



COVID-19 & Unemployment Compensation FAQ

With the current situation evolving by the day, many businesses are being forced to make tough employment decisions.

Whether your business is an office, a manufacturing plant, restaurant, or construction site the challenges are the same. Below are a few Frequently Asked Questions regarding unemployment compensation:

Q: Will workers qualify for unemployment benefits if the coronavirus (COVID-19) causes an employer to shut down operations?

A: An executive order issued by Governor DeWine expands flexibility for Ohioans to receive unemployment benefits during Ohio's emergency declaration period. Unemployment benefits will be available for eligible individuals who are requested by a medical professional, local health authority, or employer to be isolated or quarantined as a consequence of COVID-19, even if they are not actually diagnosed with COVID-19. In addition, the waiting period for eligible Ohioans to receive unemployment benefits will be waived.

Q: Where do employees file for benefits?

A: Ohioans can apply for unemployment online 24 hours a day, seven days a week at www.unemployment.ohio.gov. It also is possible to file by phone at 1(877) OHIO-JOB (1-877-644- 6562) or TTY at 1(888)642-8203, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Q: When should you be notified an employee has filed?

A: A claim form should be received within a week - with the expected increase in claims, delays might occur.

Q: If an asymptomatic employee imposes a self-quarantine because of the coronavirus, will they be eligible for unemployment benefits?

A: In most cases, no. Unemployment benefits are available to individuals who are totally or partially unemployed due to no fault of their own. In this example, the individual-not the employer-is choosing not to work and, therefore, would be ineligible. However, the facts of each circumstance are important. If the employer allowed this individual to telework, they would not qualify for benefits because they would not be unemployed. If the employer required the individual to stay home but did not offer telework, the individual might be eligible for benefits if they met the monetary and weekly eligibility criteria.

Q: If an employee is in mandatory quarantine because of suspicion of having the coronavirus, will they be eligible for unemployment benefits?

A: Yes, an executive order issued by Governor DeWine states that employees who are quarantined are considered to be unemployed.

Q: What happens if you have to layoff over 10 employees?

A: The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) is instructing Ohio employers planning layoffs or shutdowns as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic to share the following mass layoff number with their employees to speed the processing of unemployment benefits: 2000180. The agency also is providing instructions for employers to share with their employees about how to apply for benefits.

Q: What claims can be contested?

A: If the unemployment claim is due to COVID-19, the claim cannot be contested. If they quit or were laid off, they will receive a claim form in the mail, and they can respond to it.

Q: What is the financial impact I should expect?

A: For contributory employers, charges during Ohio's emergency declaration period will be mutualized. Mutualized account is to maintain the unemployment trust fund at a safe level and recover the costs of unemployment that are not chargeable to individual employers. These costs are recovered, and the money restored to the fund through the mutualized tax levied on all contributory employers. The mutualized tax is used solely for the payment of benefits. Reimbursing employers will follow existing charging requirements under Ohio Revised Code Chapter 4141. Reimbursing employers are non-profits (such as schools & hospitals) that do not pay taxes but pay dollar for dollar on claims.

Hunter Consulting maintains a staff of experienced unemployment compensation claims management professionals. These professionals are trained to manage claims from the client's perspective. The objective is to provide expert service with a goal of reducing your unemployment costs. Hunter Consulting Company exercises the employer's rights by adjusting erroneous tax rates, contesting suspect benefit charges and appealing referee decisions.

Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions or concerns.

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**Sincerely,
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