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**Subject:** COVID-19 UPDATE - March 19, 2020  
**Date:** March 19, 2020 1:29:42 PM  
**Attachments:** [Sample Project Mandatory Declaration.pdf](#)

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Good Afternoon Members

As part of our continuing efforts to update our members with information they may find useful please see our update for today below:

1. As the spread of COVID-19 has an increasing impact on staffing levels we thought this would be a good time to share some information regarding employees who are not able to work to assist you or your employees moving forward. As you know, any time an employee is unable to work you are required to issue a Record of Employment. If you have questions or concerns regarding how to appropriately complete an ROE you should contact Service Canada; however, we have collected the information below from Service Canada and the Canadian Payroll Association regarding these Records:
  - If an individual is sick: the reason on their Record of Employment is “D – Illness”
  - If an individual is under quarantine or self-isolation but does not have the disease: the reason on their record of employment is “D – Illness”. Claims will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis
  - If a work site is shut down and the employer does not have alternate work available or an employer closes its business, the reason on the worker’s record of employment is “A – Lack of work”.
  - If an individual refuses to work because of the risk, the reason on their record of employment is “E – Voluntary termination” or “N – Leave” although current recommendation from Canadian Payroll Association is to use “N – Leave”. Claims will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
  - Avoid adding comments unless absolutely necessary.
2. Once your employee has been issued a Record of Employment Service Canada is requesting all applications for EI to be done online to avoid exposure in their offices. Employees should go to: <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei.html> for more information on EI Benefits they may qualify for. To go directly to the application for EI Illness Benefits they can go here: <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/ei-sickness/apply.html>. In order to have the waiting period for sick benefits waived an employee should call Service Canada at 1-833-381-2725 two days after they apply for their Illness Benefits – note that this phone number is dedicated only for this purpose. For general questions employees can contact Service Canada at 1-800-O-Canada although the information on the website is detailed and should answer most questions.
3. For employers interested in options to provide a top-up to EI benefits to employees who are unable to work during the COVID pandemic there is a program available called a Supplemental Unemployment Benefit which allows an employer to top-up an employees EI benefits to 95% of their employment earnings without impacting the EI claim. The challenge we are having in providing detailed advice about this is that the program requires that the plan be filed with and

approved by Service Canada and we have been unable to get a response from Service Canada regarding the approval process, the time it requires or whether the registration requirement will be temporarily lifted in this circumstance. If you are interested in more information on this program it is available on the Service Canada Website here: <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/ei/ei-list/ei-employers-supplemental-unemployment-benefit.html>.

4. We are aware of at least one project that is using a health declaration for all employees returning to site. We have attached a sample of a declaration to this e-mail as there may be others who find this to be a useful tool. In addition as most of you are probably aware the BC Government has posted a self-assessment tool on their website – that tool can be accessed here: <https://covid19.thrive.health/>.
5. Business Development Canada is implementing some measures to support businesses struggling with the effects of the current pandemic on their business. More information is available here: [https://www.bdc.ca/en/about/mediaroom/news\\_releases/pages/bdc-announces-additional-measures-provide-relief-canadian-entrepreneurs.aspx](https://www.bdc.ca/en/about/mediaroom/news_releases/pages/bdc-announces-additional-measures-provide-relief-canadian-entrepreneurs.aspx).
6. **Of course we have commented on this in past messages as well but a reminder never hurts. In this sensitive time it is important all employers have sufficient hand wash facilities and hand sanitizers on site. It is also critical that when planning safety or other site meetings keep in mind both the restriction on any gatherings over 50 people imposed by the Province and the requirement for all attendees to remain a proper social distance from each other. If you are having challenges getting sufficient cleaning and sanitizing supplies on site you can contact WorkSafeBC but also let us know so we can gather the concerns and pass them on to government.**

Joleen Kaminski | Office Manager *on behalf of Ken McCormack, President and CEO*

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