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Province introduces job protection for workers during COVID-19 situation

The Ontario Government is moving to put new measures in place to protect workers during the COVID-19 crisis.

On Monday, Premier Doug Ford and Minister of Labour Monte McNaughton announced the government's intention to introduce new legislation which, if passed quickly, would ?immediately provide job-protected leave to employees in isolation or quarantine due to COVID-19? as well as those who need to take time away from work to care for their children amid school and day care closures.

"While everyone's concerns about their health and safety is top of mind, the last thing we need is anyone worrying about job security as the COVID-19 situation evolves," said Ford. "That's why I directed the Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development to draft legislation that will protect workers and their families during this difficult period."

Added the Minister: "Mothers and fathers who need to care for children or dependants shouldn't have to worry about losing their job. The same goes for people who receive medical or public health advice and are required to take precautions as a result. They shouldn't have to worry about losing their job. In this time of uncertainty, we need to support employees who must isolate or quarantine themselves, or who need to care for a loved one.

The proposed legislation would, if passed, provide job protection for employees unable to work for the following reasons:

> - The employee is under medical investigation, supervision or treatment for COVID-19.- The employee is acting in accordance with an order under the Health Protection and Promotion Act.- The employee is in isolation or quarantine.- The employee is acting in accordance with public health information or direction.- The employer directs the employee not to work.- The employee needs to provide care to a person for a reason related to COVID-19 such as a school or day-care closure.

The proposed legislation would also make it clear that an employee will not be required to provide a medical note if they take the leave. The measures would be retroactive to January 25, 2020, the date that the first presumptive COVID-19 case was confirmed in Ontario.