

## **Joleen Kaminski**

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**From:** CLRInfo  
**Sent:** April 17, 2020 9:18 AM  
**To:** Ken McCormack  
**Cc:** Paul Strangway; Joleen Kaminski  
**Subject:** COVID 19 UPDATE: April 17

**Importance:** High

CLR Members,

### **Reported Incidents of COVID-19**

Today's numbers show a reported more than 30,600 cases of infection now in Canada, with 1,575 occurring in BC. While these numbers are terrible and we are far from having something to celebrate, on a per capita basis the numbers reported in each province show that BC is somewhat ahead of the rest. The measures taken in BC are helping. Please take a moment today to consider the front line workers who are putting their health and lives at risk to protect the rest of us. They deserve our most sincere appreciation.

### **No Reported Infections on Construction Job Sites**

On the issue of reported incidents of infection, it was reported to me yesterday that there have been no incidents reported to WorkSafeBC where anyone has caught COVID-19 on a construction job site. This is something that we all collectively need to be proud of. The important work you are doing to ensure safe and healthy worksites is doing what it is supposed to do. Your business and your commitment to health and safety are ensuring that construction remains an essential service and keep people working, and makes sure that people are safe when they are on the job sites. This is hugely important and something to celebrate.

### **Supporting our Communities**

I am aware of one construction company at least who has recognized that there is an opportunity to support the community they operate in and the other small businesses that are financially impacted in that community. As a construction employer they know the workers that remain engaged on their job site need to eat, and provided they can ensure the health and safety of their people and those that enter their work site, they have made a commitment to bring prepared meals on site from restaurants that remain open in the community and who are adhering to the Provincial Health Officer (PHO) Guidelines. I am being vague intentionally because I know that company wants to communicate what they are doing, and the partnerships they have forged, on their own. In the meantime though, I encourage our members to consider what they can do to help safely promote economic support to businesses outside the construction sector without putting their workers at risk. It seems with the right protocols in place, it can be done. Perhaps there are opportunities for you and your business as well?

### **Spring/Summer Construction Projects**

One of the many issues that we have been advocating with government on your behalf includes encouraging the start of construction and maintenance work that typically happens in the summer and for which various levels of government have influence or direct control. This came to our attention by one member who understands that when the current crisis starts to ease, and we all hope it will be soon, there will be significant demand for construction development to ramp up and for more workers than we can possibly supply if everything comes at once. One example of this is work necessary on provincial schools.

We have been advised that the annual budget cycle for school districts may create challenges in expediting the work necessary on schools. For those of you who do work on schools you may know already that each spring, government approves funding for individual school districts to complete construction projects (new building/renovation). It is then

up to each district to conduct the necessary planning and tendering, which follows a timeline to allow construction to start in the summer (if necessary). Because of the required timelines for tendering etc., there is limited latitude to expedite projects. Additionally, although regular school may not be in session, many schools are still being used for administrative staff and/or for special purposes such as emergency response or providing childcare/education to the children of healthcare workers, etc.

That said, government hasn't heard any plans to pause or delay school construction or renovation projects and expect only slight delays on larger projects. It was suggested to me that if construction companies want to pursue this further, it would be advised that you reach out to relevant school districts directly, as they are the ones managing the procurements at this point and the provincial government has limited capacity to intervene. In other discussions, I have been told that in fact, some school districts are trying to expedite this process for the schools in their jurisdiction so it may be worthwhile for you to contact the school districts you're interested in and encourage them to initiate projects sooner than later.

### **Prime Minister's Address**

In his address this morning, The Prime Minister (PM) announced more assistance for provinces and territories.

The federal government made several announcements for new and expanded supports:

- \$1.7 billion to be used to clean up orphaned wells in BC, AB, SK and other provinces. The PM says it will create immediate jobs (support 5,200 jobs in this sector) while supporting companies facing bankruptcy and continue to ensure we are protecting the environment;
- \$750 million emission reduction fund to support jobs in the emissions sector. Energy companies are facing a "cash crunch" and this initiative will support these companies and the jobs that depend on them. He claims this should maintain 10,000 jobs across the country;
- Working with BDC and EDC to support at risk energy companies to remain in operation and support their workers.

For small businesses in general, the government brought in the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy to help keep people on the payroll. They implemented the Canada Emergency Business Account to help businesses with cash flow. But government knows that too many businesses are still "falling through the cracks". To fix that they made additional announcements today:

- \$962 million to regional development agencies and the community futures network. This will ensure those in more remote areas and those who do not have a traditional relationship with banks will get support.
- \$270 million to Futurepreneur and the industrial research assistance program to support innovators and early stage companies under development that do not qualify for other supports.
- \$500 million to Heritage Canada to support arts, creators and rising sports stars. Those who work in these sectors are often not eligible for supports due to their business models Those eligible will get access to funds for salaries and financing to assist with cash flow problems.

The Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) so far has made 7.5 million payments directly to those who were approved. Moving forward, government will be releasing data on the use of these programs on their website.

I hope you have a great, albeit isolated, weekend. Stay safe and well.

Ken McCormack | President & CEO

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