

COVID-19 WORKER SUPPORTS

Ministry of Labour

Employment Standards Act Amendment

1. Job Protected Leave for COVID-19 (March 23, 2020)

- a. The Province has made two significant changes to the Employment Standards Act to better support workers both during the COVID-19 public health emergency and in the long term. Firstly, changes that allowed workers to immediately take unpaid, job-protected leave if they are unable to work for reasons relating to COVID-19. This means workers who are ill, need to self-isolate, need to care for their child or other dependent, or whose employer is concerned that the employee may expose others to risk, will be able to take leave without putting their job at risk. The leave is retroactive to Jan. 27, 2020, the date that the first presumptive COVID-19 case was confirmed in B.C. During this public health emergency, people can take this job-protected leave for as long as the circumstance that requires them to be away from work applies.
- b. Secondly, to better support workers on an ongoing basis, the changes also provide up to three days of unpaid, job-protected leave each year for people who cannot work due to illness or injury. This is a permanent change to the act that brings B.C. in line with all other provinces in Canada. (*Technically not specific to COVID-19 but was done in conjunction with the above*)

2. Paid Leave for COVID-19 vaccinations (April 19, 2021)

- a. Amended the ESA to provide up to three hours of paid leave, per dose, to employees who are receiving their COVID-19 vaccination.

Employment Standards Regulation Amendments

3. Temporary Layoffs Extensions to Maintain Workforce (May 4, 2020 - present)

- a. In response to the economic impact of COVID-19, and to ease financial hardship on businesses and keep workers connected with their jobs, government first extended the temporary layoff period from 13 to 16 weeks in May 2020. In late June, government extended this period to 24 weeks, expiring on Aug. 2020, to give employers more time to recover before recalling staff. Both extensions were designed to coincide with the availability of the Canada Emergency Response Benefit. In addition, the Ministry of Labour created a simplified online application process that allowed employers and workers to jointly apply to extend temporary layoffs

beyond Aug. 2020 quickly and easily. Temporary layoffs are currently being used by businesses affected by the pandemic.

4. Job Protected Leave for Vaccinations (April 1, 2020)

- a. The Province has made regulatory improvements under the Employment Standards Act to quickly bring in a job-protected leave. Part-time and full-time workers will be able to take the time they need to receive the vaccine or to take a dependent family member to receive the vaccine.

WorkSafeBC

5. Workplace Safety Inspections and Plans (May 15, 2020)

- a. WorkSafeBC guidelines that help businesses and organizations develop their plans to reopen safely initially moving into Phase 2 of recovery. WorkSafeBC has continued this work throughout the pandemic helping to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 in workplaces by increasing outreach, investigations and helping workers and employers maintain effective COVID-19 safety plans.
- b. WorkSafe has also been assisting the Vancouver and Fraser Health Authorities with workplace shutdowns for up to 10 days as directed by Health Authorities to keep workers safe and contain COVID-19 exposures.

6. COVID-19 Presumptions and Claims (August 14, 2020)

- a. B.C. was the first province in Canada to create a presumption for COVID-19 – and similar viral infections – to the Workers Compensation Act. This is important for workers who are at a higher risk, such as those in the health care sector. This ensures that workers get the care and benefits they deserve as quickly as possible, so they can focus on recovering from this terrible virus.

Ministry of Agriculture

Temporary Foreign Workers, Other Province Arrival Supports

Temporary foreign workers make an important contribution to that workforce and are skilled and trained for specific tasks like orchard pruning and crop preparation. Our successful temporary foreign worker 14-day quarantine program demonstrates what can be accomplished by working together with various provincial ministries, industry representatives, migrant support organizations, and the federal and foreign governments.

We worked with local governments and growers in the Okanagan and Creston to develop measures to support accommodation for seasonal workers who arrive from other parts of Canada, that are safe for them and the community.

Ministry of Health

Front-line worker Priority Vaccination (Announced Mar. 18, 2021)

More than 300,000 front-line workers were prioritized and made eligible for COVID-19 vaccinations as BC's Immunization Plan moved forward ahead of schedule.

Beginning in April, workers in priority groups identified by public health and the COVID-19 Workplace Task Group started to receive their first dose of the AstraZeneca/SII COVISHIELD (AZ/SII) vaccine..

Groups included first responders, grocery store employees, and teachers and child care workers.

Ministry of Finance

Pandemic Pay Front-line Workers

More than 250,000 eligible front-line workers will receive temporary pandemic pay, a lump-sum payment of about \$4 per hour for a 16-week period, starting on March 15, 2020. Eligible workers will receive the payment directly through their employer and do not need to apply.

