

# Labour Day Reality Check

## Government Sector Sick Days



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Canadian  
**Taxpayers**  
FEDERATION

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## About the Canadian Taxpayers Federation

The Canadian Taxpayers Federation is a federally incorporated, not-for-profit citizen's group dedicated to lower taxes, less waste and accountable government. The CTF was founded in Saskatchewan in 1990 when the Association of Saskatchewan Taxpayers and the Resolution One Association of Alberta joined forces to create a national organization. Today, the CTF has 215,000 supporters nation-wide.

The CTF maintains a federal office in Ottawa and regional offices in British Columbia, Alberta, Prairie (SK and MB), Ontario, Quebec and Atlantic. Regional offices conduct research and advocacy activities specific to their provinces in addition to acting as regional organizers of Canada-wide initiatives.

CTF offices field hundreds of media interviews each month, hold press conferences and issue regular news releases, commentaries, online postings and publications to advocate on behalf of CTF supporters. CTF representatives speak at functions, make presentations to government, meet with politicians, and organize petition drives, events and campaigns to mobilize citizens to affect public policy change. Each week CTF offices send out Let's Talk Taxes commentaries to more than 800 media outlets and personalities across Canada.

Any Canadian taxpayer committed to the CTF's mission is welcome to *join at no cost* and receive issue and *Action Updates*. *Financial supporters* can additionally receive the CTF's flagship publication *The Taxpayer* magazine published three times a year.

The CTF is independent of any institutional or partisan affiliations. All CTF staff, board and representatives are prohibited from holding a membership in any political party. In 2017-18 the *CTF raised \$5.1-million on the strength of 31,205 donations*. Donations to the CTF are not deductible as a charitable contribution.

## Days Lost Per Worker

In 2018, government employees in Canada were absent 77% more often than private sector employees due to illness or disability. The Canadian average for the government sector is 12.2 days per employee, and the private sector average is 6.9 days. That is 5.3 more days absent for government employees. Sick days taken by government employees has increased every year for the last five years. It was 10.6 in 2014, and is now 12.2 days per year. In the private sector, the number of sick days taken has increased more slowly from 6.4 days in 2014 to 6.9 days in 2018.

Days Lost Per Employee				
Year	Government Sector	Private Sector	Difference in Days	Per Cent Difference
2018	12.2	6.9	5.3	77%
2017	11.5	6.9	4.6	67%
2016	11.2	6.8	4.4	65%
2015	10.8	6.3	4.5	71%
2014	10.6	6.4	4.2	66%

Federal government employees take 12.5 sick days per year compared to the 11.5 per year for provincial and municipal employees, and only 6.9 days for private sector workers.

Days Lost Per Employee					
Employer	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Private sector	6.4	6.3	6.8	6.9	6.9
Government sector	10.6	10.8	11.2	11.5	12.2
Federal government	10.5	11.9	12.9	11.7	12.5
Provincial government	9.8	9.8	11.7	10.8	11.5
Local and other	9.6	10.1	8.9	8.8	11.5

*All data is from a Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey custom tabulations. For more detail on the data and category definitions, see the methodology section.*

## Provincial Employees

Provincial government employees in some provinces are absent due to illness or disability much more than in other province. Alberta government employees missed the most days of work averaging 14.4 days per year. Quebec government employees were close behind missing 13 days per employee. The national average of sick days per provincial government employee is 11.5 days per year.

Data isn't available for Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador in some years because Statistics Canada deemed the data too unreliable to publish.

<b>Days Lost Per Provincial Government Employee</b>					
<b>Province</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>
<b>British Columbia</b>	8.2	9.7	11.4	10.2	9.4
<b>Alberta</b>	11.3	9.9	7.8	11.2	14.4
<b>Saskatchewan</b>	8.2	10.9	12.2	12.2	11.5
<b>Manitoba</b>	13.2	13.7	14.4	12.0	11.5
<b>Ontario</b>	10.2	7.3	7.6	8.4	9.9
<b>Quebec</b>	10.1	11.9	18.0	13.4	13.0
<b>New Brunswick</b>	6.8	9.1	10.3	-	9.6
<b>Nova Scotia</b>	8.9	11.0	7.4	10.3	11.9
<b>Prince Edward Island</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Newfoundland and Labrador</b>	-	-	9.6	-	10.4
<b>Canada</b>	9.8	9.8	11.7	10.8	11.5

