Infectious Disease Emergency Leave for workers

In March, the provincial government amended the Employment Standards Act (ESA) to establish a new unpaid, protective leave in response to COVID-19, called the Infectious Disease Emergency Leave. Recently, the government amended the criteria and regulations to the ESA. For more information on the ESA and the Infectious Disease Emergency Leave, visit the provincial government’s website.

Who's eligible for this leave?

When the leave was first introduced, only employees who were at home sick, in isolation or quarantine, or taking care of children because of school closures or relatives due to COVID-19 were eligible for unpaid leave. In May, the province extended eligibility to include employees whose wages or hours of work were temporarily reduced or eliminated as a result of COVID-19.

What does this mean for veterinary practices?

Employees whose hours were reduced or eliminated because of COVID-19 are now deemed to have been placed on Infectious Disease Emergency Leave rather than on layoff. It also clarifies that these employees have leave of absence job protection benefits. In other words, at the end of the COVID-19 period, the employee must be returned to normal hours. Review this legal memorandum by Jordan Morelli and Tamara Ramsey from Dale & Lessmann, LLC for more information.

How do I know if my employee has taken this leave?

As in all provincial leaves, an employee must inform their employer of their absence at the start of the leave, or as soon as possible. However, the new provincial leave has been made retroactive to January 25, 2020, and many employees who have been off from work due to COVID-19 may be eligible to have their absence changed to an Infectious Disease Emergency Leave if they meet the criteria.

How long is the Infectious Disease Emergency Leave?

According to the province, the leave remains in effect “until COVID-19 is defeated.” For employees on leave, there’s no maximum number of days for the Infectious Disease Emergency Leave at this time. The length of leave can vary depending on individual circumstances.

As an employer, what are my responsibilities to my employees on this leave?

The expectations for employers are generally the same as pregnancy or parental leaves.
Register for our virtual JumpStart! Bootcamp workshop

While we can't bring staff together in person, we can bring JumpStart Boot Camp to them!

This full-day workshop is designed to equip frontline staff with the skills and tools required to keep clients happy and engaged. It's open to every member of your practice team, from reception staff to veterinarians. You'll be led through step-by-step processes to:

- Handle phone shoppers
- Overcome client objections
- Handle client complaints
- Communicate benefits to gain client compliance
- Remind clients and achieve results
- Keep the appointment book filled
- Provide the ultimate client experience at your hospital (even with curbside care)

**When:** Tuesday, July 14 and Wednesday, July 15 from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

**What’s needed:** A quiet room with a computer, a good Internet connection, camera, headphones and a microphone*.

Members can register at a discounted rate of $175 per person (practice owner needs to be a member to qualify the rest of their staff). Non-members can register for $250.

For more information and to register, contact Sheila Krane at skrane@ovma.org or 1.800.670.1702, ext. 216.

This session is generously sponsored by LifeLearn and Hill’s Pet Nutrition.

*Camera and microphone are needed to provide an interactive experience.

Save $100 on LiveFit Foods meal plans until June 30

To help members live healthier lives, OVMA has partnered with LiveFit Foods to provide access to well balanced, affordable meal plans. LiveFit offers healthy, ready-to-eat, chef cooked meals delivered right to your door.

Until June 30, OVMA members can use promo codes to receive $100 off three separate purchases: $50 off your first purchase, $30 off your second purchase and $20 off your third purchase. After this date or once you redeem all three codes, members will receive a 10 per cent discount off future orders.

Choose from a menu of more than 100 dishes or pick a package of meals designed by goals, such as gain muscle, lose weight, eat vegan and more. No cooking is required – just heat and enjoy!
New: LiveFit Grocery now also brings the essentials right to your doorstep, including fruits, vegetables, juices, dairy, coffee and more. OVMA’s member promo code applies to all purchases made through livefitfood.ca.

To view meal plans, grocery items available, schedule your first delivery and to learn more, visit livefitfood.ca. To access the promo codes, visit the OVMA website. If you have questions, contact Cheryl Coulombe, manager of member services, at 1.800.670.1702, ext. 227 or ccoulombe@ovma.org.

OVMA is here to help

As an OVMA member, you have access to numerous resources to assist you with your personal and professional needs. If you’ve been struggling with finances, staff management or business in general, OVMA’s Economic and Business Development team can help.

If you’re looking for support, contact Darren Osborne at 416.918.0814 or dosborne@ovma.org, Terra Shastri at 647.205.7077 or tshastri@ovma.org, or Chris Doherty at 519.803.7932 or cdoherty@ovma.org.

Correction: SafePet Ontario document updates

The SafePet documents linked in last week’s NewsHound were incorrect. Download the updated pet foster parent agreement and waiver forms. If your veterinary clinic participates in the SafePet Ontario program, you’re required to start using these updated forms to adhere to regulations.

For more information, contact Tammy Merritt at tmerritt@ovma.org or by calling 1.800.670.1702, ext. 234.