

COVID-19 Update

ACCESSING EI IN BC

During COVID-19 pandemic

Some IATSE 891 members are looking for information on how to access EI in this difficult time. Here's a handy how-to guide on how to apply. If you do not qualify for regular EI or EI Sickness Benefit and are out of work due to the COVID-19 pandemic you may be able to access the new Canada Emergency Response Benefit which replaces the previously announced Emergency Care Benefit and the Emergency Support Benefit. [Click here for details.](#)

The rules are rapidly changing. Please check [this link](#) to see new updates from the Canadian government.

- STEP 1** Understand what type of EI you are eligible for
- STEP 2** Call the COVID EI hotline
- STEP 3** Gather your information
- STEP 4** Fill out the online EI application
- STEP 5** Call Service Canada (who administers EI)
- STEP 6** Submit your required bi-weekly updates

STEP 1 Understand what type of EI you are eligible for

TYPE 1 Those out of work due to self-quarantine

You do not have to be laid off by your employer to qualify but must be able to say your employer or a medical professional asked that you stay home. You must be unable to work from home to qualify. EI sickness benefits may provide up to 15 weeks of income replacement. You will not need a medical certificate if you are under quarantine.

TYPE 2 Those out of work due to workplace closure due to COVID-19

You will need between 420 and 700 hours of insurable employment based on the unemployment rate in your area during the qualifying period to qualify for regular benefits.

You can look up EI Economic Region by Postal Code to find out the unemployment rate in your region and the number of hours to qualify for regular benefits here: https://srv129.services.gc.ca/ei_regions/eng/postalcode_search.aspx

This is all your workplaces combined.

TYPE 3 Those on quarantine that may finish their quarantine to find their workplace closed

The majority of IATSE 891 members and permittees will qualify as a **TYPE 2** case.

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STEP 2 Call the COVID EI hotline

For those who have been asked by their employer or a medical professional to stay home and quarantine due to COVID-19

TYPE 1 **TYPE 3** | If **TYPE 2**, skip to step 3

Hours are 8:30am-4:30pm • Note you may be on hold for several hours due to a high volume of calls. You can complete Steps 3-4 while on hold. Make sure you have your phone plugged in, on speaker, and somewhere you will be able to answer quickly when they pick up. Toll free number: 1-833-381-2725.

If you are inquiring about EI due to quarantine, this is the number for you. The other EI number is not dealing with COVID cases, and vice versa. Doctors note requirement is waived during this crisis.

STEP 3 Gather your information

TYPE 1 **TYPE 2** **TYPE 3**

You will need the following information on hand when you fill out your EI application:

- The first and last date of your employment
- Your SIN number. If your SIN begins with a 9, you need to supply proof of your immigration status and work permit.
- Your mother's maiden name.
- Your mailing and residential addresses, including the postal codes
- Your complete banking information to sign up for direct deposit, including the financial institution name, bank branch/transit number, and account number. You can get this from your online bank account or a blank cheque.
- Names, addresses (including postal codes), phone number for all your employers over the last 52 weeks
- You need to find your paystub or cheque for your **HIGHEST earning two week period in the last year**. Go through your bank statements to find your cheque deposits if you don't have your paystubs. They won't ask for this now, but if your number is way off you can be audited. This means if you usually make \$500/wk but in a two week period last summer where you picked up extra shifts, you made \$700/wk, use these weeks. They **DO NOT** need to be two consecutive weeks. You may add the money you made from multiple employers together. Please list the amount you made **BEFORE** deductions such as staff tabs, taxes, medical insurance, vacation pay etc. There are two types of tips: controlled & direct. Controlled tips **MAY** be claimed. You will receive up to 55% of this number as your EI payment (up to a max of \$573/week in Vancouver) For example, if you made \$100/week on paper, you should receive \$55 per week on EI.

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See photo below on how to find your banking information from a cheque:

JANE SPECIMEN
2345 MAIN STREET
VANCOUVER, BC V6A 4G2

DATE 20YY-MM-DD
Y Y Y Y M M D D

PAY TO THE ORDER OF _____ \$ _____

100 DOLLARS Security features included. Details on back.

Vancity VANCOUVER CITY SAVINGS CREDIT UNION
Make Good Money™ VANCITY CENTRE COMMUNITY BRANCH
183 TERMINAL AVENUE, TEL: 604.877.7013
VANCOUVER, BC V6A 4G2

MEMO _____

① 00 ② 1234567890 ③ 100000026054

■ Branch/Transit #

■ Financial institution #

■ Account #

Click this link for more information on the documents needed:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/ei-regular-benefit/before-applying.html>

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STEP 4 Fill out the online EI application

TYPE 1

TYPE 2

TYPE 3

It may take up to an hour to complete but is much faster if you gather all the above information first! Your information is saved for 72 hours (3 days) from the time you start. If you don't complete the application, you can come back to it later using a temporary password that you receive when you start your application.

Fill out online EI application at:

EI Regular Benefits (<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/ei-regular-benefit/apply.html>)

- Submit your form online. Once submitted, you will be supplied with a confirmation number, please write it down for reference later. If you make any mistakes that you realize after submission, there is a number you can call to update your application, this number will be listed on the page after you submit.
- Your employer is able to submit your Record of Employment (ROE) online, or if they will not, you can request a paper version from them and mail it. Your application will not be approved until your ROE is obtained by Services Canada.