## British Columbia Days Lost Per Employee

Year	Provincial Government	Private Sector	Difference in Days	Per Cent Difference
2018	9.4	7.0	2.4	34%
2017	10.2	7.6	2.6	34%
2016	11.4	6.8	4.6	68%
2015	9.7	6.6	3.1	47%
2014	8.2	6.1	2.1	34%

## Alberta Days Lost Per Employee

Year	Provincial Government	Private Sector	Difference in Days	Per Cent Difference
2018	14.4	5.7	8.7	153%
2017	11.2	5.0	6.2	124%
2016	7.8	5.1	2.7	53%
2015	9.9	4.7	5.2	111%
2014	11.3	5.4	5.9	109%

## Saskatchewan Days Lost Per Employee

Year	Provincial Government	Private Sector	Difference in Days	Per Cent Difference
2018	11.5	6.8	4.7	69%
2017	12.2	7.1	5.1	72%
2016	12.2	7.0	5.2	74%
2015	10.9	7.1	3.8	54%
2014	8.2	6.2	2.0	32%

## Manitoba Days Lost Per Employee

Year	Provincial Government	Private Sector	Difference in Days	Per Cent Difference
2018	11.5	7.5	4.0	53%
2017	12.0	7.1	4.9	69%
2016	14.4	6.9	7.5	109%
2015	13.7	6.9	6.8	99%
2014	13.2	7.0	6.2	89%

## Ontario Days Lost Per Employee

Year	Provincial Government	Private Sector	Difference in Days	Per Cent Difference
2018	9.9	6.0	3.9	65%
2017	8.4	6.0	2.4	40%
2016	7.6	5.9	1.7	29%
2015	7.3	5.4	1.9	35%
2014	10.2	5.5	4.7	85%

## Quebec Days Lost Per Employee

Year	Provincial Government	Private Sector	Difference in Days	Per Cent Difference
2018	13.0	8.7	4.3	49%
2017	13.4	8.9	4.5	51%
2016	18.0	9.1	8.9	98%
2015	11.9	8.2	3.7	45%
2014	10.1	8.4	1.7	20%

## New Brunswick Days Lost Per Employee

Year	Provincial Government	Private Sector	Difference in Days	Per Cent Difference
2018	9.6	7.6	2.0	26%
2017	-	8.5	-	-
2016	10.3	7.4	2.9	39%
2015	9.1	7.9	1.2	15%
2014	6.8	8.1	-1.3	-16%

## Nova Scotia Days Lost Per Employee

Year	Provincial Government	Private Sector	Difference in Days	Per Cent Difference
2018	11.9	7.5	4.4	59%
2017	10.3	7.6	2.7	36%
2016	7.4	7.5	-0.1	-1%
2015	11.0	8.4	2.6	31%
2014	8.9	7.1	1.8	25%



<b>Newfoundland and Labrador Days Lost Per Employee</b>				
<b>Year</b>	<b>Provincial Government</b>	<b>Private Sector</b>	<b>Difference in Days</b>	<b>Per Cent Difference</b>
2018	10.4	7.9	2.5	32%
2017	-	6.7	-	-
2016	9.6	6.5	3.1	48%
2015	-	6.6	-	-
2014	-	6.8	-	-

Data for Prince Edward Island was deemed by Statistics Canada to be too unreliable to publish.

## Methodology

- All data is from Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey custom tabulations
  - '-' indicate that Statistics Canada deemed the information "too unreliable to publish"
- *Government sector* includes "employees in public administration at the federal, provincial, territorial, municipal, First Nations and other Aboriginal levels as well as in Crown corporations, liquor control boards and other government institutions such as schools (including universities), hospitals and public libraries." [Statistics Canada: Guide to the Labour Force Survey](#)
- *Private sector* includes "all other employees and self-employed owners of businesses (including unpaid family workers in those businesses), and self-employed persons without businesses." [Statistics Canada: Guide to the Labour Force Survey](#)
- *Federal, provincial, and local and other* includes "establishments primarily engaged in activities of a governmental nature, that is, the enactment and judicial interpretation of laws and their pursuant regulations, and the administration of programs based on them. Legislative activities, taxation, national defence, public order and safety, immigration services, foreign affairs and international assistance, and the administration of government programs are activities that are purely governmental in nature. Ownership is not a criterion for classification. Government owned establishments engaged in activities that are not governmental in nature are classified to the same industry as privately-owned establishments engaged in similar activities." [North American Industry Classification System](#)