

# COVID – 19 UPDATE 24

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Due to the rapidly changing circumstances surrounding COVID-19 and its impact on workers, program support criteria are subject to change. Be sure to visit [www.unifor.org/covid19](http://www.unifor.org/covid19) to download updated versions of the fact sheets available to our members and their families.

[https://www.unifor.org/sites/default/files/documents/document/covid\\_infosheet\\_cews-202101\\_0.pdf](https://www.unifor.org/sites/default/files/documents/document/covid_infosheet_cews-202101_0.pdf)



## Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) Factsheet

The Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) was introduced by the federal government in April 2020 as a means of providing financial support to employers that had been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. When the program was originally announced, eligible employers received up to 75% of eligible employees' earnings, amounting to a maximum benefit of \$847 a week over the first four qualifying periods.

Starting in Period 5, the CEWS program rules were changed to so that the maximum benefit would decline gradually over time while allowing employers with any amount of revenue decline to apply for the subsidy. Moreover, employers hardest hit by the COVID-19 crisis and whose revenues have declined by more than 50% are now eligible to receive a top-up subsidy.

On October 14, the government revealed that the maximum subsidy amount (base + top-up) would remain at Period 8 levels—i.e. 65% of eligible employees' earnings—until the end of Period 10 (i.e. December 19, 2020).

On January 6, 2021, new details were released for Periods 11 to 13, with the 25% top-up increasing to 35% for a maximum subsidy of 75% (40% base + 35% top-up) until March 13, 2021.

While workers on paid leave were previously treated the same as active employees, starting December 20, 2020, furloughed workers will only be able to receive up to a maximum subsidy of \$595 a week.

All employers are eligible to apply for the CEWS except for public institutions, i.e. municipal authorities, non-taxable corporations (not including Indigenous government-owned businesses), public schools, school boards, health authorities, and public universities and colleges.

This factsheet provides relevant information that Unifor local union representatives as well as national staff may find useful in determining whether employers are eligible for the CEWS and in advocating against unnecessary lay-offs and wage cuts.

Questions or comments about the CEWS program can be directed to the Research Department at [research@unifor.org](mailto:research@unifor.org)

## Revised CEWS Rules: July 5, 2020–March 13, 2021 (Periods 5–13)

On July 27, Bill C-20 was passed which brought into force important changes to the CEWS program. Following a consultation with stakeholders, the federal government announced in July that it would be making significant modifications to the revenue threshold requirements and the structure of the CEWS benefit.

Under the old CEWS rules, applicants had to meet a 30% revenue decline threshold for Periods 2 to 4. This was a strict threshold, meaning that any applicant who cannot show a 30% revenue decline is automatically disqualified.

Under the new rules, the revenue threshold has been turned into a sliding scale so that any amount of revenue decline will now qualify an entity for the CEWS.

However, the maximum amount of the base subsidy was reduced to 60% of an employee's wages (instead of 75% under the older rules) and the level of revenue decline required to receive this maximum subsidy increased to 50% (from 30%).

This maximum subsidy amount also declined incrementally, from 60% in Periods 5 and 6, to 50% in Period 7, and 40% in Period 8. While it was originally set to decline further (to 20% in Period 9), the government recently announced that the base subsidy amount would remain at the Period 8 level until at least Period 13, which ends on March 13, 2021.

The new CEWS maximum subsidy is structured as follows (note that the maximum weekly benefit now applies to a revenue decline of 50%—not 30%—and over):

Timing	Period 5*: July 5– August 1, 2020	Period 6*: August 2–August 29, 2020	Period 7: August 30–September 26, 2020	Periods 8–13: September 27, 2020–March 13, 2021
Maximum weekly benefit per employee	Up to \$677	Up to \$677	Up to \$565	Up to \$452
Revenue drop:				
50% and over	60%	60%	50%	40%
0% to 49%	1.2x revenue drop (e.g., 1.2 x 20% revenue drop = 24% base CEWS rate)	1.2x revenue drop (e.g., 1.2 x 20% revenue drop = 24% base CEWS rate)	1.0x revenue drop (e.g., 1.0 x 20% revenue drop = 20% base CEWS rate)	0.8x revenue drop (e.g., 0.8 x 20% revenue drop = 16% base CEWS rate)

\* In Periods 5 and 6, employers who would have been better off in the CEWS design in Periods 1 to 4 would be eligible for a 75% wages subsidy if they have a revenue decline of 30% or more.

