

Employment Standards

There are 14 different employment standards jurisdictions in Canada (provincial, territorial, and federal rules):

- Alberta, has five unpaid job-protected leave days for personal and family responsibility, if the worker has been with the same employer for at least 90 days. For workers in quarantine, or other long-term illness or injury situations, they can take up to 16 job-protected weeks off unpaid, provided they've been with the same employer for 90 days. This exceeds the Employment Insurance benefit length by one week in recognition of the waiting period.
- In Ontario, employees are entitled to three unpaid sick days per calendar year (down from the previous government's allowance of 10 days entitlement with two days paid).
- Paid sick days in PEI: if a worker has been with an employer for more than five years, you are entitled to one paid sick day, three unpaid. If a worker has not been with an employer for more than five years, you can receive three unpaid sick days after 3 months of service.
- Yukon has up to 12 days unpaid sick days per year.
- Quebec has two paid days if certain conditions are met (three months uninterrupted service, and up to 26 weeks unpaid sick days).
- BC, Manitoba, and Nunavut have no paid or unpaid sick days.
- Gig economy or independent/dependent contractors' sick days are a case-by-case basis, but generally no support.

Employment Insurance

Employment Insurance benefits can be provided with up to 15 weeks of financial assistance for medical reasons (like quarantine) to a maximum benefit of \$573/week.

In order to qualify, workers need a medical certificate to show that they're unable to work, show that their earnings dropped by more than 40%, and have at least 600 hours of work before the claim.

There is a one-week wait period before a worker can start receiving Employment Insurance benefits.

On March 11, Prime Minister Trudeau announced that the federal government would waive the usual one-week waiting period for these benefits in the case of quarantine.

Evidence that Paid Sick Days Slow the Spread of Disease

A 2010 United Nations' World Health Organization (WHO) paper concluded that, "Paid sick leave plays a crucial role especially in times of crises where many workers fear dismissal and discrimination when reporting sick." And, "gaps in paid sick leave result in severe impacts on public health."

<https://www.who.int/healthsystems/topics/financing/healthreport/SickleaveNo9FINAL.pdf>

A paper published in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health found that, "Employment that does not offer paid sick leave is plausibly linked to worse health outcomes including a higher risk of mortality, including through reducing one's earnings and job productivity."

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5664748/>