



Welfare and Time Limits

This fact sheet provides information on proposed changes to the length of time you can receive welfare. While full details are not yet known, Ministry of Human Resources (MHR) documents indicate that the current law will be changed to introduce a welfare time limit.

MHR has said that, if you are classified as employable, you will be able to get welfare for a total of 24 months out of every 60-month period. This 60-month period could date back to April 1, 2002. Keep track of the time you are on and off welfare so that you know which months count toward the 24-month limit.

When figuring out your 24-month limit, MHR has said it will not count months that you are —

- receiving Level 1 or Level 2 disability benefits,
- 65 years or older,
- receiving any Child In the Home of a Relative (CIHR) benefits,
- a single parent with a child under three years old,
- a single parent caring for a disabled child,
- a refugee claimant or other person who is not a landed immigrant or permanent resident, or
- “temporarily excused” from seeking work because you —
 - receive accommodation and care in a special care facility or private hospital,
 - have been admitted to hospital because you require extended care,
 - have a drug or alcohol problem, a mental health condition, or temporary medical condition that interferes with your ability to search for or continue in employment, or participate in an employability program,
 - are participating in a treatment or rehabilitation program approved by MHR, if your participation in that program interferes with

your ability to search for employment, continue in employment, or participate in an employability program, or

- have separated from an abusive spouse within the previous six months, if your condition interferes with your ability to search for employment, continue in employment, or participate in an employability program.

Because you can only be excused from work with the permission of MHR, you need to tell ministry staff whenever you cannot look for work. When you do this, ask to be “temporarily excused.” Keep a record of the months you are “temporarily excused” in case you need to show this to MHR.

The government has said that the consequence of reaching the 24-month limit will depend on what category of welfare you are receiving. If you —

- are single and have been on welfare for 24 months or if you and your partner have no dependants and have both been on welfare for 24 months, you would no longer receive welfare.
- (or your partner) have reached the 24-month limit, your cheque would be cut by \$300 per month.
- are a single parent who has reached the 24-month limit, your welfare cheque would be cut by \$100 per month.
- (or your partner) have reached the 24-month limit and you have children, your welfare cheque would be cut by \$100 per month. If both of you have reached the 24-month limit and you have children, your cheque would be cut by \$200.

Note: Once the planned changes are made, if you are cut off welfare because you have reached the 24-month limit, you could apply again once you have been *off* welfare for 36 months.

This information comes from reliable sources. However, more information is coming out regularly. Please watch the LSS website (<http://www.lss.bc.ca>) or the PovNet website (<http://povnet.org>) for up-to-date information and new fact sheets.



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