

## Ford Keast HR Fast Facts

### **Pandemic Preparedness**

Bill C-13, The COVID-19 Emergency Response Act received Royal Assent on March 25<sup>th</sup>. This is the legislation that drives the new Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB).

Please note that this Fast Facts is as of March 26, 2020 and we continue to monitor government announcements.

The benefits announced last week, Emergency Care Benefit and Emergency Support Benefit are being merged into one called the **Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB)**.

#### Details of plan:

Benefit: \$2,000 per month

Length: 16 weeks or four months

Portal to apply: will be open early April

Expected payment: within 10 days of application

Payable: every four weeks and available from March 15, 2020 until October 3

Paid by: direct deposit or hard copy mail, this is an unknown as yet

Taxable income: yes

Need ROE: Yes, ROE's must be provided under any circumstances where a worker is removed from work by their employer or self-initiated resignation. So far, we are not sure of specific documentation or application form required for CERB.

The benefit will apply to any Canadian out of work due to:

- Sickness
- Quarantine
- Caregiving for someone who is ill with COVID-19
- Parents who are staying home to take care of children due to daycare or school closures
- Loss of job
- Employed but not receiving income due to disruption related to COVID-19
- Contract workers
- Self employed
- Full time
- Part time
- Gig industry individuals (e.g. Uber drivers)

Any resident of Canada who is 15 years or older, who is not receiving income from employment or self-employment, and for 2019, or in the 12 month period preceding the day on which they make an application, has a total income of at least \$5,000 from employment or self-employment will be eligible to apply for the CERB.

All Canadians who have ceased working *whether or not they are eligible for Employment Insurance*, are eligible to receive this benefit. Canadians who have yet to apply for federal income support will be able to decide whether to apply for CERB or EI based on which offers more financial support.



(FYI only: David Macdonald, senior economist at the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives tweeted that anyone making less than \$23 an hour and has a full time job should apply to the CERB as it will pay more than EI.)

Those who are receiving EI regular or sickness benefits as of today will continue to receive their benefits and should not apply for the CERB. If their benefits end before October 3, they can apply for the CERB once their EI ends if unable to return to work. EI and CERB cannot be applied for at the same time.

Small businesses will continue to be eligible for the 10% wage subsidy where they continue to pay employees. The Federal government announced yesterday that it is looking at expanding wage subsidy support.

Other details:

- We have not been made aware if an employer can top up the CERB, but there is consistent caveat of 'no income'.

#### ONTARIO:

The Ontario Government announced further details of *Ontario's Action Plan: Responding to COVID-19*. This includes:

\$10 billion to support businesses including through tax-related relief and deferral of WSIB payments for up to six months.

Ontario has extended job-protection for employees unable to work because:

The employee is under medical investigation, supervision or treatment for COVID-19.

The employee is acting in accordance with an order under the Health Protection and Promotion Act.

The employee is in isolation or quarantine.

The employee is acting in accordance with public health information or direction.

The employer directs the employee not to work.

The employee needs to provide care to a person for a reason related to COVID-19 such as a school or day-care closure.

The protections are retroactive to January 25, 2020.

Ontario employers are restricted from asking for doctor's notes for COVID-19 related leaves, including quarantine, self-isolation or childcare responsibilities due to COVID-19.

The government of Ontario has indicated that there will be supports for the self-employed; however, there are no details at this time.

On a lighter note (are there any?), social distancing is/should now be referred to as "physical distancing".

**Please feel free to contact me at any time if I can assist you with your Human Resources challenges.**

**519.679.9330 Ext. 401 | [jdanyluk@fordkeastHRC.ca](mailto:jdanyluk@fordkeastHRC.ca)**