How to submit your Record of Employment (ROE)

Online: [canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/ei/ei-list/ei-roe.html](https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/ei/ei-list/ei-roe.html)

By mail: Service Canada Centre W-T Region, PO Box 245, Edmonton, AB, T5J 2J1

Important: Selecting reason for unemployment on EI application

TYPE 1 **TYPE 3** Select 'medical leave' as reason for not working. This is the option that covers quarantine and people staying at home due to COVID-19 isolation. This will last for 14 days (time of standard isolation), and if you develop symptoms during this period of isolation, you may need to restart the clock. They are unsure currently if at that point you would need to get a note from a doctor, but currently the 'medical note' is waived for this isolation period so people stay at home.

TYPE 3 If you finish your time in quarantine to find your workplace is closed or unable to provide you with shifts, you can request your work email you a 'layoff' notice so you may update your EI type after your 2 week isolation. You cannot do this until your 14- day isolation 'sick leave' is over. You must call to change your EI claim type after 2 weeks. Toll free number: 1-833-381-2725

TYPE 2 When applying for general EI, answer "No" to the following question: "Are you part of a group of employees in an Apprenticeship program, a Work-sharing program, a group layoff situation (including layoffs due to a natural disaster), or the automotive industry AND were you given a reference code to submit with this application?"

Your employer of record should be listed as either Entertainment Partners Canada or Cast and Crew Entertainment Services Inc — check your paystub. State the reason for termination as "shortage of work."

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STEP 5 Speak to Service Canada

TYPE 1 **TYPE 3** | If **TYPE 2**, skip to step 6

BE KIND! These operators have had a very stressful week and don't know much more than you about what's going on or how best to help you. Sometimes they are working with information that has only been released to them a few minutes earlier. Thank them for what they are doing!

They will ask you for your SIN number and some information such as your name and birthdate to locate your EI application you just submitted online. They will read you a statement and ask you for a yes or no answer if this applies to you. It essentially states that 'I am currently out of work or in quarantine under the advisement of my doctor, a health care professional or by request of my employer.' If you agree to this statement, the one week waiting period that is standard with new EI claims is waived. If you do not agree to this statement, this hotline is not for you and can't help, please use the standard online EI form instead. If you disagree with this statement, you cannot be paid EI for the first week of unemployment.

STEP 6 Submit your bi-weekly updates

TYPE 1 **TYPE 2** **TYPE 3**

A part of EI is supplying Services Canada with bi-weekly updates. This includes if your situation has changed, say you are no longer in quarantine or your work has reopened. You can submit your updates on your My Services Canada page:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/my-account.html>

Bi-weekly reporting can also be called in at 1-800-531-7555.

*Usually the agents will ask for the first 2 digits of the 4 digit access code that is mailed to you upon filing an application. Agents are trained to ask for the last 3 digits of your SIN. Generally you will not be asked for your full SIN over the phone.

You will be mailed a login number (digital ID) when your application is processed (make sure that ROE is submitted!). It may take up to 3 weeks to process due to overwhelming demand during this pandemic. If your 3 weeks has passed since they received your ROE and all parts of your application, give them a call back. It is still up in the air what differences are going to be made and what requirements will be omitted for those affected by COVID-19 currently. Expect the requirements and this information to change over the coming weeks.

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STEP 7

Bonus step: Write to your MLAs and MPs

In a time of crisis, no one should be worried about how they will be able to afford rent or eat. No one should be going to work if they don't feel safe. Stay home if you have the privilege to do so, and use some of the time to write to our leaders about supporting small businesses and people that need it right now.

It shouldn't be this hard to afford basic living expenses while we are isolating!

- John Horgan - premier@gov.bc.ca or by phone at 1-250-387-1715
- Find your MP by your postal code: <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Members/en/search>
- A huge way that you can support people in the DTES and other high-risk people during this crisis is to call the ministry today (1 866 866 0800) and ask them what they are doing to help people on assistance or PWD to prepare for this.

Still have questions? Try these two links:

- <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/ei/ei-list/reports/digest.html>
- <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/notices/coronavirus.html>

Frequently Asked Questions

Do I have to pay taxes on EI?

Yes. EI benefits are taxable, no matter what type of benefits you receive. Federal and provincial or territorial taxes, where applicable, will therefore be deducted from your payment.

Can I work while receiving EI?

Yes, but you must report your income and there will be deductions. If you work while receiving regular benefits, you will be able to keep 50 cents of your EI benefits for every dollar you earn, up to 90 percent of the weekly insurable earnings used to calculate your EI benefit amount. This 90 percent amount is called the earnings threshold. If you earn any money above this threshold, it will be deducted dollar for dollar from your benefits.

When you work and receive benefits at the same time, you must report your work earnings and hours for each week you work, in the week in which the work occurred.

For more information about receiving EI benefits:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/ei/ei-list/working-while-claim.html>

<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/ei-regular-benefit/while-receiving.html>

Thanks to the BCGEU and Chris MacKay from Vancouver who compiled a lot of these resources. We will keep this document up to date as things change. Please feel free to send any questions or comments you have about this document to info@iatse.com.