

Coronavirus and Unemployment Insurance Benefits

Alabama Department of Labor

Questions and Answers

FOR EMPLOYEES

Question 1: Will workers qualify for unemployment benefits if COVID-19 causes an employer to shut down operations?

Answer: Alabama unemployment benefits are available to individuals who are unemployed through no fault of their own. If an employer must shut down operations and no work is available, individuals may be eligible for unemployment benefits.

Question 2: If an employer lays off employees due to the loss of production caused by COVID-19, will the employees be eligible for unemployment insurance benefits?

Answer: Alabama unemployment benefits are available to any individual who is unemployed through no fault of their own. If an employer must lay off employees due to the loss of production caused by the coronavirus, individuals may be eligible for unemployment benefits.

Question 3: If an asymptomatic employee imposes a *self-quarantine* because of COVID-19, will they be eligible for unemployment benefits?

Answer: 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.

Question 4: If an employee is in mandatory quarantine because of suspicion of having COVID-19, will they be eligible for unemployment benefits?

Answer: Yes, they will be eligible. Certain criteria and exceptions may apply, and are subject to change.

Question 5: If an employee is ill because of COVID-19 and unable to work, will they be eligible for unemployment benefits?

Answer: Yes, they will be eligible. Certain criteria and exceptions may apply, and are subject to change.

Question 6: If an employee is working reduced hours due to COVID-19 related issues, will they be eligible for unemployment benefits?

Answer: In some instances, yes. Please file a claim to determine eligibility.

Question 7: If an employee cannot work because they are caring for an immediate family member who is diagnosed with COVID-19, will they be eligible for unemployment benefits?

Answer: Yes, they will be eligible. Certain criteria and exceptions may apply, and are subject to change.

Question 8: Is COVID-19 considered a disaster, and can an employee receive Disaster Unemployment Assistance?

Answer: The president of the United States has declared COVID-19 a national disaster, but at this time there has been no Disaster Unemployment Assistance declaration. **The CARES Act provides for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA). Please check back for updates regarding this program.**

Question 9: What types of proof may be required to substantiate a COVID-19 claim?

Answer: Proof of a medical diagnosis from a health care professional for the claimant and/or the immediate family member, and/or confirmation of quarantine by the employer or applicable government entity.

Question 10: How long can an employee receive benefits?

Answer: Generally, up to three weeks, subject to verification. **This may change under the CARES Act. Please check back for updates.**

Question 11: Can self-employed workers or workers who are employed by churches receive benefits?

Answer: No. In order to receive benefits, unemployment insurances taxes must be paid by the employer. **This may change under the CARES Act, please check back for updates.**

Question 12: How does an employee know if they are approved for unemployment benefits?

Answer: There is no written notification provided for approval. The claimant will receive funds via direct deposit, an existing debit card, or will receive a new debit card. Payment may take up to as many as 21 days, but should generally be received sooner. If a debit card is selected as the method of payment, it has to be mailed, so that could also affect the time it takes to receive payment. If a claimant is NOT approved, they will receive written notification (Notice of Determination).

Question 13: If a claimant is already receiving unemployment compensation benefits, should a new COVID-19 claim be filed?

Answer: Not at this time. Continue to file weekly certifications. Eligibility under COVID-19 will be determined.

Question 14: If an employer filed a partial claim on an employee's behalf, what should the employee do? Is a PIN number required?

Answer: Follow instructions given by the employer, including calling in to establish the preferred payment method. The employer has the option to temporarily file weekly on the employees' behalf. If the employee continues to remain unemployed for an extended period of time or if the employer is unable to file, the affected employee will be eligible to file on his or her own behalf and will receive instructions for establishing a PIN.

Question 15: What should an employee do if they receive a letter requiring a doctor's input and the employee is NOT sick?

Answer: If the employee is eligible due to reasons relating to COVID-19, it is not required to return the form at this time.

FOR EMPLOYERS

Question 1: If an employee receives unemployment benefits as a result of a coronavirus-related business shutdown, will the employer's unemployment taxes increase?

Answer: Employer charges will be waived to weeks claimed due to COVID-19 related issues until further notice. Employers are urged to file partial claims on their employees' behalf, and / or to waive their right to respond to any Request for Separation information. [MORE INFORMATION](#)

Question 2: If an employee receives unemployment benefits as a result of a coronavirus-related business shutdown, can the benefits be charged to the mutual account?

Answer: At this time, no further guidance has been issued. Until such a time, normal procedures will be followed.

Question 3: What is a partial claim?

Answer: A partial claim is filed when an employee is laid off for a short period, but is expected to be rehired at the same job. [MORE INFORMATION](#)

Question 4: How does an employer file a partial claim for their employees?

Answer: Please file [HERE](#).

Last updated: 3/29/2020