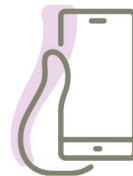


# Groupline

News and updates for advisors  
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**CUSTOMER SERVICE** May 6, 2020

**20-17**

## Stay updated during COVID-19

*This GroupLine has new information concerning COVID-19. As the situation continues to evolve, we're leveraging the most up-to-date information, but past GroupLines can still be referenced.*

**\*UPDATE\***

### Administrative relief updates from pension regulators

#### Canada Revenue Agency (CRA)

The CRA has not yet announced a suspension of the 1% minimum employer contribution rule. Canada Life will let you know once the position is announced. Pending the formal announcement of their position, any amendments to contributions may be rejected.

#### Ontario

The Financial Services Regulatory Authority of Ontario (FSRA) released an updated FAQ on their website about the Pension Sector Emergency Management Response. Read the full FAQ [here](#).

#### British Columbia

The BC Financial Services Authority (BCFSA) has also released an updated FAQ concerning the topic of contributions. Read the full FAQ [here](#).

#### Québec

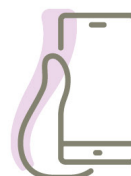
Retraite Quebec advised about temporary easing measures regarding pension plans:

- They have delayed the production of the Annual information return (AIR) for VRSP, SPP and RPP plans for three months.
- Temporary income (normally payable until age 65) has been extended until a member reaches the age of 70 with the same conditions as for a person aged 54 to 64.
- Those eligible for temporary income under age 54 from other sources (such as employment earnings) will no longer be taken into account to calculate their temporary income.
  - Instead of monthly payments, they will be allowed to receive a lump sum amount for 2020.
- The deadline to produce annual statements has been extended by three months to Dec.31, 2020.

There have not yet been any easing measures regarding disclosures requirements when an employee terminates their employment and for transfer requests. Also, no easing measures have yet been granted on contributions remittance and on contribution monitoring.

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## New Brunswick

- The deadline has been extended by 90 days for annual information returns and annual member statements that are to be filed before June 30, 2020.
- The deadline for cost certificates that are to be filed before Sept.30, 2020 has been extended by 90 days.
- Some lawyers may now be able to commission documents by [video conference](#) for any pension forms that require a signature before a Commissioner of Oaths. All lawyers in New Brunswick are Commissioners of Oaths and if there are any issues with the witnessing of any pension forms, please contact the regulators office at [info@fcnb.ca](mailto:info@fcnb.ca).
- The New Brunswick new 2020 RRIF minimum has been reduced by 25%, which is higher than the government minimum. The New Brunswick regulator is aware of this and are reviewing their policy options.

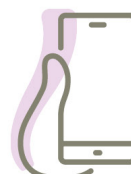
## Required contributions

In addition to the information provided in the [April 6](#) and [April 16](#) GroupLines, below are some additional updates around pension changes from each jurisdiction's pension regulators. If you need more details, reach out to your regulator for more details or further information.

Jurisdiction	Reduction of member and employer required contributions at the plan/class level	Suspension of member and employer required contributions at the plan level
Alberta	Permitted, but subject to plan amendment (30 days advance notice required). It's unknown whether any change to standard process is permitted.	<p>To be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Alberta requires an application with confirmation that the participating employer intends to continue in operation, the reason for suspension and that the employer understands that AIR's will continue to be required.</p> <p>Once approved, a plan text amendment with a Form 2, is required to be submitted within 60 days.</p> <p>The plan administrator must complete an updated Form 21 within 30 days to reflect that there will be no contributions to the plan.</p> <p>The suspension may be lifted at anytime to reactivate the plan by providing notice of the effective date to Alberta, within 60 days of making the decision.</p> <p>Please send all applications and amendments to: <a href="mailto:employment.pensions@gov.ab.ca">employment.pensions@gov.ab.ca</a></p>
British Columbia	Permitted, but subject to plan amendment and 30 days advance notice.	Plan amendment is possible, and all contributions must cease, including AVCs. Plan administrators must apply to the Superintendent of Pensions for the continuation of the pension plan under section 95 of the PBSA.
Manitoba	Permitted, but subject to plan amendment and 30 days advance notice.	Termination of the plan is required if all contributions cease.

