

The federal government amended the compassionate care provisions to the *Employment Insurance Act* and Regulation on June 15, 2006.

This Information Bulletin is intended to assist employees and employers by providing information about compassionate care.

1. How has the federal government defined compassionate care?

Compassionate care is the provision of care to a gravely ill or dying spouse or common-law partner, child or parent, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, in-law, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, foster parent, ward, guardian, or a gravely ill person who considers the claimant to be like a family member, who has a significant risk of death within 26 weeks.

2. What leave or benefits for compassionate care are available to employees covered by Alberta's Employment Standards Code?

Alberta's *Employment Standards Code* establishes minimum employment standards for employees under provincial jurisdiction. Job-protected compassionate care leave is not required by the *Employment Standards Code*. However, leave for compassionate care may be available to employees if such leave is addressed in the employment contract or agreed to by the employer. Unionized employees should review their collective agreement to determine the types of leave and benefits that may be available.

All eligible employees can access Employment Insurance benefits for compassionate care regardless of job protection.

3. Can employers under provincial jurisdiction voluntarily agree to provide leave and/or benefits for compassionate care?

Yes. Employers may make arrangements to accommodate their employees' needs with respect to compassionate care. Any compassionate care arrangement should be in writing.

4. What does compassionate care involve?

There are two components to the federal compassionate care initiative:

Employment Insurance Benefits

All workers entitled to Employment Insurance benefits who take time away from work to provide compassionate care are eligible for up to six weeks of benefits.

Job-Protected Leave

The *Canada Labour Code* allows eight weeks of unpaid job-protected leave for employees under federal jurisdiction who qualify for the compassionate care benefit.

Need More Information?

For more information about compassionate care leave for employees under federal jurisdiction, [click here](#).

For more information about compassionate care benefits, [click here](#).