

Bill 30, Employment Standards (Serious Illness Or Injury Leave) Amendment Act: BC Government Proposes 27-Week Serious Illness Or Injury Leave For Employees



On October 20, 2025, the BC Legislature introduced Bill 30, *Employment Standards (Serious Illness or Injury Leave) Amendment Act*. If passed, Bill 30 will amend the *Employment Standards Act* (the “**ESA**”) to provide employees with up to 27 weeks of unpaid leave within a 52-week period due to serious illness or injury (the “**Serious Illness or Injury Leave**”).

The new entitlement will apply to employees covered by the *ESA* who are unable to work for at least one week due to a serious personal illness or injury. The leave may be broken into multiple periods of at least one week, offering flexibility for employees undergoing recurring treatment (e.g., chemotherapy) or managing episodic diseases (e.g., multiple sclerosis).

To access the leave, employees must obtain and provide a medical certificate from a health practitioner confirming they are unable to work due to medical reasons and specifying the dates during which leave is required. Additional medical certificates can be provided to update the timing of the leave. Currently there is no minimum length of service before an employee is entitled to this leave.

What Will Bill 30 Change for Employers?

Bill 30 is in addition to an employer’s accommodation obligations under the *BC Human Rights Code*, which requires disability related leaves, typically longer than 27 weeks.

The new Serious Illness or Injury Leave is a separate statutory right to take time off work that expressly includes job protection. Employees must be returned to their pre-leave position (or a comparable position) once the leave ends.

Approaches to Serious Illness or Injury Leave in other Provinces

Bill 30 would bring BC in line with several other Canadian jurisdictions that already provide extended sick or injury leave:

- Ontario, Manitoba, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland and Labrador provide similar 27 weeks of unpaid job-protected sick leave (Quebec provides 26 weeks).
- Saskatchewan is increasing its long-term sick leave entitlement from 12 to 27 weeks.
- Alberta provides 16 weeks of long-term illness and injury leave per calendar year (after 90 days' service).

Takeaways

- If Bill 30 is passed, employers must be prepared to administer and allow a new *ESA* long-term leave that provides employees with up to 27 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave within a 52-week period for a serious illness or injury.
- Employers should review and update policies, employment contracts, and internal procedures to reflect the new entitlement, and train managers and HR staff on how to respond to requests for Serious Illness or Injury Leave.
- Employees requesting Serious Illness or Injury Leave must obtain a medical certificate from a health practitioner confirming they are unable to work due to medical reasons and specifying the dates during which leave is required.
- When managing employees on long-term medical leave, employers will need to consider their overlapping obligations under both the *Human Rights Code* and the *ESA*.

The amendment is not yet in effect. The status of Bill 30 can be tracked [here](#).

The content of this article is intended to provide a general guide to the subject matter. Specialist advice should be sought about your specific circumstances.

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