



# Information Sheet

## ***COVID-19 Wages, Leaves & Financial Supports***

With the restrictions coming into place due to COVID-19, employers are in the process of altering work patterns and process as well as reducing hours and operations. As a result, employees are being impacted. In some cases, casual, temporary, and part-time regular employees are already facing a loss of hours. In others, employees can't work due to illness, self-isolation, quarantine, or caring for family members. The following provides links to important resources that may assist you regardless of your situation.

### **VIU COVID-19 VIU Employee Leave and Work Processes**

VIU has put processes in place to support employees impacted by quarantines, self-isolation processes and illness. Further, the University is taking steps to implement plans to reduce the number of employees on campuses and sites through work-at-home and other plans.

If you are in a position that means you are still working onsite, it is important to remember:

- Risks decrease to workers onsite as the number of people on site decrease.
- Practice strict cleanliness protocols including:
  - Avoid touching your face, eyes, nose and mouth.
  - Wash your hands frequently with soap and warm water for 20 seconds.
    - Using soap and water is the single most effective way of reducing the spread of infection.
  - If a sink is not available, alcohol based hand rubs (ABHR) can be used to clean your hands as long as they are not visibly soiled. If they are visibly soiled, use a wipe and then ABHR to effectively clean them ☐ Do not touch your face, eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands
  - Cover your mouth and nose with a disposable tissue or your arm when coughing or sneezing.
  - Regularly clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.
  - Do not share food, drinks, utensils, etc.
- Practice social distancing as much as possible by keeping a minimum of 6 feet between you and others. For employees in front line positions – pay careful attention to cleanliness protocols.

For updated information, go to <https://adm.viu.ca/health-and-safety/covid-19-viu-employee-leave-protocol>

### **Leave Entitlements in the VIU-CUPE Collective Agreement**

The VIU-CUPE 1858 Collective Agreement has a variety of paid and unpaid leave entitlement for regular and temporary employees including, but not limited to, the following:

- Vacation (Article 18)
- Sick Leave and LTD (Article 19)
- Family Illness Leave (Article 19.05)
- Emergency/Unusual Circumstance Leave (Article 21.06a)

For more information, check out your Collective Agreement at <http://www.cupe1858.org/our-contracts.html>

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## Support for Lost Wages

For employees in regular and ongoing temporary positions, there are existing programs if you end up losing wages:

- **Employment Insurance** – *For workers who have been laid-off from their jobs.*
- **EI Work Sharing Program** – *For workers who agree to reduce their normal working hour as a result of developments beyond the control of their employers.*
  - Eligibility has been extended for agreements to 76 weeks.
  - Eligibility requirements have been eased.
  - Application processes have been streamlined.
- **EI Sickness Benefits** – *For workers who are ill/injured and don't have paid sick leave or have run out of paid sick time.*
  - Effective March 15, 2020, in order to provide supports during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Federal Government has temporarily waived:
    - The requirement to provide a medical certificate to access EI sickness benefits.
    - The one-week waiting period for those individuals in imposed quarantine that claim Employment Insurance (EI) sickness benefits.
- **EI Caregiver Benefits** – *For workers who need to take time off work to care for seriously ill or injured family members.*

For information on these programs, go to <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei.html>

## Don't qualify for the programs above? Help is coming!

For casual, temporary and part-time regular employees who have lost wages due to reduced hours, illness, quarantine/self-isolation, caregiving responsibilities, and childcare issues, there are new programs coming in April 2020. The following programs will be available through Service Canada and/or the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA):

- **Emergency Support Benefit** – *For workers who lose hours or their jobs and don't qualify for EI*
  - A similar rate to Employment Insurance (EI) benefits.
  - Starting in April 2020.
- **Emergency Care Benefit** – *\$450/week for up to 15 weeks starting in April 2020*
  - Flat-payment Benefit administered through the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA)
  - Individuals will be required to attest that they meet the eligibility requirements
  - Eligible individuals:
    - Sick/quarantined – Workers, including the self-employed, who are quarantined or sick with COVID-19 but do not qualify for EI sickness benefits.
    - Caregivers – Workers, including the self-employed, who are taking care of a family member who is sick with COVID-19, such as an elderly parent, but do not qualify for EI sickness benefits.
    - Parents with children who require care or supervision due to school closures, and are unable to earn employment income, irrespective of whether they qualify for EI or not.

For information on these programs, go to <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/news/2020/03/canadas-covid-19-economic-response-plan-support-for-canadians-and-businesses.html>