
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Labour

Protecting temporary foreign workers in B.C.

VICTORIA – Temporary foreign workers who come to B.C. to work will be better protected now that the employers who want to hire these workers will be required to register with the Province as of Dec. 15, 2020.

Employers who wish to hire foreign nationals through three federal programs — the Temporary Foreign Worker Program, the Home Child-Care Provider Pilot or the Home Support Worker Pilot — have until Dec. 15 to register with the provincial government. There is no fee for registering. The process takes 20 minutes to complete, on average.

“Our government is committed to ensuring that regardless of your immigration status, if you're working in B.C., your rights and protections are the same as any worker,” said Harry Bains, Minister of Labour. “These important protections for vulnerable workers in our province are long overdue and will ensure they are not taken advantage of.”

B.C. has created the registration requirement to ensure fair working conditions for all workers in the province. This means people from abroad who come here are paid for the hours they work, have a job description that matches the work they perform and ensures their rights and safety are protected while on the job.

“Temporary foreign workers are integral to our agricultural sector and B.C. relies on them for important jobs like harvesting the crops we depend on for our daily meals and to build our province’s food security,” said Lana Popham, Minister of Agriculture. “The new registration requirement for employers will help ensure foreign workers are fairly treated.”

The registration requirement will allow the Province to identify which employers hire temporary foreign workers and will enable inspection of those employers and enforcement of provincial law. Until now, there has not been a system that registers and certifies employers who hire workers from other countries.

“Caregivers arriving in B.C. as foreign workers have sacrificed so much to care for our children and our loved ones. This employer registry is a powerful step forward in ensuring that they are protected, valued and continue to thrive here,” said Marla Brock, CEO of Kidcoover, a child care agency. “For all that these workers do to move our economy forward, we must always champion initiatives that raise awareness of their rights and protections and keep their employers within the sightlines of government.”

This employer registry is the final step in implementing the Temporary Foreign Worker Protection Act, passed in fall 2018. Last year, B.C. established a licensing requirement for recruiters of foreign workers and launched the recruiter registry. Approximately 150 recruiters in B.C. are licensed and in good standing.

These actions, like the Temporary Foreign Worker Protection Act, the recruiter registry and the employer registry provide transparency into recruiting, hiring and employing foreign nationals. These changes strengthen the protections government has put in place, make it easier to find employers who mistreat workers and level the playing field for law-abiding employers.

Improving fairness and safety for all workers is a shared priority between government, the BC Green Party caucus and Andrew Weaver, MLA for Oak Bay-Gordon Head, and is part of the Confidence and Supply Agreement.

Quick Facts:

- When in force, an estimated 5,000 employers are anticipated to require an employer's certificate of registration to hire temporary foreign workers in B.C.
- With this new process, B.C. joins other provinces in Canada that have registration requirements for employers of foreign workers, including Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Nova Scotia.
- Under the federal government's Temporary Foreign Worker Program, employers can hire foreign workers to fill temporary labour and skills shortages.

Learn More:

Learn more about the employer registry: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/employment-standards-advice/employment-standards/hiring/hire-temporary-foreign-workers/register-as-employer>

Learn more about the federal Temporary Foreign Worker Program:
<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/foreign-workers.html>

Learn more about B.C.'s Temporary Foreign Worker Protection Act:
<https://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/complete/statreg/18045>

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