



Alberta Announces More Changes to Employment Legislation: Temporary Layoffs, Group Terminations, and Job-Protected Leaves Are Impacted

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The Alberta Government has announced additional amendments to employment standards legislation to deal with the practical implications arising from COVID-19.

On April 6, 2020, the Alberta Government issued a [press release](#) announcing upcoming temporary changes to the Alberta *Employment Standards Code* (the “Code”) in response to COVID-19.

The announced changes to the Code include:

- extending unpaid job-protected COVID-19 leave to employees caring for children affected by school and daycare closures or ill or self-isolated family members due to COVID-19. The requirement that an employee be employed for 90 days before taking this leave is waived and the leave length is flexible and may extend further than 14 days;
- increasing the maximum time for a temporary layoff from 60 days to 120 days. This change is retroactive for any temporary layoffs related to COVID-19 that occurred on or after March 17, 2020;
- improving scheduling flexibility by removing the 24-hour written notice requirement for shift changes, and the two weeks’ notice for changes to work schedules for those under an averaging agreement;
- removing the requirement to provide group termination notice to employees and unions when 50 or more employees are being terminated; and
- streamlining the process for approvals related to modifying employment standards so employers and workers can respond quicker to changing conditions at the workplace due to COVID-19.

The press release states that the above changes will take place “immediately” however, they have not yet been proclaimed into law. In addition, the changes are said to be temporary and in force while the public health emergency order relating to COVID-19 exists. It is anticipated that amending legislation and/or a new regulation relating to the Code will be available soon. We will continue to monitor this situation and provide updates when they are available.

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