
Government extends timetable for collective bargaining

An Order in Council under the Epidemic Preparedness Act came into force on Thursday 16 April 2020 which makes temporary changes to the Employment Relations Act 2000 in relation to Collective Bargaining.

Most of the changes relate to extensions for various timeframes. The changes acknowledge that some of the timeframes may be impracticable, given the restrictions imposed by the various Alert Levels.

The following have been extended to exclude the duration of the Epidemic Notice which is currently in place:

- The timeframe for an employer to notify their employees that collective bargaining has been initiated;
- The timeframe for an employer to seek consolidation of notices to initiate collective bargaining, and for unions to respond to an attempted consolidation;
- The 12-month period where collective agreements would have otherwise expired, but are still in force.

The changes also allow Unions to notify the other parties to a Collective Agreement of a new ratification procedure. One example of where this will apply is where the Union had signalled initially that it would ratify the Collective Agreement by holding a meeting of its members in person, which is now currently not possible. The Order enables Unions to change how it ratifies the Collective Agreement, which could include online balloting, tele-conferencing or video conferencing.

Want to know more?

If you have any questions about Collective Bargaining please contact our specialist [Employment Team](#).