

# TOOL KIT:

## From Understanding to Action

Having read through the information on this website, you should now have a good idea of the main issues you may have to tackle to make sure you are adequately protected financially in case of a serious illness or accident.

However, it is one thing to understand the issues and another to take action to change your situation.

Developing a plan to make your financial situation more secure and acting on it is definitely the hard part. These tools are designed to help. But they will only help you if you do the exercises to the best of your ability. Your answers will indicate the next steps you may need to take to increase your financial security.

**These tools are divided into five sections that follow the information presented on the site:**

1. Taking Stock of your Financial Security
2. Putting your Papers in Order
3. Income Replacement
4. Your Right to Take Sick Leave
5. Resources



# 1. TAKING STOCK OF YOUR FINANCIAL SECURITY

It can be hard to look your financial situation in the face. But understanding it clearly is the first step to being able to take things in hand. And always remember, there are excellent groups that can help you if you feel overwhelmed by your situation.

To truly understand your financial situation, you need two tools, **a monthly budget of income and expenses** and **a balance sheet that shows your savings and property and debts**.

1.1	<p>Do you have a budget?</p> <p>yes <input type="checkbox"/>      no <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If not, you will need one.</p>	<p>There are many online models. We suggest these two:</p> <p><a href="https://lautorite.qc.ca/en/general-public/calculators-and-tools/budget-tables">https://lautorite.qc.ca/en/general-public/calculators-and-tools/budget-tables</a></p> <p><a href="https://itools-ioutils.fcac-acfc.gc.ca/BP-PB/budget-planner">https://itools-ioutils.fcac-acfc.gc.ca/BP-PB/budget-planner</a></p>
1.2	<p>Do you have a balance sheet?</p> <p>yes <input type="checkbox"/>      no <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If not, you will need one.</p>	<p>We suggest this tool:</p> <p><a href="https://lautorite.qc.ca/en/general-public/calculators-and-tools/budget-tables">https://lautorite.qc.ca/en/general-public/calculators-and-tools/budget-tables</a></p>
1.3	<p>According to your budget, how much monthly income do you need to support your current level of monthly spending?</p>	<p>Minimum of \$ _____</p>



1.4	If you need to access a significant amount of money quickly, to cover a loss of income or to pay for services out of pocket, where will you find the money?	<p>List the amount of money available according to your balance sheet:</p> <p>Savings or investments:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>RRSPs (remember tax penalty for withdrawals):</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Other:</p> <p>_____</p>
1.5	If you need to use credit in an emergency, what form would it take?	How much credit would you have available?
a.	Line of credit	a.
b.	Credit card(s)	b.
c.	Borrow from family or friends	c.
d.	Other	d.

Many people face tough financial situations, so remember, if this is your case, you are far from alone. The question is how to take steps to move towards a less precarious situation. It may feel like it is impossible. If that is your case, there are groups that can help.

See the section on Resources: <http://bcaq.phil-lab.ca/resources/>

## 2. PUTTING YOUR PAPERS IN ORDER

Facing a serious illness involves a lot of paperwork. It will be much easier for you or someone who is helping you if your papers are already organized.

In this table, you will find a list of most common, important documents you may need. Fill in the table to indicate if you have current versions of these documents, if they are renewable, and where they are kept.

	Document	Date of document	If renewable, when does it need to be renewed?	Where is it kept? Does it need a password to access?
<b>EMPLOYMENT DOCUMENTS</b>				
2.1	Employment Contract			
2.2	Collective agreement			
2.3	Human Resources Policy			
2.4	Copies of timesheets or work records			
2.5	Pension fund documents			
2.6	Group insurance policy			
2.7	Other			
<b>FINANCIAL DOCUMENTS</b>				
2.8	Income tax returns			
2.9	Bank statements			
2.10	Investment statements			
2.11	Other			
<b>LEGAL DOCUMENTS</b>				
2.12	Will			
2.13	Mandate in case of incapacity			
2.14	Title to property			
2.15	Mortgage			
2.16	agreement			
2.17	Other			

### 3. INCOME REPLACEMENT

#### A. Calculating how much you would have in case of illness

If you need to stop working due to illness or an accident, the biggest question is often that of income replacement.

If you needed to go on sick leave tomorrow, what would be your source of income?

- Paid sick leave from your employer
- Employment Insurance Sickness Benefits
- Disability insurance
- Social assistance
- Savings

With this table, it is important to do the exercises to understand the eligibility requirements and to know your level of benefits. Many people are not aware of the significant loss of income that can come with income replacement programs.

	Source of replacement income	Do you meet the eligibility requirements?	How long do these benefits last?	How much will your benefits be?
3.1	Paid Sick Leave through Employer	Some employers offer a certain number of days of paid sick leave. This can sometimes be combined with overtime, vacation days and other leaves to create a bank of days that can be used. Write the details of your working conditions policy that apply to your case.  _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	At this time, how many days of paid sick leave (combined with other paid days if applicable) would you have?  _____  What is your source of income replacement when this paid leave is used up?  \$ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	Not applicable

	Source of replacement income	Do you meet the eligibility requirements?	How long do these benefits last?	How much will your benefits be?
3.2	Employment Insurance Sickness Benefits	<p>Check your eligibility here:  <a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/ei-sickness/qualify.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/ei-sickness/qualify.html</a></p> <p>Would you be eligible?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>Up to 15 weeks of benefits are available.</p> <p>Remember: EI Sickness Benefits impose a one week waiting period when the beneficiary cannot have any income and does not receive benefits.</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<p>To calculate your benefits:  <a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/ei-sickness/benefit-amount.html">https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/ei-sickness/benefit-amount.html</a></p> <p>According to this tool, how much would your benefits be:</p> <p>\$ _____</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>



