

Covid-19 - B.C. Gov't Announcements (Updated Mar 27, 2020)

On Mar 23, 2020, the B.C. government announced their Covid-19 Action Plan. The plan provides \$5 billion in income supports, tax relief and direct funding for people, businesses and services, and includes the following measures.

Relief for Individuals

- B.C. Emergency Benefit for Workers [Updated!](#)
- B.C. Climate Action Tax Credit [Updated!](#)
- B.C. Student Loans
- ICBC [Updated!](#)
- BC Hydro [Updated!](#)

Relief for Business

- Employer Health Tax Payments [Updated!](#)
- PST
- School Taxes [Updated!](#)
- Other Taxes [Updated!](#)

Relief for Individuals

[B.C. Emergency Benefit for Workers \[Updated!\]\(#\)](#)

A new B.C. Emergency Benefit for Workers will provide a tax-free \$1,000 payment to British Columbians whose ability to work has been affected by the outbreak.

The benefit will be a one-time payment for British Columbians who receive federal Employment Insurance (EI), or the new federal Emergency Care Benefit or Emergency Support Benefit as a result of COVID-19 impacts. This includes workers who have been laid-off, who are sick or quarantined, parents with sick children, parents who stay at home from work while child care centres and schools are closed, and those caring for sick family members, such as an elderly parent.

The workers can be EI-eligible and non-EI eligible, such as the self-employed.

The benefit will be paid to B.C. residents, in addition to their federal income supports.

The B.C. Emergency Benefit for Workers will provide a one-time \$1,000 payment to people who lost income because of COVID-19.

- B.C. residents who receive federal Employment Insurance, or the new federal Canada Emergency Response Benefit are eligible
- Applications for the one-time payment will open soon

B.C. Climate Action Tax Credit Updated!

The COVID-19 Action Plan takes further steps to boost income supports by increasing and expanding the B.C. Climate Action Tax Credit in July 2020. As many as 86% of British Columbians will see some extra money from this enhancement. Eligible families of four will receive up to \$564 and eligible individuals will receive up to \$218 in an enhanced payment. This boosts the regular climate action tax credit payment of up to \$112.50 per family of four and up to \$43.50 per adult.

A one-time enhancement to the climate action tax credit will be paid in July 2020 for moderate to low-income families:

- An adult will receive up to \$218.00 (increased from \$43.50)
- A child will receive \$64.00 (increased from \$12.75)

B.C. student loans

To help people with B.C. student loans, the Province is freezing B.C. student loan payments for six months, starting March 30, 2020.

ICBC Updated!

ICBC customers on a monthly payment plan who are facing financial challenges due to COVID-19 may defer their payment for up to 90 days with no penalty.

See: <https://www.icbc.com/about-icbc/contact-us/Pages/covid-19.aspx>

BC Hydro Updated!

BC Hydro customers have the option to defer bill payments or arrange for flexible payment plans with no penalty. Customers who are dealing with job loss, illness or loss of wages due to COVID-19 will be able to use BC Hydro's Customer Crisis Fund grant program for up to \$600

- Customers can defer bill payments or arrange for flexible payment plans with no penalty through the [COVID-19 Customer Assistance Program](#)
- Customers experiencing job loss, illness or lost wages due to COVID-19 can access grants up to \$600 to pay their hydro bills through the [Customer Crisis Fund](#)

Relief for Business

Employer Health Tax Payments Updated!

Effective immediately, businesses with a payroll over \$500,000 can defer their employer health tax payments until Sept. 30, 2020. Businesses with a payroll under this threshold are already exempt from the tax.

COVID-19 Action Plan: Filing Deadline Extension

The employer health tax return and final payment due date for the 2019 calendar year has been extended to September 30, 2020.

COVID-19 Action Plan: Instalment Payment Deadline Extension

Employers required to make instalment payments won't need to make them until after September 30, 2020. Future instalment payment due dates will be determined at a later date.

Provincial Sales Tax

The Province is extending tax filing and payment deadlines for the provincial sales tax (PST) until Sept. 30, 2020.

The new PST registration requirements on e-commerce and the implementation of PST on sweetened carbonated drinks, will be delayed and their timing will be reviewed by Sept. 30, 2020.

School Taxes Updated!

Business and light- and major-industry property classes will see their school tax cut in half. This will provide \$500 million in immediate relief for business that own their property and allow commercial landlords to immediately pass savings on to their tenants in triple-net leases.

Reduced School Tax Rates for Businesses

School tax rates for commercial properties (Classes 4, 5 and 6) will be reduced by 50% for the 2020 tax year.

Other Taxes Updated!

The Province is extending tax filing and payment deadlines for the municipal and regional district tax on short term accommodation, tobacco tax, motor fuel tax and carbon tax until Sept. 30, 2020. The scheduled April 1 increase to the provincial carbon tax will be delayed and its timing will be reviewed by Sept. 30, 2020.

Yours truly,

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