

# Plain Language Guide to Employment Laws in British Columbia



Let's get to work.



## **Our Vision**

Inspiring a community where we all belong.

## **Our Mission**

Inclusion Langley Society builds and strengthens community through advocacy, information, and support.

We provide services that improve quality of life for children with development disabilities or special needs and adults with intellectual disabilities and autism spectrum disorder.

# How to get support

To request services from Inclusion Langley Society (ILS), you can contact Community Living British Columbia (CLBC):

**604-532-4900**

**[communitylivingbc.ca](http://communitylivingbc.ca)**

## About Community Living British Columbia (CLBC)

**Inclusion Langley Society is funded by CLBC to provide employment support and is a free service to you.**

CLBC will provide you with information about Inclusion Langley's Employment Services. Your name will go on an employment service request list, you may have to wait before receiving services.

When the employment service becomes available, CLBC will contact you and ILS. You will be contacted by Inclusion Langley to come for a meeting to learn about our employment service and to ask questions. You can come to the meeting by yourself or you can invite someone to come with you.



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# Fairness in the workplace

Employment Equity is about equal opportunity and fairness in the workplace.

Canada has an employment act (Laws) to make sure Canadian employers provide equal opportunities to:

- Persons with disabilities
- Visible minorities: people of other races
- Women
- Indigenous people



## Labour Law:

Defines your rights and responsibilities as a worker in the workplace.

A law is a system of rules.

Canadian law says that all people should be given the same chances to work.

# Minimum wage

Any adult who works in a business must earn at least minimum wage.

Minimum wage is the lowest wage permitted by law.



## Exceptions

If you work in a job where you serve alcohol there may be different pay amounts per hour. This is because people receive tips (money) that makes up the pay difference.



# Meal and coffee breaks

## When can you have a break during work?

Canadian Law says that if you work 5 hours or more you get a 30 minute unpaid meal break.

If you work less than 5 hours then your employer does not have to give you a break.

An employee does not have to be paid for a meal break unless he or she is required to work or be available for work during a meal break.



### Fact

It is important to take breaks at work. When you work for too long it can make your body and mind tired and it can affect your ability to do a good job.

# Holidays and vacation pay

**Vacation pay is paid time away from work to go on a vacation/holiday.**

Vacation pay is 4% of a part-time employee's total amount of money you receive. Usually you need to work for a year before you are entitled to take a vacation from work.

Sometimes vacation pay is added to your pay cheque and you need to save the money you need to go on vacation. Other times the employer saves it for you so you continue to be paid when you go on a vacation.

**BC Government Holidays are also called statutory holidays.**

**These days are:**

New Years Day  
Family Day  
Good Friday  
Victoria Day  
Canada Day  
BC Day  
Labour Day  
Thanksgiving  
Remembrance Day  
Christmas Day

**These are days off from work.**

You get paid for a statutory holiday when you have worked the last 15 out of 30 days.

If you work on a statutory holiday then you are paid one and a half times your regular pay. Even if you do not work on a statutory holiday you may still get paid for that day if you would have typically worked that day.





# Reasons why money is taken off of your paycheck

**Deductions are money taken off your paycheck by your employer.**

Your employer is not allowed to keep, deduct, or ask you to pay any part of your wages. By law the employer is required to deduct mandatory employment related costs like; employment insurance.

An employer is not allowed to take money off your paycheck because of damages you may have caused.

For example: If you break a dish at work they cannot make you pay for a new one.

An employer is not allowed to take money from your cheque or tips from a server if a customer did not pay for their meal.



It is a good idea to check your pay stub and review your pay and deductions.



# Legal age to start working

You are allowed to start working when you are 15 years old.

If you are younger than 15 you must have your parent's permission.



# Volunteer and work experience

**Work Experience:** An opportunity to participate, observe and learn about the tasks and responsibilities related to jobs in the workplace

Learn new skills

Learn about the business

Meet the staff

Decide if you like or do not like the work

You may decide to apply for a position at the business or search for paid employment elsewhere.

**MentorAbility:** An educational opportunity supported by local employment consultants.

Job seekers with disabilities are matched with mentors to explore career options and to learn what they will need to get ahead in their desired field of interest.

**Perks of MentorAbility:**

Trying out jobs without needing any schooling or work experience beforehand

Learning the skills needed to work in that field

Possibly finding your dream job!



## Fact

MentorAbility is a national initiative which promotes the employment of people with disabilities in communities throughout all Canadian provinces and territories.

# Reasons you may be off of work

## Maternity and Parental Leave



**Maternity Leave:** Pregnant employees are entitled to up to 15 weeks of maternity leave. Maternity leave can then be followed by parental benefits.

**Standard Parental Leave (higher benefit rate):** Parents can take up to 40 weeks of leave, but one parent cannot receive more than 35 weeks of standard benefits.

**Extended Parental Leave (lower benefit rate):** Parents can take up to 69 weeks of leave, but one parent cannot receive more than 61 weeks of extended benefits.

## Bereavement Leave



An employee is entitled to 2 days off of work because of a death in your family. An employer is not allowed to terminate (fire) an employee who has taken leave from work for this reason.

## Injury



Whether you are injured at work or at home you may need to take time off work. Let your employer know immediately, especially if you are injured at work.

## Illness



If you feel too sick to go to work let your employer know immediately and go to the doctor. Your employer may ask you for a doctor's note.

# Your responsibilities as an employee

## As a new employee to any job, you are responsible to:

1. Be on time for the start of your shift and after your breaks!
2. Be friendly and respectful to other employees and customers.
3. Dress appropriately: wear the right clothes and shoes.
4. Have good hygiene; shower, shave, brush your teeth, put on deodorant and clean clothes. Come looking and smelling your best self!
5. Follow the rules.
6. Do your job duties to company standards.
7. Ask questions about your pay, deductions, holidays, benefits, meal breaks, and wage increases.
8. Follow all work safety rules.



# What to do when you leave your job

All employers must give Record of Employment within three days to an employee when you end your employment for any reason.

When you plan to end your job you should:

Write a letter saying you are leaving your job and say what your last day of work will be. Typically you give two weeks notice. Give this letter to the employer.

Ask your employer if you can use them as a reference for other jobs.

Find out when you get your last pay cheque.

If possible, try to have another job before leaving your current job.



Thank your employer for the job experience!



# Further resources

If you have any more questions or would like more information about these following topics, please use the links below:

## Annual earning exemptions

[www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/services-for-people-with-disabilities/disability-assistance/on-disability-assistance/annual-earnings-exemption](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/services-for-people-with-disabilities/disability-assistance/on-disability-assistance/annual-earnings-exemption)

## WorkSafeBC

[worksafebc.com/en/for-workers](http://worksafebc.com/en/for-workers)

## Persons with disabilities benefits

[www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/services-for-people-with-disabilities/disability-assistance](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/services-for-people-with-disabilities/disability-assistance)





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