	Source of replacement income	Do you meet the eligibility requirements?	How long do these benefits last?	How much will your benefits be?
3.3	Disability Insurance	<p>Consult your insurance policy for the following information:</p> <p>What are the exact eligibility requirements?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>How long is the waiting period before the policy goes into effect?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Some disability insurance requires using EI Sickness Benefits before accessing the disability insurance. If this is your case, is there a gap between EI and your insurance?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>If yes, how long?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>How long do these benefits last?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Are there any restrictions or conditions to be aware of?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>To the best of your ability, calculate the amount of sick leave benefits provided by your insurance based on your current salary.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>



3.4	Social Assistance	<p>If you are not eligible for EI Sickness Benefits, you may have to apply for social assistance if you have no income due to an illness or accident. If this is your situation, read the admissibility criteria here:</p> <p><a href="https://www.quebec.ca/en/family-and-support-for-individuals/social-assistance-social-solidarity/how-to-apply/verification-eligible">https://www.quebec.ca/en/family-and-support-for-individuals/social-assistance-social-solidarity/how-to-apply/verification-eligible</a></p> <p>Would you be eligible if necessary?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>How long are you allowed to stay on social assistance?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>How much is social assistance each month?</p> <p>\$ _____</p>
3.5	Savings	<p>If you are not eligible for EI Sickness Benefits and do not have private insurance, and you have too much in savings and/or property to be eligible for social assistance, you will have to use your savings and other equity (like property that can be sold) to live on.</p>	<p>Would you need to sell any property to have money to live on? List property.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>What would that involve?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>What would be a conservative, realistic estimate of how much money you would get for this property? Remember to deduct all fees and taxes that may apply.</p> <p>\$ _____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>What is the total amount of savings you have available to use?</p> <p>\$ _____</p> <p>What is the minimum amount of money you need to cover your basic necessities and expenditures every month?</p> <p>\$ _____</p> <p>How long would your savings last based on these figures?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>



## B. Steps forward to improve your situation

Now that you have the information to understand your financial situation if you had to take sick leave, identify what you see as the biggest weakness in your situation.

- For example, if you are not eligible for EI Sickness Benefits and do not have group insurance through your employer, can you get an individual disability policy?
- Or, if you have basic coverage in terms of income replacement, but there are gaps in coverage, are your savings sufficient to see you through those periods? If not, can savings be prioritized in your monthly budget?

3.6	What do you identify as your biggest financial vulnerability or weakness if you need to go on sick leave?	<p>What do you need to reduce this vulnerability?</p> <p>What steps are necessary to reduce this vulnerability?</p>
3.7	If you are able to act on the first vulnerability, what would be the second issue to act on?	<p>What do you need to reduce this vulnerability?</p> <p>What steps are necessary to reduce this vulnerability?</p>
3.8	Do you see a third issue to act on?	<p>What do you need to reduce this vulnerability?</p> <p>What steps are necessary to reduce this vulnerability?</p>

Sometimes, when working to change a situation, you advance, but not in the order that you planned. You may want to start working on several issues.

We recognize that it can be very hard to look at a difficult financial situation that you seem to have little power to change. The most important thing to remember is that many people are in this situation and there are groups that can help.

In Quebec, the network of the ACEFs (Associations cooperatives d'économie familiale) and other consumer and budgeting groups offer programs and support to individuals and families facing very difficult financial situations. If this is your case, we strongly suggest reaching out to one.

Consult these sites to find the group nearest you.

[Nos membres | Coalition des associations de consommateurs \(CACQ\) \(defensesdesconsommateurs.org\)](http://defensesdesconsommateurs.org)

[Nos membres – Union des consommateurs](#)

## 4. YOUR RIGHT TO TAKE SICK LEAVE

When you need to take time off work due to illness or an accident, two different issues need to be considered. This first is income replacement which you have just looked at. The second is the issue of your right to take sick leave, meaning what are your rights and obligations to your employer to take time off work that you need in order to recover and return to work.

If you are self-employed, the issue is how you will handle your obligations to your clients or the management of your business when you need time off for an illness.

If you have read the information on this site, you should have determined your job type. With that in mind, fill out the following table on your rights and obligations in case of needing to take sick leave.

4.1	What is your job type?	Write down the law and policies that determine your rights and obligations in case of sick leave	Referring for these documents, write down how you would inform your employer of your need to take sick leave. What information or proof do you need? Do you have follow-up obligations? Note down all important information and deadlines.
a.	Unionized Worker	a.	a.
b.	Nonunionized Worker	b.	b.
c.	Precarious Worker	c.	c.
		What documents determine your contractual obligations to your clients or for your business?	Referring to these documents, how would these obligations be met in case of your needing to take sick leave?
d.	Self-employed	d.	d.

## 5. RESOURCES

The issue of sick leave raises many difficult issues. Looking at them in detail can be hard. But it is also the only way to gain the knowledge you need to act to change your situation.

Our goal is to help you understand the issues, how they apply to your personal situation and let you know that you are not alone. Many people are in a similar situation and there are excellent groups that can help.

Consult our section on Resources for more information.

<http://bcaq.phil-lab.ca/resources/>