Under the new rules, organizations that experience a revenue decline of over 50% will be eligible for a top-up. From Periods 5 to 10, the maximum top-up was set at 25%, but this maximum was recently increased to 35% for Periods 11 to 13.

The top-up is structured as follows, as of Period 11:

REVENUE DROP	TOP-UP CEWS RATE	TOP-UP CALCULATION = 1.75 X (REVENUE DROP MINUS 50%)
70% AND OVER	35%	1.75 x (70%–50%) = 35%
65%	26.25	1.75 x (65%–50%) = 26.25%
60%	17.5	1.75 x (60%–50%) = 17.5%
55%	8.75	1.75 x (55%–50%) = 8.75%
50% AND UNDER	0%	1.75 x (50%–50%) = 0%

Under the new rules, the maximum subsidy amounts for Periods 5 to 13 are the following:

Timing	Period 5–6*: July 5– August	Period 7: August 30– September 26, 2020	Period 8–10: September 27–December 19, 2020	Period 11–13: December 20, 2020– March 13, 2021
<b>MAXIMUM</b> <b>\$960</b> <b>WEEKLY</b>	Up to	Up to \$847	Up to \$734	Up to \$847
<b>BENEFIT PER</b>	(60% 25% top-	(50% base + 25% top-up)	(40% base + 25% up)	(40% base + 25% top-up)

#### EMPLOYEE

*\*Safe harbour periods*

It is important to note that the top-up and new rules are not retroactively applied. This means that any organization that has experienced a revenue decline greater than 70% during Periods 1 through 4 will not be able to retroactively claim the top-up.

## Other Considerations

Employees do not need to be actively working in order to be eligible for the benefit. As long as they are employed and on payroll, they will be eligible for the CEWS. However, the maximum benefit they are eligible to receive will change under the new rules.

Furloughed employees who are on paid leave continued to receive the old 75% maximum subsidy (or up to \$847/week) from Period 5 until 8. Starting in Period 9 (October 25), however, the CEWS benefit was adjusted to align with what the employee would otherwise receive through the revamped Employment Insurance

(EI) benefit (\$500–\$573 a week). On January 6, 2021, it was announced that the maximum subsidy for furloughed workers will increase to \$595 a week for Periods 11 to 13.

Employees who were in receipt of the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) and were subsequently rehired (whether retroactively or on a go-forward basis) will have to pay some or all of their CERB benefits back. This applies in situations where the employer's CEWS claim period overlaps with an employee's

CERB benefit period, retroactive to March 15. The Canada Revenue Agency has stated that it will be using employers' payroll records to determine whether overpayment has occurred and contact CERB claimants if any amounts are owing.

If CEWS-eligible employees are not actively working—i.e. they are on paid leave—the employer's contributions to Employment Insurance (EI), Canada Pension Plan (CPP), Quebec Pension Plan (QPP) and Quebec Parental Insurance Plan (QPIP) will continue to be refunded.

## Interaction with Other Benefits

EI benefits received under the Work-Sharing program and benefits received under the 10% Temporary Wage Subsidy for small businesses will reduce the benefit that employers are entitled to receive under the CEWS for a particular qualifying period.

As stated above, CEWS-eligible employees who have been rehired and are currently receiving the CERB through EI or the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) may have to pay back some of their CERB claim.

## Application Process

Employers can apply for the CEWS through the CRA's My Business Account (<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/e-services/e-services-businesses/business-account.html>) Applications for each claim period can only be submitted once the claim period is over.

The government has developed an online CEWS calculator (<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/subsidy/emergency-wage-subsidy/cews-calculate-subsidy-amount.html>) that allows employers to determine the amount of subsidy they will receive for each claim period. This calculation must be included with their CEWS application.

