

COVID-19 Update

General Leave: Asymptomatic Employees



December 1, 2021

By email: 2 pages

Changes to eligibility for General Paid Leave: Asymptomatic Employees

The General Paid Leave: Asymptomatic Employees will end on December 31, 2021 for those employees who are able to be vaccinated.

Access to the general paid leave for asymptomatic employees will continue for:

- Employees who have medical conditions recognized by the Provincial Health Officer as contraindications to receiving the COVID-19 vaccine.
- Employees who cannot be vaccinated for reasons that would entitle them to an accommodation (from receiving the COVID-19 vaccine) under the *Human Rights Code* of British Columbia.
- Employees already on approved General Paid Leave: Asymptomatic Employees prior to December 31, 2021 may complete their approved leave.

The BCTF and K-12 Presidents' Council have been notified of this change.

If your district has been utilizing this leave, you may wish to communicate with your local unions that this without precedent and prejudice leave is ending.

Background

General Paid Leave was offered on a without prejudice and precedent basis and has been in place since February 2021. Its purpose was to provide employees with paid leave (not sick leave) if they are directed by a public health official to self-isolate due to potential exposure to COVID-19 and are asymptomatic.

For Background Information please refer to the following:

- @Issue 2021-03 dated February 5, 2021 [UPDATE to PHO Directed Isolation Leave](#)
- @issue 2021-02 dated February 1, 2021 [Leave When Directed by Public Health to Self-Isolate](#)
- @Legislative Update 2021-04 dated May 26, 2021 [Amendments to Employment Standards Act: Paid Sick Leave](#)

Why is this leave ending for most employees?

Public health is no longer requiring those who have been fully vaccinated to self-isolate after an exposure. The leave is being discontinued for employees who can be vaccinated, but have chosen not to receive the vaccination.

Next steps

Where an asymptomatic employee is directed by a public health official to self-isolate, and where that same employee is medically unable to be vaccinated or exempt from vaccination because of a protected ground under the Human Rights Code of BC, districts are advised to:

1. Explore work from home options in the employee's current position for the duration of the required self-isolation.
2. Where work from home in the employee's current position is not possible, consider options for re-deployment to work that can be completed remotely.
3. Where no accommodation can be made, and on a without prejudice and without precedent basis, the employee would be placed onto the general paid leave for asymptomatic employees.

Questions

Should you require assistance or wish to discuss this issue further, please contact your BCPSEA liaison.