

UPDATE FROM SERVICE CANADA
INCREASE TO NUMBER OF WEEKS FOR
THE CANADA RECOVERY BENEFITS AND
EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE REGULAR BENEFITS

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of Canada has strongly urged Canadians to stay home to stop the spread of COVID-19. As Canadians continue to make difficult but important sacrifices for their health and their communities, the Government of Canada has been there to support individuals and their families every step of the way, including through the creation of recovery benefits and a more flexible and accessible Employment Insurance (EI) program.

Recent EI legislative and regulatory amendments allow for an increase to the number of weeks of benefits available under the **Canada Recovery Benefit (CRB)**, the **Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit (CRSB)**, the **Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit (CRCB)** and **EI regular benefits**.

As of March 17, 2021, the following changes have come into effect:

- **An increase to the number of weeks available under the CRB and the CRCB by 12 weeks, extending the maximum duration of the benefits from the current 26 weeks, to up to 38 weeks;**
- **An increase to the number of weeks available under the CRSB from the current 2 weeks to 4 weeks; and**
- **An increase to the number of weeks of EI regular benefits available by up to 24 weeks, to a maximum of 50 weeks, for claims that are made between September 27, 2020 and September 25, 2021.**

In addition to increasing the maximum number of weeks available to workers under the EI program, self-employed workers who have opted-in to the EI program to access special benefits, are able to use a 2020 earnings threshold of \$5,000, compared to the previous threshold of \$7,555. This change is retroactive to claims established as of January 3, 2021, and apply until September 25, 2021.

To ensure employees in the federally regulated private sector can access the additional weeks of CRCB and CRSB without the risk of losing their jobs, the maximum length of leave related to COVID-19 under the *Canada Labour Code* (the Code) has also been extended. Job-protected leave under the Code has increased complementary to the additional weeks available under the CRCB and CRSB, from 26 weeks to a maximum of 38 weeks of leave for caregiving-related reasons due to COVID-19, and from 2 weeks to a maximum of 4 weeks of leave for sickness-related reasons due to COVID-19.

Additional changes that were included under the legislation with respect to EI eligibility for international travellers have also come into effect.

For information on the Canada Recovery Benefits and EI benefits, please visit the following COVID-19 Benefits and Services webpage at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/covid19-emergency-benefits.html>.



Canada.ca

General Information: 1-800-O-Canada (1-800-622-6232)

Employment Insurance Call Centre: 1-800-206-7218