Employers will also need to sign an attestation (<https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/cra-arc/serv-info/tax/business/topics/cews/rc661-fill-20e.pdf>) form that confirms their eligibility for the CEWS, including the fact that their qualifying revenue has declined by the required amount(s). The form also requires the employer to maintain records demonstrating revenue reduction, employee remuneration and any other information required to verify the amount of the CEWS claim are kept. These must be made available to the CRA upon request.

Employers will need to make sure that their business details and direct deposit information for their payroll accounts are up to date in My Business Account (<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/e-services/e-services-businesses/business-account.html>). Those expecting to receive payments of \$25 million or more will need to register for the large value transfers system (LVTS) (<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/tax/businesses/topics/corporations/corporation-payments/managing-your-corporation-account/making-adjustments-account-balances/refunds-over-25-million.html>).

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## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Q: Does the employer have to top wages up to 100%?

A: While employers are not legally required to top up wages as part of the CEWS, they must continue to abide by collective agreement clauses, including wage provisions. Unless workers enter into an agreement to temporarily reduce their wages, employers must pay full wages as stipulated by the collective agreement and/ or employment contract.

Q: Can the employer force employees to take vacation while on paid leave?

A: This depends on the collective agreement. If the CA requires vacation time to be mutually agreed upon, the employer must negotiate with the employee to take vacation time while they are on paid leave. However, if the collective agreement is silent on vacation scheduling or it allows the employer to determine vacation scheduling according to operational requirements, the employer may be able to force vacation time. In most jurisdictions, this would require two weeks' notice.

Q: If an employer is receiving the CEWS, are they allowed to stop paying pension contributions, health insurance premiums, or other benefit obligations defined in the collective agreement?

A: No. The CEWS does not permit the employer to suspend any part of the collective agreement, including benefit and pensions provisions. However, there may be circumstances where union members are willing to suspend such benefits temporarily. Such agreements must be negotiated between the local and the employer.



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# THE COVID-19 BRIEF

## CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

*Your resource for cutting through the fear and misinformation. Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, check*

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*your email for trusted CTV News reporting and analysis to help differentiate between fact and fiction.*

Follow [the latest updates](#) and read [full coverage](#)

**The outbreak by the numbers** (as of 10:30 a.m. Friday, Jan. 22, 2021):

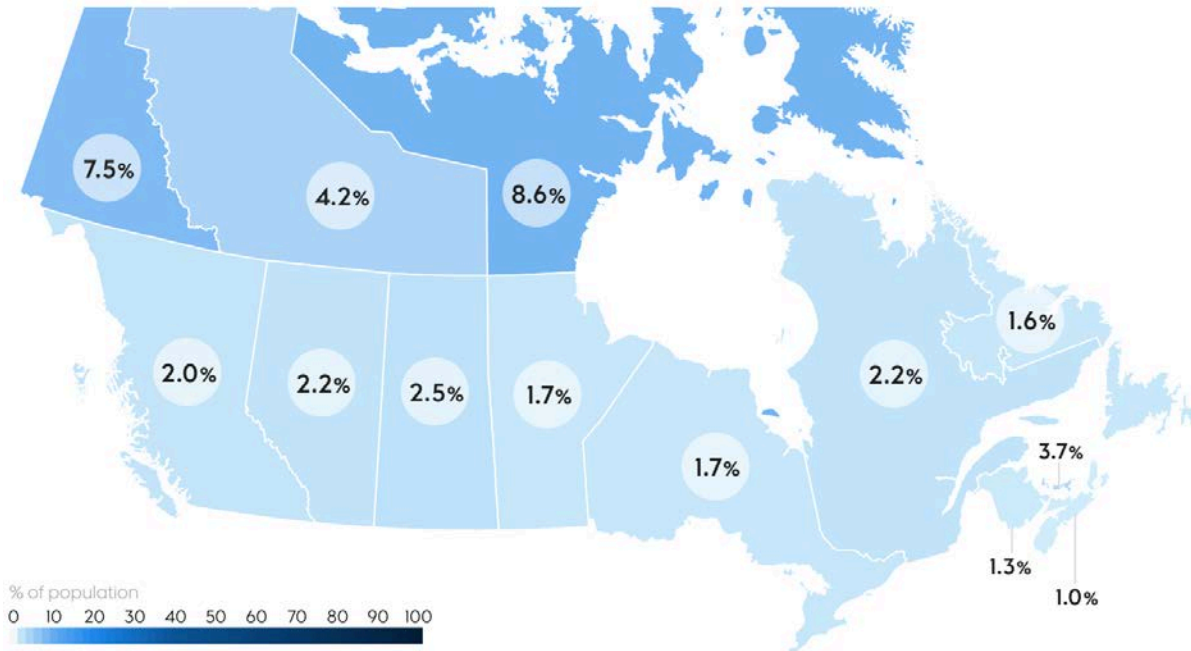
- **Canada:** 734,113 cases | 64,903 active | 18,709 deceased
- **Globally:** 97,645,892 cases | 53,866,741 recovered | 2,094,191 deceased

