

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO LOOSEN EI, SICKNESS RULES

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Relief is on the way for workers displaced due to the coronavirus pandemic. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has presented a plan before parliament to spend \$82 billion, with Canadian workers and businesses eligible for some \$27 billion of it.

Come April, Employment Insurance (EI) rules should loosen to allow for more applications. Two emergency benefits are included for those who don't qualify. The government has released guidelines on who can apply, and the amount of money to expect.

"These are extraordinary times," Trudeau said.

"Our government is taking extraordinary measures."

DO I QUALIFY FOR EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE?

For those who lost employment through no fault of their own (including layoffs), you need to consider the number of hours worked in the last 52 weeks. That number will depend on your situation. But move as quickly as possible to apply. If four weeks pass between your last day of work and the date of your application, you could lose access to the benefits.

WHAT HAS CHANGED WITH EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE?

EI sickness benefits kick in if you are unable to work because of illness or quarantine. This is among

the changes before parliament. Normally, a one-week waiting period is mandatory for sickness benefits. That has been removed for those told to self-isolate or quarantine. Approved applicants can now be paid for the first week of a claim.

The maximum amount to be paid out for EI is \$573, if approved.

WHAT IF I DON'T QUALIFY FOR EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE?

The self-employed and some contract workers do not qualify for EI. However, those who are quarantined or sick with COVID-19 can apply. Those staying home to care for a family member with COVID-19 can also apply. So can parents staying



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Relief is on the way for workers displaced due to the coronavirus pandemic.

home to care for children because of school closures.

There is \$5 billion in The Emergency Support Benefit for workers normally ineligible for EI who

are facing unemployment. The government has not determined how long the money will be given out, or how much, but it is intended to be a long-

term income support.

A toll-free number has yet to be set up, but both EI benefit plans will be available through the Canada Revenue Agency in April.

HOW DO I APPLY?

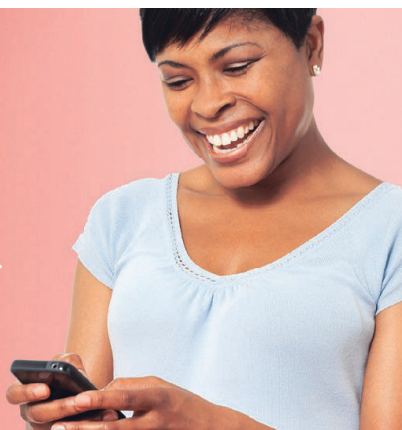
Quarantined workers can now apply without the usual medical certificate and records of employment. Other applicants will typically need both. For those who can't apply from where they are quarantined, file for EI sickness benefits later and have the claim backdated.

Apply for EI benefits at the website canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/ei-sickness/apply.html. After that, you can apply to have the waiting period waived by calling the government's toll-free number at 1-833-381-2725 or teletypewriter 1-800-529-3742.

Apply in person at a Service Canada office – call first – unless you are experiencing symptoms or in self-isolation, quarantined or instructed not to visit.

It all adds up.

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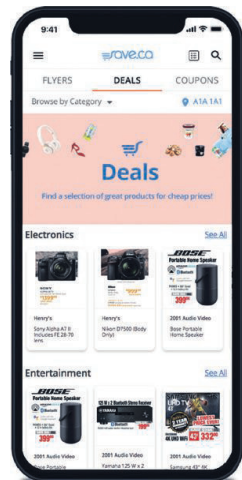
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Your A-Z for COVID-19.

As the COVID-19 pandemic evolves, we know you have questions. We're hard at work to answer those questions. There are plenty of uncertainties right now — our hope is that our reporting will help you make informed decisions based on clear, convenient information.

You can access all of our COVID-19 related coverage here:

theifp.ca/coronavirus



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