal of NAOSH week is to focus the attention of employers, employees, the public and all partners in occupational health and safety on the importance of preventing injury and illness in the workplace, at home and in the community.