

**COVID-19 and Unemployment Insurance Benefits
Questions and Answers**

**Wyoming Department of Workforce Services
Last Updated 3/18/20**

NOTE: This information is subject to change as the COVID-19 situation progresses

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

A: Wyoming 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 if they meet the monetary criteria and the federal weekly eligibility criteria.

Q: 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?

A: Wyoming unemployment benefits are available to any individual who is unemployed through no fault of his/her own. If an employer must lay off employees due to the loss of production caused by COVID-19, individuals may be eligible for unemployment benefits if they meet the monetary criteria and the federal weekly eligibility criteria.

Q: If an employee receives unemployment benefits as a result of a COVID-19-related business shutdown, will the employer's unemployment taxes increase?

A: Unemployment benefits are proportionately charged to each employer based on weeks worked and wages earned in each individual's base period. Contributory employers could see an increase in their tax rate, which would result in higher taxes. Reimbursing employers would be charged dollar for dollar for benefits paid, which could result in higher than expected unemployment costs.

Q: 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.

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

A: They might meet the initial eligibility criteria but not the ongoing federal eligibility criteria, which require them to be able to work, available for work, and actively seeking suitable work.

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

A: No. The federal requirements mandate that claimants be able to work, available for work, and actively seeking suitable work. If someone is ill, they would not meet these criteria.

Q: Temporary layoffs due to a slowdown in business.

A: You may request the employee be job attached for up to 12 weeks and your employee can collect unemployment benefits without having to look for other work. (To qualify 50% of the base period wages need to be from employment with your business.)

Q: What is the minimum amount of base period wages needed to qualify?

A: \$3,800.00

Q: What is the current Maximum Weekly Benefit amount?

A: \$508.00

Q: Where do I go to file my Unemployment Insurance Claim?

A: WYUI.wyo.gov