
UPDATE

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Ministry of Labour

Deadline looms for temporary layoff extensions

VICTORIA – With only two weeks until the application deadline, employees and employers who need to extend temporary layoffs beyond the Aug. 30, 2020, expiry date are entering a critical phase to meet deadlines.

Businesses requiring an extension should apply for a variance using the Employment Standards Branch’s new online application by Aug. 25.

“While more and more businesses are reopening, we know there are still some businesses that won’t be able to recall staff back to work by the end of August,” said Harry Bains, Minister of Labour. “This new variance process will help maintain the link between employers and workers, so that when businesses are able to scale up their reopening, they have the skilled and experienced workers ready to resume their jobs – but only if the deadline is not missed.”

Last month, the Ministry of Labour launched a simplified variance application process to help businesses navigate the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic more easily. The redesigned process replaces paper-based applications, allows all documents to be sent by email and reduces the burden on employers and employees by providing the templates and tools needed to apply.

In order to receive a variance, an employer must survey employees eligible for an extension to their temporary layoff and the business must ensure it has more than 50% support before applying.

Employers are encouraged to apply as soon as possible. An application deadline is set for Aug. 25 for employees and employers to jointly apply for an extension, to ensure that all applications will be processed by the Aug. 30 expiry date.

The temporary layoff variance process is intended to maintain ongoing relationships between businesses and their employees. This can ensure faster startups when a business is ready to resume operations.

Under B.C.’s Employment Standards Act, temporary layoffs related to COVID-19 can last up to 24 weeks, or until Aug. 30, before the layoff becomes permanent.

BC’s Restart Plan is supporting businesses to safely reopen and get people back to work.

Learn More:

View a demonstration of the process to apply for a temporary layoff variance presented to the British Columbia Chamber of Commerce by the Ministry of Labour:

<https://youtu.be/SrRv8XykBAM>

Visit the updated website for temporary layoff variance applications: www.gov.bc.ca/covidlayoffs

For information on employment standards around temporary layoffs, visit: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/employment-standards-advice/employment-standards/hours/variances>

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