

March 17, 2020 – 9:30AM

UA Local 516 COVID-19 Update

With how quick everything changes, we are trying to keep the membership and contractors up to date on relevant issues as soon as possible. We have been given an update on the coordination of benefits between Employment Insurance and Short-Term Disability provided by Canadian insurers. In addition to this notice, we have posted an updated Canada Life Newsline on our website ua516.org.

Short-Term Disability

As of March 16, 2020, if you are covered by the Refrigeration Workers Health & Welfare Plan, Canada Life has waived the short-term disability waiting period for members who are ill **and** have tested positive for COVID-19 **and** have been ordered by a medical doctor or public health official to self-quarantine. If you are unable to work due to an illness and either tested negative for COVID-19 or were told you do not need a test, the waiting period will apply, and your claim will be assessed based on your illness (as usual).

If you were already travelling out of country when the government issued the requirement of a 14-day self-quarantine to those returning to Canada, **and** your self-quarantine began prior to March 16, 2020, you should still apply for Short-Term Disability even if you were not experiencing any symptoms or were tested for COVID-19.

Employment Insurance

If you are not experiencing any illness symptoms, Employment Insurance has taken on the responsibility for members who are quarantined by a public health officer, health care provider, or employer. This includes anyone returning from vacation and their quarantine begins on or after March 16, 2020.

Members can contact Service Canada directly for more details regarding their coverage for Employment Insurance (EI) sickness benefits. Quarantined Canadians can apply for Employment Insurance (EI) sickness benefits. Service Canada is ready to support Canadians affected by COVID-19 and placed in quarantine, with the following support actions:

- The one-week waiting period for EI sickness benefits will be waived for new claimants who are quarantined so they can be paid for the first week of their claim.
- Establishing a new dedicated toll-free phone number to support inquiries related to waiving the EI sickness benefits waiting period:
- Telephone: 1-833-381-2725 (toll-free)
- Priority EI application processing for EI sickness claims for clients under quarantine.

Additional information is available at the following site:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/notices/coronavirus.html>

Updates will continue to be passed along as we receive them.