AGENDA

May 3, 2021

South Asian Covid Task Force

Location: Zoom

Attending:

Premier John Horgan

Rachna Singh, MLA

Minister Ravi Kahlon

*Invited Participants listed below

12:01 PM	Pre-Brief	Led by Naveen Girn
12:25 PM	Log into Zoom	Government Attendees
12:28 PM	Welcome/Housekeeping	Naveen Girn
12:30 PM	Opening Remarks	Premier Horgan
12:35 PM	Opening Statement (in Punjabi)	Rachna Singh
12:40 PM	Moderated Roundtable Discussion	Moderated by Minister Kahlon
1:15 PM	Closing Remarks	Premier John Horgan
1:25 PM	Closing Remarks (in Punjabi) Event Ends	Rachna Singh

Invited Participants: :

Name	Email Address
s.22	s.22
Joban Phulka	
Poonam Sandhu	
Birinder Narang	
J Sunner	s.22
Madhu Jawanda	s.22

Ranjit Dhari	ranjit.dhari@ubc.ca
s.22	s.22
Balbir Gurm	balbir.gurm@kpu.ca
Baldev Sanghera	s.22
Gunpreetk Singh	
Rupinder Brar	
Sharry Kahlon	
A Hardeep	
Upkar Tatley	
Dupinder Saran	
s.22	
Kulpreet Singh	

SPEAKING NOTES
South Asian Task Force
May 3, 2021

Premier John Horgan here.

[Land acknowledgement]

I am joined today by Parliamentary Secretary Rachna Singh, who will speak to you shortly.

Thank you all for joining us.

I want to update you on the status of the largest vaccination program in the province's history.

We have some good news.

Large supplies of vaccine will be arriving soon – including over 1 million doses of Pfizer in May alone.

I am meeting with you today to share an urgent call to action.

More than 2 million people have already registered for vaccine, but with massive deliveries coming in, we need everyone to register now.

People need to register, so they get notified as soon as it's their turn to book appointment.

We need everyone to get vaccinated at the first opportunity to flatten the curve and protect our communities.

You have already done so much to share knowledge and awareness about COVID-19 in your community and encourage people to get vaccinated.

Today I ask for your continued help in this final push to get everyone registered.

We are asking for your valuable wisdom on how to approach this challenge.

Later today, I will be meeting with mayors from the Fraser Health and Vancouver Coastal regions.

On Wednesday, I will also be meeting separately with stakeholders from the Chinese and South Asian communities.

I will be joined by Minister Kang and Minister Kahlon.

I will be stressing to community leaders, as I am to you, the need to share the message about registering.

I will be listening to them for insight on how best to reach their community members.

We have invited a diverse group of people to join us.

That includes:

- business leaders and heads of non-profits

- youth and student groups
- academics and social media influencers
- and faith leaders

I am certain they will provide further guidance.

We are spreading the message in English and 12 other languages.

Public health officials have also come up with a comprehensive plan to increase vaccinations in hot spots.

16 hot spots have been identified in the Fraser Health and Vancouver Coastal Health regions.

Targeted vaccination programs have shown great success in Indigenous communities, as well as in Whistler and Prince Rupert.

It's like turning down the heat on an overboiling pot.

My urgent request to you today is to help spread the word about the need to register.

As you know, the facts are clear.

The vaccines are safe.

And they are effective.

We need everyone to register for the vaccine now.

That is the surest way for us to get vaccines into the arms of every British Columbian as quickly as possible.

If there is scepticism or reluctance, it must be countered by facts.

If there is lassitude, it must be met with urgency.

We're stepping up our efforts to encourage more people to register, and I'm eager for your feedback about how we can better reach people too.

More than a third of British Columbians have already had their first vaccination.

We are on track to have all British Columbians vaccinated with their first dose by the end of June.

We are so close to flattening the curve.

We cannot falter now.

I am eager to hear from you in our roundtable talk.

Thank you.

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	Event Ends	

Invited Participants: :

South Asian media will be invited to the first 10 minutes of this conversation.

Name	Email Address
s.22	s.22
Joban Phulka	

Poonam Sandhu	s.22
Birinder Narang	
J Sunner	
Madhu Jawanda	
Ranjit Dhari	ranjit.dhari@ubc.ca
s.22	s.22
Balbir Gurm	balbir.gurm@kpu.ca
Baldev Sanghera	s.22
Gunpreetk Singh	
Rupinder Brar	
Sharry Kahlon	
A Hardeep	
Upkar Tatley	
Dupinder Saran	
s.22	
Kulpreet Singh	

