

New Temporary Measures for Employment Insurance Benefits

April 2025

In our March 7, 2025 Briefing Note, [Trump's Tariffs Have Landed – How Can Canadian Employers Pivot?](#), we discussed the impact of the United States launching a trade war with Canada and options for Canadian employers if right- or downsizing becomes necessary.

In our March 13, 2025 Briefing Note we discussed, in detail, [special measures the Federal Government introduced under Service Canada's Work-Sharing Program](#).

On April 9, 2025, the Federal Government announced a six-month employment insurance (“EI”) pilot project to support Canadian workers.¹ With the significant job losses expected in a tariff-impacted economy, the EI benefits claims are expected to increase substantially, with an anticipated 415,000 additional claims in the first 12 months. It is also expected that a greater percentage of claimants will exhaust their weeks of entitlement, with the potential of return to employment increasingly difficult.

As a result, the following measures are now in effect:

1. **Service Canada will waive the one-week waiting period for all EI claims.**
 - This is in effect from March 30, 2025 to October 11, 2025.
 - EI claimants may still serve the waiting period if it is to their advantage because of a top-up from a Supplemental Unemployment Benefit plan.
2. **EI claimants will not experience a delay in receiving benefits, or a reduction of benefits, if they also receive separation monies (e.g., severance, vacation, and other monies), if:**
 - a. The claimant's benefit period begins between March 30, 2025 to October 11, 2025; or
 - b. The separation monies are allocated during a period where the first week falls between March 30, 2025 to October 11, 2025.
 - This is in effect from March 30, 2025 to October 11, 2025.
 - For an employment separation or layoff that occurred before March 30, 2025 and separation payments that continue beyond October 11, 2025, a delay or reduction in EI benefits may still occur.

¹ [“Regulations Amending the Employment Insurance Regulations \(Pilot Project No. 24\): SOR/2025-115” Government of Canada](#)” (April 9, 2025)

3. During the period April 6, 2025 to July 12, 2025, the Government will artificially boost regional unemployment rates as follows:
- a. For a region with a rate of 6.1% or less, the rate will be deemed to be 7.1%.
 - b. For a region with a rate between 6.1% and 12.1%, the rate will increase by 1% point.
 - c. For a region with a rate between 12.1% to 13.1%, the rate will be deemed to be 13.1%.
 - d. For a region with a rate of 13.1% or greater, the rate will not change.
- Claimants across all EI regions will need no more than **630 hours** of insurable employment to qualify for regular benefits²; and
 - Across all EI regions, entitlement to benefits may increase by up to **4 additional weeks**.³

To learn more, please contact your Sherrard Kuzz LLP lawyer or info@sherrardkuzz.com

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² Depending on the EI region, a claimant regularly needs 429 to 700 hours of insurable employment .

³ Depending on the EI region, the standard maximum is 45 weeks.