



EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE BENEFITS AND ELIGIBILITY WHILE WORKING PARTTIME

General Information about Employment Insurance

Employment Insurance can be awarded where the employee is unable to work due to illness or quarantine (“**Sickness Benefits**”) or where the employee was laid off due to no fault of their own (“**Regular Benefits**”). Details about how to apply for Regular Benefits can be found here: <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/ei-regular-benefit.html>.

Subject to specific situations, a waiting period of one (1) week will apply before the employee begins to receive EI benefits. So far, this waiting period has only been waived where the applicant is under quarantine or directed to self-isolate due to COVID-19 and is claiming EI Sickness Benefits.

Eligibility

In order to qualify for EI, the applicant has to have a minimum amount of *insured hours* in the 52 week period preceding the start of their claim (or in the period since the start of their last EI claim, whichever is shorter). Simply put, the applicant has to have worked a minimum number of hours for an employer during the year prior to their EI application.

The minimum amount of insured hours varies depending on the unemployment rate of the region.

In Quebec, for **Regular Benefits**, all regions require **700 insured hours** in the year prior to the start of their claim, with the exception of Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Lower Saint Lawrence- North Shore. More information on the unemployment rate applicable to your area can be found here :

https://srv129.services.gc.ca/ei_regions/eng/rates_cur.aspx.

For **Sickness Benefits**, the individual must have **600 insured hours** in the 52 weeks before the start of their claim. More information on Sickness Benefits can be found here:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/ei-sickness/qualify.html>.

Duration of the benefits

Sickness Benefits and Regular Benefits are not cumulative.

For Sickness Benefits, the maximum duration is 15 weeks.

The duration of Regular Benefits varies in relation to the unemployment rate in the applicant’s region and typically ranges from 14 to 45 weeks. More information on the unemployment rate applicable to your area can be found here : https://srv129.services.gc.ca/ei_regions/eng/rates_cur.aspx.

Amount of benefits

The amount of benefits an applicant can receive varies according to a calculation based on *insurable earnings*. Insurable earnings are all earnings paid in the form of cash – i.e. not payments in-kind – from an employer as a result of employment. These can include base salary, tips, and commissions.

For most individuals, the basic rate is 55% of the average earnings (capped at \$54, 200) in the year prior to their claim. The maximum weekly benefit is \$573.

The calculation of total insurance earnings will be based off the best weeks of the last 52 week period prior to the application for EI.

Working while on EI

When an individual has served the one (1) week waiting period without pay, and begins receiving EI, they can begin to work again *and* continue to receive Regular Benefits.

In order to work and maintain eligibility for EI benefits, the individual cannot work a full week, regardless of the amount earned.

The individual can keep 50 cents for every dollar earned, up to 90% of the weekly insurable earnings of the previous weekly earnings. Any amount earned above the 90% earnings threshold will be deducted dollar for dollar from the benefits received.

The effect of working while on EI on the applicant's EI benefit would be as follows :

If the individual made \$500 weekly prior to going on EI, they would receive \$275 in EI benefits (55% of \$500 = \$275)

If the individual works part time while receiving EI benefits, half of the amount earned in salary (50 cents on the dollar) will be deducted from their regular EI benefit.

That means, if this same individual finds part time work which pays \$300 per week, their EI benefits of \$275 will be reduced by \$150, or 50 cents for every dollar earned ($\$300 \div 2 = \150).

Their total EI benefits would then be \$125 ($\$275 - \$150 = \125)

The applicant therefore takes home their \$300 weekly salary plus their EI benefit of \$125 per week, for a total of \$425 per week.

COVID-19 Measures Federally and Provincially

The Federal Government announced the **Emergency Care Benefit** which will be administered through the Canada Revenue Agency. This is an EI program that will be available to individuals under quarantine, who have tested positive for COVID-19, or who are caring for a family member with COVID-19, and who would otherwise not be eligible for EI benefits (e.g. self-employed workers). Applications for this EI benefit will be available in April. For more information, consult the following link: <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/news/2020/03/canadas-covid-19-economic-response-plan-support-for-canadians-and-businesses.html>.

The Quebec government put into place the **Temporary Aid Worker's Program** which will assist individuals who have been ordered to self-isolate, are under quarantine, have contracted COVID-19, or have come into contact with an individual testing positive for COVID-19, and who are otherwise ineligible for Employment Insurance. Applications are available as of March 19 at the following link : <https://www.quebec.ca/en/family-and-support-for-individuals/financial-assistance/temporary-aid-for-workers-program/>.