**Vaccinations by the numbers** (as of 10:00 a.m. Friday, Jan. 22, 2021)

- **Globally:** 53,796,935 doses administered | 0.69% of population
- **Canada:** 681,845 first doses | 56,404 second doses | 1.94%
- **British Columbia:** 103,221 first doses | 1,680 second doses | 2.04%
- **Alberta:** 96,506 first doses | 0 second doses | 2.18%
- **Saskatchewan:** 26,727 first doses | 3,054 second doses | 2.53%
- **Manitoba:** 20,846 first doses | 3,038 second doses | 1.73%
- **Ontario:** 213,592 first doses | 40,225 second doses | 1.72%
- **Quebec:** 186,210 first doses | 0 second doses | 2.17%
- **New Brunswick:** 7,869 first doses | 2,567 second doses | 1.34%
- **Nova Scotia:** 7,131 first doses | 2,696 second doses | 1%
- **Prince Edward Island:** 4,503 first doses | 1,407 second doses | 3.7%
- **Newfoundland and Labrador:** 6,812 first doses | 1,737 second doses | 1.64%
- **Yukon:** 3,160 first doses | 0 second doses | 7.49%
- **Northwest Territories:** 1,893 first doses | 0 second doses | 4.2%
- **Nunavut:** 3,375 first doses | 0 second doses | 8.59%



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## [Here's what's been happening in Canada](#)

**Cases pass 734,000.** Since the last newsletter, officials have confirmed more than 8,000 new cases of [COVID-19 in Canada](#), including 2,662 in Ontario [on Friday](#). The province, which has been closing the gap in total case numbers with the worse-hit [province of Quebec](#), has also recorded more than 300 new COVID-19-related deaths since Sunday.

**Vaccine timeline.** Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said Thursday that he spoke with the CEO of Pfizer Global and was reassured that the company's [promised shipment](#) of four million doses of COVID-19 vaccine by the end of March will still come through. The current delay, which sees Pfizer shipments [drop by half](#) each week, will impact Canada's short-term immunization targets, but should not interfere with long-term goals, officials said.

**First Nations.** As [active cases](#) in Indigenous communities across Canada reach all-time highs, the federal government says it is working with the provinces to prioritize vaccinating First Nations communities against COVID-19. "We need participation of the provinces to ensure that needles get into the arms of people that are the [most vulnerable](#)," said Indigenous Services Minister Marc Miller.

**Inmate vaccines.** The Canadian Civil Liberties Association says provinces should be setting targets to vaccinate provincial inmates, but as many as half of jurisdictions have yet to do so. "Prisoners are disproportionately impacted by health conditions that would make them very susceptible to serious illness and death as a result of COVID," the group said.

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## [Don't downplay mRNA, experts say](#)

While most met the swift development of COVID-19 vaccines with enthusiasm, some are hesitant to accept the relatively new messenger RNA vaccine technology. But while the mRNA method, which provide cells with instructions to make proteins, is new to immunization efforts, the technology has actually been around for decades. The mRNA vaccines teach our cells to produce a benign piece of the SARS-COV-2 spike protein, which then teaches the immune system to recognize and fight off the virus.

"It sounds fancy, mRNA, but there's nothing outlandish about it," Dr. Earl Brown, a virology and microbiology specialist with the University of Ottawa told The Canadian Press. "This is the way our cells operate -- we live by mRNA."



