



e2r Alert

British Columbia Establishes Vaccine Leave; Alberta Takes a Different Approach

British Columbia has become the second province (joining Saskatchewan) to provide a new job-protected leave for employees getting the COVID-19 vaccine. In particular, this new leave allows employees to take unpaid time off work to get the COVID-19 vaccine themselves or to take dependent family members to get vaccinated.

The B.C. government concurrently announced in an accompanying press release that they will explore options regarding a paid leave to allow employees to receive a vaccine, but for the time being the leave will be unpaid.

Further, B.C. has made changes to the existing COVID-19 related job-protected leave, which provides employees time off work for other COVID-19 related reasons. These amendments have extended the COVID-19 related leave to an employee who is more susceptible (due to an underlying condition or illness) to contracting COVID-19. In addition, the amendments permit employees an opportunity to take an unpaid leave to care for family members (and not only children and dependents) because of COVID-19.

Meanwhile, Alberta has taken a slightly different approach to encourage workers to get vaccinated. This week the Ministry of Labour and Immigration has confirmed that workers are able to take unpaid time away from work to receive the COVID-19 vaccine under rules introduced in March 2020, which permitted employees five (5) days of unpaid leave annually to deal with health or family issues.

Now that B.C., Alberta and Saskatchewan have taken steps to address the issue of time off work for vaccine purposes, it is likely that other provinces will follow suit. Keep an eye out for future e2r® Alerts to stay up to date on any other COVID-19 related developments.