

FAMILY TIPSHEET: Your Legal Rights during the COVID-19 and Coronavirus outbreak

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Based on when you are viewing this tipsheet, the information may not be the most up to date. Please refer to the date this tipsheet was last updated, at the end of the document. You can also access this tipsheet online at hollandbloorview.ca/covid-19-tipsheets

Free legal advice

- The Pro Bono Free Legal Advice hotline is a resource that families can access to find legal information and advice that relates to **housing and employment**.
- The hotline accepts calls from Monday to Friday between 9:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m., and between 1:00 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. They offer up to 30 minutes of free legal advice and assistance.
- Website: <https://www.probonoontario.org/hotline/>
- Telephone: 1-855-255-7256

Employment Insurance (EI) and quarantine

- Employment Insurance (EI) sickness benefits provide up to 15 weeks of income replacement and is available to eligible claimants who are unable to work because of illness, injury or quarantine, to allow them time to restore their health and return to work.
- Canadians quarantined or unable to work because of illness or injury can apply for Employment Insurance (EI) sickness benefits for up to 15 weeks of income replacement.
- The one-week waiting period for EI sickness benefits will be waived for new claimants who are quarantined so they can be paid for the first week of their claim.
- People claiming EI sickness benefits due to quarantine will not have to provide a medical certificate.
- If you are eligible, visit the EI sickness benefits page to apply.
<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/ei-sickness/apply.html>

If you have already completed the application for EI sickness benefits whether you are sick or quarantined and would like to have the one-week waiting period waived, call the new toll-free phone number:

Telephone: 1-833-381-2725 (toll-free) /Teletypewriter (TTY): 1-800-529-3742

Website: <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/notices/coronavirus.html>



Emergency Care Benefit/Emergency Support Benefit

- In April, the **Emergency Care Benefit** will be made available for workers **who do not qualify for EI**, can't go to work and don't have paid sick leave.
- This includes the self-employed, who are quarantined or sick with COVID-19 or who are taking care of a family member who is sick with COVID-19, such as an elderly parent.
- Parents staying home to care for children because of school closures are also covered, and can apply whether or not they qualify for EI.
- For workers who lose their job or face reduced hours of work, the **Emergency Support Benefit** will be made available for workers who do not qualify for EI.
- It is part of an **economic response plan** that has been released by the Prime Minister for workers and businesses, which covers flexibility for taxpayers, mortgage default management tools, and the role of financial institutions.
- Website: <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/news/2020/03/canadas-covid-19-economic-response-plan-support-for-canadians-and-businesses.html>

Tax

- The Government is proposing to provide low and modest-income families increases to their Goods and Services Tax Credit and Canada Child Benefit payments in a one-time special payment for the 2019-2020 benefit year by early May 2020.
- The deadline to file taxes for individuals has now been extended until June 1, 2020 however the CRA encourages individuals who expect to receive benefits under the Goods and Services Tax Credit or the Canada Child Benefit not to delay the filing of their return to ensure their entitlements for the 2020-2021 benefit year are properly determined.
- To find out if you are eligible for help at a free tax clinic in your area visit <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/campaigns/free-tax-help.html>

Housing

The Attorney General has announced that no new **evictions** will be issued, and all other eviction orders will be postponed until further notice.

- Website: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/ontario-puts-brakes-on-new-eviction-orders-postpones-ones-in-the-works-because-of-covid-19-1.5499926?cmp=rss>

Daycare and city service updates

- For reimbursement of **daycare fees**, the City of Toronto has not yet introduced a process for that and that fees may continue to be owing, but updates can be found on the website below.
- Please note, as of April 10, the Ontario government passed an emergency order forbidding daycares from charging parents for services not rendered during the COVID-19 shutdown.



<https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2020/04/10/ontario-bans-child-care-fees-for-daycares-closed-during-covid-19-shutdown.html>

- A 60-day grace period is in effect for City of Toronto residents to pay property tax, water and solid waste utility bill payments, for bills dated as of March 16:
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/coronavirus-covid-19-ontario-friday-toronto-1.5504109>
- Other city service updates can be found here as well.
- Website: <https://www.toronto.ca/home/covid-19/affected-city-services/>
- If families are experiencing difficulty with this, they are encouraged to call the Pro Bono Free Legal Advice hotline (listed on page 1) as they also field calls that have to do with "**consumer issues**"

Changes to funding for special needs children, youth and adults

In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services is temporarily expanding the list of eligible expenses to support people and their families while community-based activities and settings are closed. These changes allow you to use your funding for goods and services that may make it easier for you to stay at home during this time and practise physical distancing.

Special Services at Home (SSAH)

<http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/specialneeds/specialservices.aspx>

Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities (ACSD):

<http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/specialneeds/disabilities.aspx>

Passport:

<https://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/en/mcsc/programs/developmental/serviceSupport/passport.aspx>

Job security

- Legislation has now been enacted to allow a leave with job-protection to employees in isolation or quarantine due to COVID-19, or those who need to be away from work to care for children because of school or daycare closures.
- It would be retroactive to January 25, 2020.
- Employees would not be required to provide a medical note if they take leave. However, the employer may require the employee to provide other evidence that is reasonable in the circumstances, at a time that is reasonable in the circumstances. This could include such requests as a note from the daycare or for evidence that the airline cancelled a flight, but not a medical note.
- Website: <https://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2020/03/employment-standards-amendment-act-infectious-disease-emergencies-2020.html>



Are you a Holland Bloorview client?

If you are a Holland Bloorview client or a caregiver of a Holland Bloorview client, you can reach out to Hannah Lee, our Pro Bono Ontario lawyer. Hannah will be available for consults by telephone during office hours, which are Monday and Wednesdays between 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

If you wish to book an appointment, please email her at hannah@pblo.org or call at 416-425-6220 ext 6557.

For even more information visit: <https://stepstojustice.ca/covid-19>

This tipsheet belongs to a set of specialized resources for the COVID-19 and Coronavirus outbreak period. If you are looking for other family resources that have to do with childhood disability, please visit www.hollandbloorview.ca/resourcecentre

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