## ['Vaccine tourism' crackdown in Florida](#)

As reports popped up in recent weeks of Canadian snowbird [flying south](#) to Florida to get a COVID-



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19 vaccine, the state has announced new restrictions that could curb that very activity. Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis announced earlier this week that anyone who owns property in Florida and lives there at least part-time can get the jab. Travellers who aren't state residents will no longer be eligible.

"To just kind of come in from another country or whatever, we don't support that and we're not going to allow that ... we're not doing vaccine tourism," he told reporters.

Anyone who doesn't have a Florida ID is being asked to provide proof of residency, whether it's a utility bill, property tax receipt or lease agreement.



## [Debunking a misinformation flyer](#)

Among the letters, bills and coupons in their mailboxes, some Ontario residents have found a flyer claiming to expose the truth of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Titled "Facts Not Fear," the flyer is just more junk mail, says infectious disease specialist Dr. Isaac Bogoch.

"It's garbage," he told CTV's Your Morning on Friday. [Click here](#) to read why.

## [Latest on the coronavirus in Canada:](#)

- [Pfizer pitches Canada for tax breaks in upcoming budget](#)
- [Doctor says Canada underfunding long-term care amid call to end for-profit homes](#)
- [W-shaped recovery would be 'very severe' without government assistance: CMHC](#)
- [Experts say pandemic fuelling apparent spike in eating disorders among adolescents](#)
- [LIVE UPDATES: What's the latest in Canada and around the world today](#)

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# List of locations: Here's where to get tested for COVID-19 in B.C.

Internet Explorer

<https://bcgov03.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/7f71191c6e0c4e65a644c1da3f53eb68>

Mobile and Desktop

<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/3862560c5a41418e9d78f4f81688e9d0>

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**Unifor's website is constantly being updated as new information is provided. Unifor has many websites to direct you to for assistance.**

## **Resources:**

Unifor COVID-19 Information and Resources: <https://www.unifor.org/covid19>

Government of Canada Outbreak Update: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html>

Government of Canada Income Supports for Workers/Individuals:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/economic-response-plan.html>

**Please also check the websites of your respective provinces for any additional provincial supports or resources that may be available to you.**

BCCDC website for Health info about COVID-19: [www.bccdc.ca](http://www.bccdc.ca)

British Columbia Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) website: <http://covid-19.bccdc.ca/>

**Health Issues: Dial 811 and follow your Provincial Protocols**

**Mental Health Issues: Dial 211 or access your EAP benefits:**

## **Other useful websites with information**

### **Federal Government Financial Support Resources:**

Government of Canada COVID-19 Financial Assistance for Canadians Outside of Canada: <https://travel.gc.ca/assistance/emergency-info/financial-assistance/covid-19-financial-help>

Government of Canada Economic Plan & How to Apply for Support: <https://www.canada.ca/en/department->

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[finance/news/2020/03/canadas-covid-19-economic-response-plan-support-for-canadians-and-businesses.html](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support)

COVID - 19 Employment and Social Development Canada Information Guide: <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/notices/coronavirus.html>

Canada Revenue Agency COVID-19: <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/covid-19-employee-info.html>

**Provincial Government Financial Support Resources:**

BC Preparedness Response: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support>

Income Assistance: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/income-assistance>

Income Assistance Offices in the Lower Mainland: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/income-assistance/access-services#lowermainland>

**Health & Preparation Resources:**

COVID-19: Being prepared: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/being-prepared.html>

Government of Canada Symptoms & Treatments: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/symptoms.html>

BC COVID-19 Symptom Self-Assessment

Tool: <https://covid19.thrive.health/?fbclid=IwAR1NzQXV3eUgFa5bSimQ2wiRpXVRMZc1LPbpg5fUNIDFIK1Sc7yjhcc4aB>

Health Link BC & 811: <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/services-and-resources/about-8-1-1>

**Other Useful Links:**

World Health Organization Myth Busters: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/myth-busters>

World Health Organization Public Advice: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>  
Government of Canada, Community-based Measures: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/health-professionals/public-health-measures-mitigate-covid-19.html>

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**If you have any questions please contact your Local Union Representative.**

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**Follow phone directory to get to your Local Rep and if not available leave a message you will get a call back.**

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