

Christchurch Earthquake Support Package

Recognising the effect of the February earthquake on Christchurch business and workers, the Government has implemented an initial support package to support the recovery and rebuilding of Christchurch.

The Christchurch Earthquake Support Package provides support to employers and employees in Canterbury affected by the February earthquake.

While any affected business in Christchurch City is covered, businesses located in Selwyn, but substantially affected by loss of Christchurch City trade should also apply for special consideration.

The Christchurch Earthquake Support Package is made up of two components:

- **Earthquake Support Subsidy** - a subsidy for employers who believe they are going to remain in business and want to keep their staff. They'll get \$500 gross per week or \$300 gross per week to cover part time staff for up to six weeks.
- **Earthquake Job Loss Cover** - a \$400 a week in the hand payment for a period of six weeks paid to fulltime employees, (\$240 in the hand for part time employees). This applies to those who are unable to contact their employer or the business has closed permanently.

The **Earthquake Support Subsidy** gives companies up to six weeks space to get back into operation while keeping their staff.

The **Earthquake Job Loss Cover** is available as an alternative for those who cannot make contact with their employer, or whose employer has closed permanently.

[Earthquake Employment Support Package information on the Work and Income website](#)

Earthquake Support Subsidy – For employers

What is it?

Earthquake Support Subsidy is an initial payment for employers to assist them to pay their employees while they deal with the initial impact of the earthquake. The subsidy is also available to the self employed or business owners who draw a wage.

If the workplace can re-open, we want to support employers to maintain their business and keep Cantabrians in work wherever possible.

The payment will be made directly to the employer who will then pay the employee. The wage subsidy will be paid:

- for up to 6 weeks from 22 February 2011.
- at a gross rate of \$500 per week per employee for full time employees (over 20 hours per week) or a gross rate of \$300 per week per employee for part time employees (anyone working 20 hours a week or less).

Who does qualify?

- New Zealand owned business
- Christchurch City Council area based employer or
- self employed, sole trader, or contractor
- be unable to access the workplace due to damage, a cordon, or an essential service is not available, or who can open but are experiencing significant loss of trade

Employers who have business interruption insurance should contact their insurance company in the first instance. If insurance payments will be delayed, employers can access the Earthquake Support Subsidy to cover the intervening period, but will be required to repay it when the insurance payment is received.

Who does not qualify?

- employers who can continue to operate and/or meet obligations to pay employees
- government or government-related organisations
- international and large national organisations

Those with staff who have been injured or bereaved and who are receiving weekly compensation from ACC, cannot also get the Earthquake Support Subsidy for those staff members.

What constitutes the Christchurch City area in terms of these payments?

The Christchurch City Council area, which includes Akaroa-Wairewa, Burwood-Pegasus, Fendalton-Waimairi, Hagley-Ferrymead, Lyttelton-Mt Herbert, Riccarton-Wigram, Spreydon-Heathcote, and Shirley-Papanui. There may be exceptions to this and employers are encouraged to call and discuss their circumstances.

**** SELWYN BASED BUSINESSEES WHO HAVE BEEN SIGNIFICANTLY AFFECTED DUE TO LOSS OF CHRISTCHURCH TRADE SHOULD ALSO APPLY****

How to apply

- Online at www.workandincome.govt.nz.
- By phoning the government helpline on 0800 779 997 (this line is operating 24/7).
- At a Work and Income office if there is no access to internet or phone

What information is needed?

Employers need to provide their business IRD number, business bank account number, and the details of the staff requiring the subsidy (employee name and IRD numbers). This information will be confirmed by IRD before payment is made.

Employers need to contact Work and Income and their employees and make them aware of what is happening. Where employees have already applied for Earthquake Job Loss Cover before hearing from the employer, they will be transferred to the Earthquake Support Subsidy.