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## The COVID19 Unemployment Update

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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 Montana Department of Labor & Industry Unemployment Insurance Division's latest unemployment updates.

Montana has released information regarding their response to the effects of COVID-19.

- The state will waive the 1-week waiting period for Unemployment claims to expedite payment of benefits
- The state will also, modify the availability requirement
- Employers will be eligible for relief of benefit charge as a result claims paid as a result of COVID-19
- Penalties for late filings may be waived if directly correlated to COVID-19

Emergency Rules for Unemployment:

Considered laid off for purposes of unemployment:

- Employees told to leave and/or not to report for work due to COVID-19
- Employees quarantined due to COVID-19 during the period of the quarantine
- Employee who is a caregiver of a family member who is the subject of a COVID-19 quarantine

Considered Able Available & Actively seeking suitable during COVID-19 Pandemic

- (a) the employer intends to recall the claimant to work at the end of the temporary layoff; and
- (b) the claimant intends to return to work when recalled by the employer and takes reasonable measures to maintain contact with the employer.

Claimants MAY be eligible (dependent if they meet monetary eligibility) if:

- A worker was exposed and quarantined, while their place of business remains open
- An employer send a worker home due to pandemic concerns
- A worker is caring for a family member impacted by COVID-19
- A worker is immune-compromised and advised to self-quarantine
- An employer must shut down due to quarantine
- An employer shuts down due to a business slowdown or lack of demand
- An employer reduces available hours due to business slowdown or lack of demand

Claimants will be denied if:

A claimant laid off as the result of being subject to a COVID-19 quarantine is ineligible for benefits if the claimant refuses work that can be performed while complying with the terms of the quarantine.

For more information on Montana's Scenarios and Benefits Available to Claimants affected by COVID-19, go here: <http://dli.mt.gov/Portals/57/Documents/covid-19/COVID-19-ScenariosAndBenefits.pdf?ver=2020-03-18-113453-153>

Employer Considerations

- Montana has recommended that all employers affected by COVID-19, sign up for SIDES, to expedite the processing of mass claims. If you are a CCC customer, contact your Account Executive for more information.
- Employers are advised to handle lay offs normally. Contact Montana's Employer Charging Unit at 406-444-0399.

For more information regarding Montana's Response to Covid-19, go here: <http://dli.mt.gov/employer-covid-19>

**Information contained in the bulletin was gathered both independently, as well as utilizing resources obtained from NASWA and the Department of Labor. CCC is in contact with both national and state representatives regarding this issue and will keep you updated as more information becomes available.**