Re: COVID -19 Stakeholder Conversations May 3-5

From: Girn, Naveen PREM:EX <Naveen.Girn@gov.bc.ca>
To: Bain, Don PREM:EX <Don.Bain@gov.bc.ca>
Cc: Nash, Amber PREM:EX <Amber.Nash@gov.bc.ca>, Geary, Vanessa PREM:EX <Vanessa.Geary@gov.bc.ca>, Marriott, Sarah GCPE:EX <Sarah.Marriott@gov.bc.ca>, Brewer, Lia PREM:EX <Lia.Brewer@gov.bc.ca>, Brandt, Alissa GCPE:EX <Alissa.Brandt@gov.bc.ca>, Badger, Joleen GCPE:EX <Joleen.Badger@gov.bc.ca>, Byers, Lindsay PREM:EX <Lindsay.Byers@gov.bc.ca>, McKinnon, Michael PREM:EX <Michael.McKinnon@gov.bc.ca>, Meggs, Geoff PREM:EX <Geoff.Meggs@gov.bc.ca>, Hockin, Amber PREM:EX <Amber.Hockin@gov.bc.ca>, Smith, George PREM:EX <George.Smith@gov.bc.ca>, Zadravec, Don GCPE:EX <Don.Zadravec@gov.bc.ca>
Sent: May 2, 2021 at 10:59:48 AM Pacific Daylight Time
Attachments: image001.png, image001.png

Hi Don,

Yes. The first Conversation with the SA Covid task force is at 12:30 and the second conversation with the local mayors is at 2:30.

Thanks,
Naveen

Sent from my iPhone

Naveen Girn

Director of Strategic Outreach & Stakeholder Relations
Office of the Premier |Government of British Columbia
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Vancouver, B.C
V6C 3E1 | [250.812.5295](tel:250.812.5295)
E-mail: naveen.girn@gov.bc.ca

On May 2, 2021, at 10:53 AM, Bain, Don PREM:EX <Don.Bain@gov.bc.ca> wrote:

Hello Naveen,

Have we confirmed the times for the two meetings tomorrow?

Don

From: Girn, Naveen PREM:EX

Sent: April 30, 2021 4:40 PM

To: Nash, Amber PREM:EX; Bain, Don PREM:EX; Geary, Vanessa PREM:EX; Marriott, Sarah GCPE:EX; Brewer, Lia PREM:EX; Brandt, Alissa GCPE:EX; Badger, Joleen GCPE:EX; Byers, Lindsay PREM:EX; McKinnon, Michael PREM:EX; Meggs, Geoff PREM:EX; Hockin, Amber PREM:EX; Smith, George PREM:EX

Subject: COVID -19 Stakeholder Conversations May 3-5

Hi all,

Thank you all for your helpful conversations today.

Here is a list of the stakeholder conversations for early next week.

This includes:

- May 3rd 5-6pm Meeting with MLAs and MPs (information session only Min Dix and Dr. Henry)
- May 3rd (Time TBD) Meeting with Metro Vancouver Mayors
- May 3rd (Time TBD) Meeting with South Asian COVID 19 Taskforce (PS Singh to support in language) South Asian Media invited to view opening statements
- May 5th 11-12pm: South Asian Community Conversation (Min Kahlon to support in language) South Asian Media invited to view opening statements
- May 5th 12-1pm: Chinese Canadian Community Conversation (Min Kang to support in language) Chinese Canadian Media invited to view opening statements

Best wishes,
Naveen



Naveen Girn

Director of Strategic Outreach & Stakeholder Relations
Office of the Premier | Government of British Columbia
740 – 999 Canada Place, Vancouver, BC V6C 3E1 | 250.812.5295
E-mail: naveen.girn@gov.bc.ca

Pronouns: he, him, his

The City of Vancouver is located on the unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Sel̓ilwítulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

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s.22	
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Birinder Narang	<u>Yes</u>
Jessie Sunner	<u>yes</u>

Madhu Jawanda	<u>Yes</u>
Ranjit Dhari	
s.22	<u>yes</u>
Balbir Gurm	<u>Yes</u>
Baldev Sanghera	<u>Yes</u>
Gunpreetk Singh	<u>Yes</u>
Rupinder Brar	
Sharry Kahlon	<u>Yes</u>
A Hardeep	
Upkar Tatley	<u>Yes</u>
Dupinder Saran	<u>Yes</u>
s.22	
Kulpreet Singh	<u>Yes</u>

Key questions:

- A. What have you experienced or heard are the barriers to vaccine registration?
- B. What does government need to understand about the reasons for vaccine hesitancy?
- C. What's missing from this conversation? What does government need to know to ensure every British Columbian is vaccinated?

Attendees:

Minister Kahlon

PS Rachna Singh

Chief MOH Dr. Elizabeth Brodtkin

Dr. Victoria Lee, CEO Fraser Health

Staff:

Don

Naveen

Lindsey

Rick

Con Call Details:

Tel: s.17

Participant code: s.17

PO will moderate

Moderator code: s.17