



April 24, 2020

TO ALL IBEW FIRST DISTRICT LOCAL UNIONS

Greetings:

Our office has been staying on top of the daily federal government announcements by the Prime Minister and working with key Ministers and their staff on the evolving changes to several support programs that the federal government has been releasing in relation to COVID-19.

We are in fluid times which means that these programs change almost on a daily basis. A lot of these changes are as a result of labour and employers addressing our concerns with government officials on the needs and where there are people who are left behind or do not qualify for certain programs.

We will continue to monitor and update you on these changes. Please find below an update on some of this week's announcements and clarifications on some programs. I encourage you to visit our dedicated [IBEW Canada COVID-19](#) page for more information.

Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB)

The Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) is available to those who stop working for reasons related to COVID-19, for example:

- You have lost your job;
- You are in quarantine or sick due to COVID-19;
- You are taking care of others because they are in quarantine or sick due to COVID-19; and/or
- You are taking care of children or other dependents because their care facility is closed due to COVID-19.

There may be other reasons related to COVID-19 beyond these examples why you may have stopped working. However, you cannot voluntarily quit your job.

Alternatively, you can apply for the CERB if:

- You are eligible for Employment Insurance regular or sickness benefits; or
- You are a former Employment Insurance claimant who used up your entitlement to your Employment Insurance regular benefits between December 29, 2019 and October 3, 2020.

The federal government has increased eligibility for its Canada Emergency Response Benefit to include employees earning less than \$1,000 in employment and/or self-employment income, for the duration of the four-week period of the claim.

To be clear, in order to get the CERB, you may **not** earn more than \$1,000 for a period of at least 14 consecutive days within the initial four-week period of your claim or \$1000 in total for each subsequent claim.

It is important for our members to know that the CERB is a taxable benefit.

Employment Insurance (EI)

If you have stopped working because of COVID-19, you should apply for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit.

*For anyone who became eligible for EI regular or sickness benefits on March 15, 2020 or later, your Employment Insurance claim will be **automatically** processed through the Canada Emergency Response Benefit.*

For other Employment Insurance benefits, including maternity, parental, caregiving, fishing and work-sharing, you should continue to [apply](#) as you normally would.

Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS)

The Prime Minister announced that employers will be able to apply for the CEWS starting on **Monday, April 27th** for the 75 per cent salary top-up to keep staff on the payroll. The government expects to have processed 90 per cent of claims by May 4th, with payments landing later that week.

We have had several Local Unions enquire to find out if they qualify for the CEWS program. Local Unions who have staff employed and meet the eligibility requirements for the CEWS can apply. More information on the application process and the eligibility requirements can be found [here](#).

Eligible employers include:

- individuals (including trusts)
- taxable corporations
- persons that are exempt from corporate tax (Part I of the Income Tax Act), other than public institutions:
 - non-profit organizations
 - agricultural organizations
 - boards of trade
 - chambers of commerce
 - non-profit corporations for scientific research and experimental development
 - **labour organizations or societies**
 - benevolent or fraternal benefit societies or orders
- registered charities
- partnerships consisting of eligible employers



Public institutions are **not eligible** for the subsidy. This includes municipalities and local governments, Crown corporations, public universities, colleges, schools and hospitals.

New Calculator Launched

The government is also launching a [calculator application](#) on the Canada Revenue Agency's website to help employers and businesses determine how much they will be able to claim through the wage subsidy program.

Canada Emergency Student Benefit

For those of you with students at home. The federal government is launching a new benefit program to provide immediate support for young Canadians by investing \$9 billion to create new jobs and double student grants. Under the new benefit, post-secondary students will be eligible for \$1,250 a month from May to August. Those with disabilities or who are taking care of someone else will be eligible to receive \$1,750 monthly. The payment will be retroactive to May 1st and will be delivered through the Canada Revenue Agency.

Working students earning less than \$1,000 per month, as well as college and university students who are currently in school, planning to start in September, or who graduated in December 2019 will also be eligible for the program.

Stay safe and stay healthy.

Best wishes.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Reid".

Tom Reid
International Vice President

TR/ln

cc: First District Representatives
IBEW, System Council #11
IBEW, CCO