



Paid Sick Leave

Main message:

- When you're sick, please stay home.
- When your staff are sick, please encourage them to stay home.
- Nova Scotia's Paid Sick Leave program will officially launch on May 26, 2021.
- We are working closely with the program administrator, the Nova Scotia Co-operative Council, on final details and more information will be available online at that time.

Program facts:

- Nova Scotia's paid sickness benefit is available to employees and self-employed workers who miss less than 50 per cent of their schedule work time in a one-week period due to COVID-19. The worker may qualify if they are:
 - Awaiting a PCR appointment
 - Getting tested;
 - Self-isolating while awaiting testing results; or,
 - Going to get vaccinated.
- For-profit businesses and not-for-profit organizations are eligible to apply for reimbursement for sick leave costs through this program. Employers must maintain a physical location in Nova Scotia and be registered to carry on business in the province.
- Self-employed workers who are actively earning an income may also be eligible for paid sick leave in Nova Scotia.
- Paid sick leave is available for qualifying workers for a total of four (4) days.
- The maximum payment amount is \$20 per hour or \$160 per day for qualifying workers. The maximum payment per worker is \$640.
- Nova Scotia's paid sick leave program is expected to benefit over 100,000 eligible Nova Scotians. \$16 million has been set aside to deliver the program over the 12-week period.
- Nova Scotia's paid sick leave benefit is effective from May 10, 2021 until July 31, 2021. Applications made when the program opens on May 26, 2021 will be retroactive to the start date.
- A doctor's note is NOT required.

RESOURCES

- If employees or employers have questions, they may wish to wait until May 26, 2021 when the program officially launches to contact the program administrator. They can also email COVIDsickbenefit@novascotia.ca.
- More information is available on our webpage: <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/paid-sick-leave-program>
- If you need to miss more than 50 per cent of your scheduled work week, you may qualify for the Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit (CRSB). Go to: <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/benefits/recovery-sickness-benefit.html>



Who qualifies for Nova Scotia's COVID-19 paid sick leave benefits?

Employees and self-employed workers who miss less than 50 per cent of their scheduled work week period due to COVID-19 may qualify for Nova Scotia's paid sick leave program. This includes if you are awaiting PCR test results, getting tested, self-isolating while awaiting test results and / or you need to go to get vaccinated.

When does it come into effect?

Nova Scotia's Paid Sick Leave Program will officially launch on May 26, 2021. Applications for reimbursement can include sick days incurred on May 10, 2021 and until July 31, 2021.

Why now? (why not before?)

We have been looking at the best way to ensure Nova Scotians are supported when they are not feeling well and need to stay home to isolate or go for testing. This program bridges the gap to Canada's Recovery Sickness Benefit which only covers absences where the worker has missed at least 50% of their work week.

How do businesses apply to be reimbursed?

Employees do not need to apply. Employers or business can apply to be reimbursed beginning May 26, 2021.

Beginning May 26, 2021, businesses and self-employed individuals can submit requests for reimbursements to the program administrator, the Nova Scotia Co-operative Council. Employers and self-employed individuals will be required to fill out an online application, including a declaration form. The declaration form submitted as part of the employer's application will require sign off by both the employer and the employee whose wages are being reimbursed by the program.

How soon will I receive payment?

Employees do not need to apply. Employers or business can apply to be reimbursed beginning May 26, 2021.

More information will be available then for employers who wish to apply.

If you are sick in the meantime, please stay home. Reimbursements will be retroactive to May 10, 2021.

What's the max I can get?

The maximum payment amount is \$20 per hour or \$160 per day for qualifying employees and employers. The maximum payment per worker, including those who are self-employed, is \$640.

Is this retroactive?

Yes, applications for reimbursement can include sick days beginning and including May 10, 2021.

Do I have to wait until May 26, 2021, when the program launches, to take time off due to COVID-19?

No. If you are feeling unwell, you should stay home and go get tested.



