

April 8, 2020

## **BC Hydro's COVID-19 Relief Fund open for applications from residential customers**

VANCOUVER: BC Hydro today announced it is accepting applications from residential customers for its COVID-19 Relief Fund; small business customers can start applying next week.

The COVID-19 Relief Fund provides bill relief for BC Hydro residential and small business customers that have been hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Eligible residential customers can apply for a one-time bill credit of three times their average monthly bill amount. Small business customers that have had to close their business as a result of COVID-19 can apply starting next week to have their electricity charges waived for up to three months. Customers have until June 30, 2020 to submit their application.

To be eligible for the COVID-19 Relief Fund, residential customers must be a residential account holder and have had their account since March 31, 2020 and they or their partner/spouse must have lost employment or income due to COVID-19, because of:

- a job lay-off;
- being quarantined or sick with COVID-19;
- taking care of a family member that is sick with COVID-19;
- providing care for their children due to school and daycare closures; or,
- be unable to earn self-employment income.

In addition, customers have to be eligible for either [Employment Insurance](#), the [Canada Emergency Response Benefit](#) or [B.C.'s Emergency Response Benefit for Workers](#) and provide proof of their application or approval.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, BC Hydro has seen an increase in the number of customers seeking help with their BC Hydro bills. This includes a seven per cent increase in bill deferrals compared to the monthly average.

Since March 12, BC Hydro has also received a daily average of 100 COVID-19 related applications for its Customer Crisis Fund – this is nearly six times higher its typical daily average. The Customer Crisis Fund has been available to customers since May 2018 and offers grants up to \$600 for customers facing temporary financial hardship and possible disconnection of their BC Hydro service due to job loss, illness or loss of a family member.

For customers that do not meet the eligibility requirements for the the COVID-19 Relief Fund or the Customer Crisis Fund, BC Hydro offers payment deferrals and payment plans through its COVID-19 Customer Assistance Program. Customers can call BC Hydro's customer team at 1 800 BCHYDRO (1 800 224 9376) to discuss their options.

To apply for the COVID-19 Relief Fund, customers can visit [bchydro.com/covid19relief](https://bchydro.com/covid19relief).