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Jurisdiction	Reduction of member and employer required contributions at the plan/class level	Suspension of member and employer required contributions at the plan level
New Brunswick	Permitted, but subject to plan amendment. Notice to members is required.	Will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
Newfoundland & Labrador	Permitted, but subject to plan amendment. Notice to members is required.	Will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
Nova Scotia	Permitted, but subject to plan amendment. Notice to members is required.	Will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
Ontario	Permitted, but subject to plan amendment and 30 days advance notice.	Plan must be amended, and notice provided to members. If the plan involves a collective agreement, then the FSRA should be contacted directly for approval.
Quebec	Permitted, but subject to plan amendment and 30 days advance notice. No change to standard process is permitted.	Not permitted.
Saskatchewan	Permitted, but subject to plan amendment. Notice to members is required.	Will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

**\*UPDATE\***

## Updates from OSFI

OSFI has updated their [question and answers](#) about COVID-19 measures for federally regulated private pension plans.

We've compiled the most relevant questions and answers here.

**Can electronic signatures be used on forms for financial hardship unlocking?** (Note, this depends on whether the financial institution will accept electronic signatures).

Yes. Section 31.2 of the *Pension Benefits Standards Act, 1985* says electronic signatures are allowed if:

- The signature is unique to the member
- The technology or process is used by the person to incorporate, attach or associate their signature to the electronic document
- The technology or process can be used to identify the user

**Can an employer suspend their contributions to a Defined Contribution Registered Pension Plan during the COVID-19 pandemic?**

Yes; however, collective agreements, employment agreements, etc., should be reviewed to ensure they allow such a suspension. The employer should contact their relationship manager at OSFI for further information/instructions.

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## Because of physical distancing, can a witness signature be excluded from pension forms?

No. OSFI expects forms to still be witnessed where required. There are other ways to have someone witness a signature while maintaining physical distancing. The individual acting as witness must be able to verify the identity of the signor, see the individual sign the form, and verify that the document signed is what they are witnessing.

**\*NEW\***

## Supporting frontline healthcare workers

We're supporting Canadian frontline healthcare workers by contributing \$100,000 to The Frontline Fund to help the fight against COVID-19. The funding will help arm frontline workers with the support, supplies and research funding they need during for the pandemic. The donation will also support northern communities and Indigenous health. This is our latest measure in our commitment to helping Canadians and communities during this pandemic.

**\*NEW\***

## Resources to help businesses get through the pandemic

The [Canadian Business Resilience Network](#) has put together several resources to help businesses get through the COVID-19 pandemic. It's a new program from the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, which Canada Life is proud to sponsor.

Here are some topics you may be interested in:

- [Tax and finance](#) – featuring Patrick Gill, Director of Tax and Financial Policy for the Canadian Chamber of Commerce.
- [Workforce strategies](#) – featuring Leah Nord, Director of Workforce Strategies and Inclusive Growth for the Canadian Chamber of Commerce.
- [Tips for business leaders](#) – featuring insights from Jeff Macoun, Canada Life President and COO.

Check these out and other resources on the [Canadian Business Resilience Network](#).

**\*REMINDER\***

## Go digital

### Terminate members online

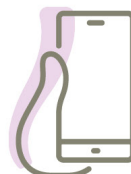
As a reminder, if a plan member leaves your group retirement and savings plan, you may use the Terminate employment feature on [GRS Access](#) instead of filling out a paper form.

Here's how to terminate a member on GRS Access

1. Sign in to the sponsor resource centre on [grsaccess.com](#).
2. From the menu on the top left, use the member search to look up the employee you're terminating.
3. In the left-hand menu, select Terminate employment.
4. Follow the instructions to:
  - Provide details like the termination date, termination reason and if there will be future contributions remitted for the member.

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- Add or edit the employee's personal contact information, like their email, address and phone number.
- Review and submit the termination. You can print a copy of the termination details for your records.

If you're already using GRS Access to let Canada Life know about any terminating members, there's nothing further for you to do.

**\*REMINDER\***

## **Sending contributions**

If you submit contributions for 25 plan members or less and pay the full amount of the contribution when it's submitted, you're eligible to use Canada Life's online contributions feature on GRS Access. You can submit contributions and approve bank withdrawals electronically for your plan members' group retirement and savings plan(s). To use this feature, you'll need to fill out an authorization form. Contact your Canada Life representative to get started. If you're already making use of this feature, there's nothing for you to do.

## **Continued support for you and your members**

Revisit this [Newsline](#) from April 8, 2020 for resources available to members during these times.

For more information, visit [Public Health Agency of Canada](#) or the Canada Life corporate [site](#).

The information in this communication should not take the place of, or be a substitute for, medical advice or official guidance and/or direction issued by your public health authorities or local government. We encourage you to visit the World Health Organization website and your local government health authority websites for the most up-to-date and reliable information about the status of the coronavirus in your region.

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