

Joleen Kaminski

From: CLRInfo
Sent: April 30, 2020 9:23 AM
To: Ken McCormack
Cc: Paul Strangway; Joleen Kaminski
Subject: COVID 19 Update: April 30

Importance: High

CLR Members,

BC Update

Yesterday, the provincial government announced that the State of Emergency in BC will be extended for another 2 weeks (until May 12). The government does acknowledge that the curve appears to be flattening and the measures taken to control the virus are working, but are not yet ready to ease restrictions. The Premier mentioned that when the times comes to ease restrictions, it will be done in a gradual, controlled and measured way that maximizes the chances that we can protect the progress that we have made so far in controlling the spread of the virus. Announcements could be made as early as next week.

Also in his address, the Premier mentioned the work they are doing to review sick leave for employees throughout the economy. More specifically, the fact that some employees do not get paid sick leave and end up going to work when they are sick. There is no clear announcement yet, or timeline for implementation, but the Premier is expected to make an announcement soon that will most likely require employers to offer paid sick leave to their employees (possibly including part time workers). According to the Premier, the current pandemic has highlighted the need to ensure that people do not come to work sick because there is an “economic imperative” that they work because they can not afford to stay home. When questioned about financial burdens on employers should mandatory sick leave be implemented, the Premier was not specific but indicated that anything implemented would be done “with industry”, likely through discussions with WorkSafeBC.

Federal Update

Yesterday, we reported that the federal government was working with provincial and territorial Premiers on developing a coordinated approach to reopening the provincial economies. The concern for the Prime Minister (PM) is that such decisions are provincial jurisdiction. Each province having been impacted by the virus to varying degrees, and they will need different solutions to restart their economies. The federal government does not want to see those decisions being made without coordination and standard health and safety measures being followed. With these concerns in mind, the federal and provincial governments worked on a set of principles and guidelines. Here is the link to the joint statement released by the PM.

<https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2020/04/28/prime-minister-releases-joint-statement-first-ministers-restarting>

In his address today, the PM’s daily address was focused on the tragic loss of six Canadian naval personnel after their helicopter crashed during a training exercise while serving as part of NATO’s *Operation Reassurance* off the coast of Greece. The cause of the crash is unknown and they are still looking for 5 of the 6 crew members who went down with the helicopter.

Reporters asked how the government plans to repay the national debt after it has been reported that the current deficit is expected to reach \$252 billion, with debt to GDP now at 49% (GDP is expected to drop 12% this year). Reporters want to know if the federal government expects to implement a new tax or other measures to deal with the debt. The PM

responded that the current focus is on helping Canadians through the pandemic. Economic recovery will be addressed once the economy fully reopens. Of course some measures will be necessary but they will be looked at later. No specific measures are being looked at right now. He pointed out that Canada is fortunate to be in a position where our debt to GDP ratio is the strongest in the G7, and that our economy was strong enough that the government was able to help our people in this time of need. He expects the Canadian economic recovery to be less onerous than what many other countries will be facing.

Canadian Construction Association (CCA)

The CCA has been advocating with the federal government for measures to be taken to provide “relief” for construction businesses in Canada as an escalated measure beyond the assistance that has been provided to date. Existing supports are expected to create financial burdens for businesses down the road that some will not be able to recover from. The CCA is proposing that construction businesses add their voice to that of the association’s by sending a letter to their local Member of Parliament (MP). The link to the letter for your consideration is as follows:

<https://www.pushpolitics.ca/clients/construction/>

WorkSafeBC’s Certificate of Recognition (COR)

WorkSafeBC’s Certificate of Recognition (COR) team is working with the certifying partners (CPs) to support employers with 2020 COR audit requirements during the COVID-19 outbreak.

From the WorkSafeBC website:

For audits not yet started for employers with COR certifications that expire by August 31, 2020:

- *If you are an employer with an Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) or OHS and Return-to-Work (RTW) certification that expires by August 31, 2020 and you have not started the **certification** audit, you can apply for a “2020 audit waiver.”*
- *To apply:*
 - *Contact your CP to ask for the waiver*
 - *CPs will complete and submit the 2020 audit waiver form to WorkSafeBC on your behalf*
 - *WorkSafeBC will reply to the CP with appropriate approvals*
 - *CPs will contact you to outline next steps*
- *Once approved, we will issue a one-year COR certificate(s) from the date of the original certificate expiry (i.e., expiry of 2020-05-03 will now have expiry of 2021-05-03). This means that employers accepted into the waiver program will require certification audit(s) conducted by an external auditor (or internal auditor for small employers) in 2021 on or before the new expiry date.*

To apply, please contact your CP at the following link:

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/health-safety/create-manage/certificate-recognition/certifying-partners>

For more information:

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/news-events/announcements/2020/March/information-for-cor-certified-employers>

Stay safe and well.

Ken McCormack | President & CEO

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