

The COVID19 Unemployment Update

President Trump declared COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) a National Emergency on March 13, 2020. The declaration provides new guidance and outlines flexibilities that states will have in administering their unemployment insurance programs. The following are the Alabama Department of Labor's latest unemployment updates.

Alabama Department of Labor has announced that Alabama workers who are not able to work due to COVID-19 will be eligible to file for unemployment benefits.

Based on current guidance from the U.S. Department of Labor, the Alabama Department of Labor is modifying existing unemployment compensation rules to allow workers to file a claim for unemployment compensation benefits:

- Those who are quarantined by a medical professional or a government agency,
- Those who are laid off or sent home without pay for an extended period by their employer due to COVID-19 concerns,
- Those who are diagnosed with COVID-19, or, those who are caring for an immediate family member who is diagnosed with COVID-19.
- The requirement that a laid-off worker is "able and available" to work while receiving unemployment compensation benefits has been modified for claimants who are affected by COVID-19 in any of the situations listed above.
- Claimants will also not have to search for other work provided they take reasonable steps to preserve their ability to come back to that job when the quarantine is lifted, or the illness subsides.
- The waiting week, which is typically the first week of compensable benefits, will also be waived.
- Claimants can begin filing these claims on Monday, March 23, 2020.
- Certain criteria and exceptions may apply and are subject to change. Verification of illness or quarantine may be required.
- Workers can file for benefits online at www.labor.alabama.gov or by calling 1-866-234-5382. **Online filing is encouraged.**

People who are being paid to work from home, or those receiving paid sick or vacation leave are NOT eligible for unemployment compensation benefits, regardless if they experience any or all of the situations listed above.

Employers Information:

- Shutdowns related to COVID-19 should treat the shutdown as a temporary layoff.
- Relief will be offered to Employers for Unemployment Claims related to COVID-19 both Partial and Full Benefits
- Employers are encouraged to file partial claims on behalf of employees. Employers will need to answer YES when asked if the claim is COVID-19 related when they file partial unemployment claims beginning on Monday, March 23, 2020." - <https://www.labor.alabama.gov/COVID/COVID-19%20Employers%20File%20Claims%20news%20feed.pdf>
- File partial claims here - <https://www.labor.alabama.gov/uc/partials/parlogin/default.aspx>
- For employers who are unable to file partial claims on their employees' behalf, ADOL recommends that they notify the agency that they waive their right to respond to any Request for Separation information (known as the BEN 241). The BEN 241 will still be mailed to employers, however they will **NOT** need to respond to it *IF THEY NOTIFY ADOL IN WRITING THAT THEY WAIVE THIS RIGHT*. Employers can notify the agency by: emailing Ben241waiver@labor.alabama.gov or by faxing 334-309-9098. The statements should be on company letterhead, and should include the state unemployment insurance account number. These methods of contact will be available on March 23, 2020

For additional information please see the Alabama FAQs at: <https://www.labor.alabama.gov/Coronavirus%20Unemployment%20Benefits%20FAQ.pdf>

CCC is in contact with both national and state representatives regarding this issue and will keep you updated as more information becomes available.