



e2r Alert!

Ontario Approves Paid Sick Days

The Ontario government has passed the new *COVID-19 Putting Workers First Act*, which will mandate employers to provide three paid sick days to most employees.

Provincially regulated employees (federally regulated employees do not qualify for these days) will be able to take these three days if they are:

- going for a COVID-19 test
- staying home awaiting the results of a COVID-19 test
- being sick with COVID-19
- going to get vaccinated
- experiencing a side effect from a COVID-19 vaccination
- having been advised to self-isolate due to COVID-19 by an employer, medical practitioner or other authority
- taking care of a dependent who is:
 - sick with COVID-19 or has symptoms of COVID-19
 - self-isolating due to COVID-19

Doctors' notes will not be required.

Employers will be required to pay employees up to \$200 per sick day. If the employee's regular rate of pay is less than \$200 per day, employers are only required to pay their regular rate. The days do not need to be taken consecutively.

Employers who already offer 3 or more paid sick days, do not need to offer any additional days. Likewise, employers who already offer 1 or 2 paid sick days, are only required to offer the difference between what they offer and 3 paid sick days.

While businesses will be expected to foot the upfront costs of the program, the government said it will reimburse business owners up to \$200 per day, per employee through the Workplace Safety Insurance Board. Employers have 120 days to apply for reimbursement from the date of the employee's paid sick day. It's important to note that this reimbursement only applies to sick days provided under the program. Meaning, if an employer already offered paid sick days those days are not eligible for reimbursement. Further details related to the actual reimbursement process will be made available via the Ministry of Labour website in the coming days.

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This document is intended to be used as a reference and ought not be considered as constituting legal advice (including jurisdictional variances) and accordingly should not be relied upon without obtaining specific legal advice from e2r™.

This program is a temporary measure only and applies retroactive to April 19, 2021 and ends September 25, 2021.

If you have any questions regarding the above, please do not hesitate to reach out to speak with an e2r™ Advisor.