

Alberta: COVID-19 relief measures for businesses in Alberta

Businesses that offer only non-essential goods or services are now prohibited from allowing public access into their businesses. These retail businesses may choose to offer online shopping and curbside pick-up. This applies to dealerships.

To learn which businesses are currently closed in Alberta.

<https://www.alberta.ca/restrictions-on-gatherings.aspx>

The Alberta government has announced measures to help small businesses maintain normal business operations.

- Corporate income tax changes: corporate income tax balances and installment payments will be deferred until August 31, 2020.
- Utility payment deferral: residents, agri-businesses and small businesses can defer electricity and natural gas bill payments for the next 90 days to ensure no one will be cut off, regardless of the service provider. Call your utility provider directly to arrange for a 90-day deferral on all payments. Learn more about utility payment deferral here.
- Education property tax freeze: the Alberta government canceled the decision made in Budget 2020 and will freeze education property taxes at last year's level (a savings of \$32 million for businesses).
- Education property tax deferral: the Alberta government has deferred education property tax for businesses for the next six months.
- WCB premium deferral and relief: WCB premiums have been deferred until early 2021. Employers who have already paid their WCB premium payment for 2020 are eligible for a rebate or credit. For small and medium businesses, the government will cover 50% of the premium when it is due. Find out more here.
- Tourism levy deferral: Hotels and other lodging providers can delay paying the tourism levy until August 31, 2020 for amounts that become due to government on or after today.

For more detailed information, please visit the Alberta government's COVID-19 information page.

<https://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx>

Employment Standards

- Creating a job-protected leave for employees caring for children affected by school and daycare closures or ill or self-isolated family members due to COVID-19

The 90-day employment requirement is waived.

The leave length is flexible and linked to guidance from the Chief Medical Officer.

A medical note is not required.

Regular personal and family responsibility leave rules continue to apply for all other circumstances.

- Removing the 24-hour written notice requirement for shift changes
- Removing the requirement for 2 weeks notice for changes to work schedules for those under an averaging agreement
- Removing the employer requirement to provide group termination notice to employees and unions when 50 or more employees are being terminated

Individual termination entitlements remain in effect.

Employers must still give group termination notices to the Minister of Labour and Immigration as soon as is practical.

- Increasing the maximum time for temporary layoffs from 60 days to 120 days

This change is retroactive for temporary layoffs related to COVID-19 that occurred on or after March 17

- Streamlining approvals for modifying employment standards (variances and exemptions) related to COVID-19

ATB Financial and Alberta credit unions announced assistance to customers impacted by COVID-19

ATB Financial customers impacted by COVID-19

- Customers can apply for a deferral on their ATB loans, lines of credit, and mortgages for up to six months.
- Small business customers, in addition to payment deferrals on loans and lines of credit, will be provided access to additional working capital.
- For other business and agriculture customers, ATB will work with customers on a one-on-one basis and further solutions are being considered at this time.
- For more information on ATB's relief program, please visit their website.
<https://www.atb.com/company/news/stories/customer-relief-program/>

Alberta credit unions

- Credit union members will have access to a variety of programs and solutions designed to ease difficulties with loan payments and short-term cash flow.
- Both individual and business members are encouraged to proactively contact their credit union directly to work out a plan for their personal situation.

Workers' Compensation

Information and updates on workers' compensation issues related to COVID-19 can be found on the website and on the COVID-19 Fact Sheet. The fact sheet includes answers to questions such as:

When COVID-19 may be work related?

Do I report cases where one staff member caught COVID-19 from a co-worker?

When do I report a case of COVID-19 to WCB-Alberta?

What happens when I submit a COVID-19 claim?

<https://www.wcb.ab.ca/about-wcb/news-and-announcements/COVID-19.html>

Safety in the workforce

Alberta Health has updated their Non-healthcare Workplace Guidance During COVID-19 document.

<https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/covid-19-workplace-guidance-for-business-owners.pdf>