Nova Scotia's paid sick leave benefit is effective from May 10, 2021 until July 31, 2021. You can apply for sick leave due to COVID-19 throughout this 12-week period and reimbursement to your employer will be retroactive.

What if I feel sick again inside of the 12 weeks?

Under Nova Scotia's paid sick leave benefit, you can apply for a maximum of four sick days during the 12-week period. These days do not have to be taken consecutively.

What if I have to miss more than 50 per cent of my scheduled work week?

If you need to miss more than 50 per cent of your scheduled work week, you may qualify for the Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit (CRSB). More information is available at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/benefits/recovery-sickness-benefit.html>

What if I need to care for a family member who is sick? Can I collect benefits from the province?

The Canada Recovery Caregiver Benefit (CRCB) provides income support to employed and self-employed individuals who are unable to work because they must care for a child under 12 or family member.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/benefits/recovery-caregiving-benefit.html>

When do people access the federal program versus the provincial program?

Both programs offer protection for employees and self-employed workers who need to miss work due to COVID-19.

Canada's Recovery Sickness Benefit is for workers who must miss *at least 50 per cent of their scheduled work-week* due to illness, advice to self-isolate or an underlying health condition.

Nova Scotia's Paid Sick Leave complements the federal program by addressing the gap for qualifying workers who *miss less than 50 per cent of their scheduled work week* due to PCR testing, self-isolating while they are waiting for results and / or vaccination.

What if my employer is not in good standing? Does that mean I can't collect benefits? (Example: employers who have deferred their workers compensation payments)

If people are unwell, they should stay home and go get a PCR test until they receive a result. We will continue to work with businesses throughout the process.

How does money flow to me ...via my employer?

Your employer will continue to pay you and they will be reimbursed after they submit the application request including your declaration form.

What if my employer will not participate?

Employers in this province have made public health a priority and have supported their employees throughout this pandemic. We expect employers will take full advantage of this program which financially supports them to not only support their employees, but to keep the workplace and our communities safe.



How quickly will employers be compensated for payment of sick time?

We are working closely with the Nova Scotia Co-operative Council to quickly process reimbursements to employers. We appreciate how responsive and supportive businesses have been throughout this pandemic; we want to make it easier for businesses and employers that are doing the right things.

Why only four (4) days?

Nova Scotia conducted a scan of similar programs in other jurisdictions and determined that four (4) days will help address the gap not currently covered by Canada's Recovery Sickness Benefit. The maximum allotment of four paid sick days does not have to be used consecutively and can be for any of the reasons we mentioned (if you are awaiting on PCR testing, self-isolating, or getting vaccinated).

Why did it take so long to implement this program? OR Why was Nova Scotia behind other provinces in announcing this program?

As with all of our COVID-19 relief programming, we look to address gaps in federal and existing funding. Once it was clear that Canada's Recovery Sickness Benefit was not meeting the needs of all Nova Scotians, we acted to develop a program that would provide paid leave to Nova Scotians when they need to stay home due to COVID-19.

Why is Nova Scotia only offering this benefit until July 31 when other programs are available until late September?

We believe that Nova Scotians are doing the right things to keep each other safe, and we should be in a good position by summer due to the current vaccination strategy.

While we believe July 31 is the appropriate time this temporary sick leave benefit is needed, the Province will revisit this closer to this time if necessary.

Can this paid sick leave be taken for other types of illnesses or health issues unrelated to COVID-19?

Currently, Nova Scotia's paid sickness benefit is to help workers who must take time off due to COVID-19. This includes those who are going to get a PCR test, awaiting results, self-isolating or getting their vaccination.

Although a doctor's note will not be required, can an employer request one from an employee as part of its own internal business policy?

Employers should not ask employees to obtain unnecessary doctor's notes. This puts unnecessary strain on doctor's office. It also undermines the public health order to stay home as much as possible.

Is this a voluntary program? If so, why?

The program is voluntary for businesses. We appreciate how responsive and supportive businesses have been throughout this pandemic; we want to make it easier for businesses to support their employees during this difficult time.