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The COVID-19 situation is rapidly evolving, so it is important to stay connected. We will be sending regular bulletins during this period of time so that you can stay well informed on your legal obligations as an employer and strategies on how to stay connected with your employees and mitigate risk.

All of our team members are prepared to work from home and we will continue to provide all of our clients with support during this time of uncertainty. Please see the bottom of this bulletin for our email addresses and phone numbers.

It is essential as leaders that we remain calm and reassure our employees that we have procedures in place to ensure the continuity of our businesses.

If your business is required to close...

Consider the sustainability of your business.

- 1. Are your employees able to work from home?**
- 2. Have your employees take their available paid personal days, sick time and vacation time. Under the Employment Standards Act, as an employer, you do have the right to tell an employee when they can take vacation.**
- 3. Issue a ROE for Short-term Layoffs**
 - For most people, the basic rate for calculating EI benefits is 55% of your average insurable weekly earnings, up to a maximum amount. As of January 1, 2020, the maximum yearly insurable earnings amount is \$54,200. This means that employees can receive a maximum amount of \$573 per week.
 - We will keep you posted on how you can institute top-up programs for lay-offs.

In the case that the government mandates business closures, the following are tips that we recommend.

My employees are working from home, now what?

Institute an Offsite Management Team

We recommend instituting an offsite management team who will be available to telecommute from their home offices. Provide personal email addresses and cellphone numbers and let your employees know that the management team will be available for calls and employee questions.

Stay Connected with Your Employees

Stay connected with your employees. Have all employees' cellphone numbers, email addresses and make sure that your information has been made available to them.

Have scheduled virtual meetings or conference calls to continue to reassure employees and stay connected.

Ensure that employees know that all workplace policies and procedures will still apply while working from home. Let them know that it is still "business as usual" and the expectations of attending virtual meetings, consider a daily check-in email for employees to let you know what they have been working on for the day, etc.

Ensure that if an employee is not feeling well, they need to report it to you via email and track their absenteeism. For anyone who is considered a vulnerable worker from a mental health perspective or another reason to be considered vulnerable, ensure that they know that you are there to offer support.

Resource Corner

Government of Canada - Travel Advice and Advisories

<https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories>

Public Health Ontario

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/>

Government of Canada – COVID-19 Being prepared

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/being-prepared.html#a5>

We recommend that employers post the following information in a conspicuous place:

- Telehealth **1-866-797-0000**
- Phone number for your local Public Health Department
- Phone number for your local hospitals

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