

Stay Home If You Are Sick Act FAQs

What does this bill do?

This bill gives employees in provincially regulated workplaces the right to at least 10 days of personal emergency leave (PEL) each year, 3 of which must be paid, and an additional 14 days of paid leave during an infectious disease emergency. It eliminates the need for doctors' notes, and it calls for financial support to help struggling businesses pay for sick days.

What can workers use PEL days for?

Personal emergency leave can be used for illness or injury, to care for family members, or to tend to other urgent matters, including bereavement. This flexibility will be much more effective than the current government's strict allotment of days for personal use, caregiving, and bereavement.

Who pays the wages for paid PEL days?

Employers would be required to pay their workers' regular wages for paid sick days, which ensures there is no interruption in pay or consequent disincentive to stay home when sick. The bill calls for the Ontario government to implement a temporary program to help struggling small businesses with the cost.

With the Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit in place, why do we need provincially mandated paid infectious disease emergency leave?

The CRSB is a temporary stopgap. It was introduced seven months into the pandemic and will expire in September 2021. By putting paid leave for infectious disease emergencies permanently in place, this bill ensures we are prepared for a seamless implementation in the event of another emergency.

Do other jurisdictions mandate minimum paid sick days?

Workers in [Quebec](#) and [PEI](#), and all federally-regulated employees in Canada have access to legislated paid sick days. Many U.S. states or cities and governments in other OECD countries also mandate paid sick days.

Don't most people in Ontario already stay home when they are sick?

[60%](#) of Ontarians do not have paid sick days, and that number is higher in low-paying, seasonal, casual, or contract jobs. Employees without paid sick days are [1.5 times](#) more likely to show up to work with a contagious illness.

Won't employees abuse paid sick days?

Recent studies consulting both [employers](#) and [employees](#) have shown that where paid sick days are available, there is very little misuse.

Why not let employers require a sick note?

In a [national poll](#), 82% of Canadians said that they would rather go to work sick than get a sick note. The [Ontario Medical Association](#) says sick notes waste the patient's time and money, put health providers at unnecessary risk of exposure and needlessly use public resources.

Why seven days at full pay?

On average, doctors recommend staying home about 4 days with a flu-like illness or 2 days for a cold or stomach bug. The [Decent Work and Health Network](#) recommends 7 permanent paid sick days to account for employees getting sick themselves and also needing paid time to care for family. Workers with 6+ days are also [significantly more likely to access preventive care](#) like mammograms and cholesterol screening. Research shows that paying sick days at less than regular wages leads to more employees showing up to work sick.

How do paid sick days help employers?

Paid sick days [benefit employers in many ways](#). They help reduce job turnover as well as presenteeism, workplace injuries, and outbreaks in the workplace, which ultimately cause more absences and cost money. Employees with paid sick days are also more likely to access preventive health services, which minimizes serious or chronic illness and saves employers money on benefits premiums. Studies have shown mandatory paid sick days have [little to no effect on overall costs for most employers](#), and some see decreased costs.