

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 Oklahoma Employment Security Commission's latest unemployment updates.

Oklahoma's Executive Director issued a waiver on March 25, 2020, pursuant to the natural disaster provision of 40 O.S. §3-106.1, all benefit wage charges to experience rated employers for allowed claims of unemployment that are directly related to the COVID-19 pandemic shall be waived. An attempt will be made to prevent charges from going out on COVID-19 claims, but if an employer does receive a benefit wage charge on a COVID-19 claim, the employer should timely protest the charge and give information about the nature of the claim.

Reimbursing charges to reimbursing employers shall not be waived and must be paid timely.

For employers with layoffs as a result of COVID-19:

- Permanent Closures: Claims are taken online. Employees may access the online application by going to <https://unemployment.state.ok.us/>. If assistance is needed in filing claimants must call 1-800-555-1554.
- The employer will need to report this to the OESC. To do this submit a termination form (OES-24) online through the EzTaxExpress portal at <https://eztaxexpress.oesc.state.ok.us>
- Temporary Closures: There are two options depending on the size of the business
 1. The easiest method would be to have employees file online at the address above. When filing, they would need to provide a return to work date within eight weeks of the last day worked.
 2. A **mass claim** is initiated by the employer when a temporary shutdown occurs. In order to file the mass claim the employer:
 - Must have at least 25 employees
 - Must complete an excel file with specific information on each employee.
 - The file will establish claims and employees will need to file weekly certifications for payment until they return to work.
 - Inquiries on mass claims may be sent to MASSClaims@oesc.state.ok.us.
 - Please note, mass claims need a few days to process to ensure that the file is correct.
 - If you have closed and are unable to correspond with the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission (OESC), please have your employees file their own claims at <https://unemployment.state.ok.us/>.

Claimant Information:

- The waiting week has been waived
- Work search requirements have been waived

Oklahoma's COVID-19 Information can be found: https://www.ok.gov/oesc/Claimants/COVID-19_Message.html

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