

# COVID-19 Paid Sick Leave Program

## Additional Information for Self-Employed Workers

### QUALIFYING FOR THE BENEFIT

The COVID-19 Paid Sick Leave Program applies to self-employed workers who miss **less than 50%** of their scheduled work time in a one-week period due to COVID-19. (Note, if the calculation of missed time equals 50% or more of the individual's scheduled work week, the worker might qualify for the [Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit \(CRSB\) - Canada.ca](#).)

The reason for time missed must be because the worker is:

- Self-isolating due to an exposure, close contact, or symptoms **and**:
  - waiting for rapid or lab (PCR) testing
  - taking the test
  - waiting for test results
- Getting a COVID-19 vaccine or booster (this includes travel time related to getting the vaccine or booster)

Information about accessing rapid or lab (PCR) testing is available at [COVID-19 Testing | Nova Scotia Health Authority \(nshealth.ca\)](#)

### Example #1

#### Self-isolating and Testing

An individual, who planned a schedule of 45 hours for the week of December 19, 2021, learns on December 20 they are a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. They immediately self-isolate and arrange for a COVID-19 test. The individual takes steps that allow them to continue working while self-isolating starting December 22 and, as a result, they miss only 15 hours of work that week. The individual meets the criteria outlined above.

## Questions and Answers

**Q:** If an individual can continue working while self-isolating but chooses not to, can they still qualify for the Program?

**A:** No. The Program is meant to support individuals who are unable to work.

**Q:** If an individual misses 50% or more of their work week for the reasons outlined above, can they access the Program by only claiming pay for the time missed that falls below the 50% threshold?

**A:** No. The individual does not meet the criteria to qualify for the Program. The individual might, however, qualify for the [Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit \(CRSB\)](#) administered by the federal government.

## Example #2

### Getting the Vaccine or Booster

An individual has a booster appointment on December 26, 2021 and must take 2 hours off work to travel to their appointment, get their booster and return to work. The 2-hour period the individual needs off work to attend their appointment meets the criteria of the Program.

## Questions and Answers

**Q:** If the individual misses work due to side effects from the vaccine or booster, can the individual claim that missed time?

**A:** No. Missed time due to side effects does not meet the Program criteria.

**Q:** If the individual chooses to take a full day off work to get their vaccine or booster – even though they only need part of the day to attend their appointment – can they claim a full day's pay through the Program?

**A:** No. The Program only covers the time the individual needs off work to get their vaccine or booster.

## ELIGIBILITY

### Self-employed workers

- are a resident of Nova Scotia
- are actively earning income from the business as their primary source of income
- are registered to do business in Nova Scotia (unless such registration is not required)
- have declared business income on their most recent tax return
- are in good standing with the Province of Nova Scotia (not in default of any financial obligations like loan repayments, taxes, fines, fees, administrative and court orders)
- aren't eligible for or receiving other income support (like Business Interruption Insurance, the Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit or any other income replacement or insurance programs)

### Example #3

A self-employed worker who lives and works in Nova Scotia, and is registered to do business in the province, has clients around the world. The individual is scheduled to work on a project for a client located in Mexico the week of January 9, 2022. The individual misses time that week due to the COVID-19 reasons outlined previously. The missed time is less than 50% of the hours they planned to work that week. The individual meets the Program criteria.

### Questions and Answers

- Q.** If a self-employed worker has registered their business in Nova Scotia but resides in a different province, can they qualify for the Program?
- A.** No. Self-employed workers must reside in Nova Scotia to qualify for the Program.

- Q.** If a self-employed worker who is residing and working in Nova Scotia has not registered their business with the Nova Scotia Registry of Joint Stock Companies, can they still qualify for the Program?
- A.** It depends. If the self-employed worker's business does not need to be registered with the Nova Scotia Registry of Joint Stock Companies (i.e. the business is exempt from the requirement to register) they may qualify for the Program.

## LENGTH OF THE BENEFIT

Self-employed workers can qualify for a maximum of 4 days over the duration of the Program (December 20, 2021 to March 31, 2022).

### Example #4

A self-employed worker misses work time over three days during the week of January 10, 2022, due to COVID-19 symptoms and testing. The missed time is less than 50% of the worker's planned work hours that week. The individual applies for the Program and is approved for payment. A month later, the individual needs 2 hours off work to get their COVID-19 vaccine. As the individual has used only 3 of the 4 days available through the Program, the time off to get their vaccine is still within the maximum 4 days offered by the Program.

## Questions and Answers

- Q.** Does appointment time to get vaccinated count as 1 of the 4 days a self-employed worker might be entitled to under the Program, even if the worker is required to miss only part of a work day to get their vaccine?
- A.** Yes. If a self-employed worker misses part of a workday for the reasons outlined previously, it counts as 1 of the 4 days available through the Program.
- Q.** If a self-employed worker submitted a claim and received payment through the Program when the Program was in effect previously (May 10, 2021 to July 31, 2021), can the individual still qualify for up to 4 days again under the relaunched Program?
- A.** Yes. Even if a self-employed worker qualified for the maximum 4 days under the previous launch of the Program, they could still qualify for up to 4 days under the relaunch of the Program (December 20, 2021 to March 31, 2022).

## MAXIMUM PAYMENT

Under the Program, self-employed workers qualify for their hourly rate of pay for missed time up to a maximum of \$20 per hour or \$160 per day.

### Example #5

A self-employed worker earns \$18 per hour and misses 10 hours of work in one day for the reasons outlined previously. The worker qualifies for the Program and submits a claim for 10 hours at \$18 per hour (\$180). The worker is approved for the maximum allowable amount of \$160 per day.

### Example #6

A self-employed worker earns \$25 per hour and misses 6 hours of work for the reasons outlined previously. The worker qualifies for the Program and submits a claim for 6 hours at \$25 per hour. The worker is approved for \$120 (\$20 x 6 hours) as the maximum hourly rate of pay covered by the Program is \$20 per hour.

## Questions and Answers

- Q.** If a claim exceeds the maximum amount allowed under the Program, should the applicant adjust their rate of pay, or missed time, when submitting their claim to ensure it falls within the maximum amount allowed under the Program?
- A.** No. Self-employed applicants are required to submit their established rate of pay and actual hours missed.

## VERIFICATION

Program applicants who are self-employed may be required to submit with their claim the following documents (for the most recent taxation year):

- GST/HST Return
- T1 Income Tax Benefit and Return (including Statement of Business or Professional Activities - Form T2125)

If the claim is in relation to the applicant obtaining a vaccine or booster, the applicant will need to provide the date of the vaccine/booster appointment, the appointment time, and the number of kilometres traveled to and from the appointment.

As well, applicants may be asked to provide additional information, if the Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration determines additional information is required. Additional information may be requested as part of the claim verification process or if the application is audited.

### Questions and Answers

**Q.** What if an applicant does not provide requested information?

**A.** The applicant may be deemed ineligible for the Program. If an individual receives payment through the Program and is then deemed ineligible as a result of a subsequent audit or verification process, the individual will be required to return the payment to the Province.

## QUESTIONS ABOUT QUALIFYING FOR THE PROGRAM

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