

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 Washington State Employment Security Departments latest unemployment updates.

Update as of March 23, 2020

- Employees laid off work as a result of the governor's stay home order issued on March 23, are eligible for unemployment benefits. When employees apply for benefits, they have been directed to select "laid off" as the reason for separation and to choose "Company temporarily closed" from the secondary options.
- Work search requirements are optional for all claimants until further notice. Employees can request standby status for up to 12 weeks. If on standby, workers must accept any work you offer that they can do without breaking isolation or quarantine.
- The requirement to register for work and search for work is fulfilled so long as the employee has been placed on standby and take reasonable measures to maintain contact with the employer for 12 weeks. Exceptions can also be made due to a COVID-19 infection at the employer's place of business or an emergency proclamation by the governor that causes the employer to close or severely curtail operations
- Standby is available to all workers including full-time, part-time and other less than full-time employees
- The one-week waiting period to be eligible for unemployment benefits is waived.

March 12, 2020, Washington announced its adoption of new emergency rules relieving the burden of temporary layoffs, isolation, and quarantine for workers and businesses. The new rules allow current unemployment claimants who are in isolation or quarantine, more leniency when it comes to UI deadlines and mandatory appointments, such as deadlines for applying for training programs. It also allows businesses more leniency when it comes to financial penalties for employers who file their tax reports late, pays their taxes late, or miss deadlines as a result of COVID-19. **For complete details from the State of Washington, go here: <https://esd.wa.gov/newsroom/covid-19>**

Expanded Program for Employers:

- SharedWork is a smart alternative to a layoff. SharedWork allows employers to reduce the hours of permanent and paid hourly employees by as much as 50 percent, and the employees can collect partial unemployment benefits to replace a portion of their lost wages
- Temporary shutdowns due to quarantine
- If employers need to shut down operations temporarily because an employee becomes sick and other employees need to be isolated or quarantined, workers may be able to receive unemployment benefits.
- Employers may receive relief of benefit charges. Under the new emergency rules, temporary shutdowns related to COVID-19 infection at the place of business that causes you to close or severely reduce operations are considered extraordinary circumstances. Requests for relief of benefit charges. Workers must accept any telework you offer.
- Temporary layoffs due to a slowdown in business

Important Notes About Emergency Rules

- Claimants who have contracted COVID-19 and have mild symptoms and/or claimants who are quarantined are eligible for Unemployment benefits. If a claimant exhibits severe COVID-19 symptoms, they are covered by other programs.
- Claimants who are immune-compromised and are advised by a medical professional to quarantine, are also eligible for benefits under new Emergency Rules.

For ESDWAGOV Scenarios and Benefits available form, go here: <https://esdorchardstorage.blob.core.windows.net/esdwa/Default/ESDWAGOV/newsroom/COVID-19/covid-19-scenarios-and-benefits.pdf>

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