

# Coronavirus (COVID-19) Information

## COVID-19 FAQs FOR BUSINESSES & WORKERS

- UNEMPLOYMENT
- WORKERS' COMPENSATION
- DISCRIMINATION



### Unemployment Information

### Workers' Compensation

### Discrimination

***3/19/2020 - Check back often for updated information as conditions change.***

**For Employers:** If you are an employer and need more information on the services available through the Missouri Division of Employment Security (DES), please click:

- **Filing a Contribution & Wage Report,**
- **Shared Work Program** - a lay-off aversion program
- **Filing a Mass Claim** – Expedite filing multiple claims on behalf of your employees.
- Tax representatives are available to assist employers by phone Monday – Friday from 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM by calling 573-751-1995.

Or to contact a tax representative by email: [esemptax@labor.mo.gov](mailto:esemptax@labor.mo.gov)

#### **For Employees:**

- If this is your first time filing for unemployment please watch **this video** on unemployment basics.
- Visit **UInteract** to file for unemployment and access our video gallery at [uinteract.labor.mo.gov](http://uinteract.labor.mo.gov), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Regional Claims Center representatives are available by phone Monday – Friday from 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM by calling:

Jefferson City	573-751-9040
Kansas City	816-889-3101
Springfield	417-895-6851
St. Louis	314-340-4950
Outside Local Calling Area	800-320-2519

Or to contact Regional Claims Center representative by email: [esuiclaims@labor.mo.gov](mailto:esuiclaims@labor.mo.gov)

**UInteract** ([uinteract.labor.mo.gov](http://uinteract.labor.mo.gov)) is an easy to use mobile-friendly online Unemployment Insurance application that is available to workers and employers 24/7.

If you need more information on Unemployment Insurance:

- Visit the Missouri Division of Employment Security website at [labor.mo.gov/DES](http://labor.mo.gov/DES).

# Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Unemployment Insurance Benefits

## Questions and Answers

**Question 1:** If I am off of work due to the coronavirus and am receiving pay such as paid sick leave, vacation pay or family medical leave pay, am I eligible to receive unemployment benefits?

**Answer:** No. Generally speaking, an individual still receiving pay while off of work is not “unemployed” and is ineligible for unemployment benefits.

**Question 2:** If the coronavirus (COVID-19) causes an employer to shut down operations temporarily, will workers qualify for unemployment benefits?

**Answer:** In most situations, yes. Missouri unemployment benefits are available to individuals who are unemployed through no fault of their own. If an employer must shut down operations temporarily and no work is available, individuals may be eligible for unemployment benefits if they meet the eligibility criteria. Weekly work search requirements are not required when there is a recall date within eight weeks of the temporary lay-off. If the recall date changes but is within the initial eight weeks from the last day worked, the employee must contact a Regional Claims Center representative to update the recall date. An employer may apply for approval of an extended recall and work search waiver for employees of up to sixteen weeks. For more information about recall and extended work search waiver please visit [labor.mo.gov/DES/Employers/extended\\_waiver](https://labor.mo.gov/DES/Employers/extended_waiver).

**Question 3:** Will employees be eligible for unemployment insurance benefits if an employer lays off employees due to the loss of production caused by the coronavirus?

**Answer:** In most situations, yes. Missouri unemployment benefits are available to any individual who is unemployed through no fault of his or her 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 if they meet the eligibility criteria. Employers may be able to avoid a lay-off with a partial shut down by applying for the Missouri Shared Work program. See question 4 below.

**Question 4:** Can an employer participate in Missouri’s shared work program whose business has temporarily declined due to the coronavirus (COVID-19)?

**Answer:** An employer can participate in a shared work plan if they meet the eligibility requirements for Missouri’s shared work program. The Shared Work Unemployment Compensation Program is an alternative to layoffs for employers faced with a reduction in available work. It allows an employer to divide the available work among a specified group of affected employees instead of a layoff. These employees receive a portion of their unemployment benefits while working reduced hours. For more information about the eligibility requirements for Missouri’s shared work program, please visit [www.sharedwork.mo.gov](https://www.sharedwork.mo.gov), email [sharedworkinfo@labor.mo.gov](mailto:sharedworkinfo@labor.mo.gov) or call 573-751-WORK (9675).

**Question 5:** Can an employer participate in a mass claim filing?

**Answer:** Yes. The Electronic Mass Claims Filing System is available to employers during a temporary mass lay-off. Employee information provided by the employer, allows the DES to file an initial or renewed unemployment claim on behalf of employees quickly and efficiently. An employer can participate in a mass claim filing if they meet the eligibility requirements below:

- The lay-off must be due to a lack of work;
- The lay-off must be less than eight weeks in duration;
- An employee is not on a leave of absence;
- The employee is not receiving pay; for example, sick pay, vacation pay, family medical leave pay, etc.
- For more information about the Mass Claims Filing System, please call 573-751-0436.

**Question 6:** Will an employer’s unemployment taxes increase if an employee receives unemployment benefits because of a coronavirus-related business shutdown?

**Answer:** Unemployment benefits are proportionately charged to each employer based on weeks worked and wages earned in each individual’s base period. For contributory employers, benefits paid out and chargeable to the employer will be used to calculate future tax rates and could result in an increase in unemployment taxes. Reimbursable employers are charged dollar for dollar for benefits paid, which could result in higher than expected unemployment costs for the employer. For more information about employer tax rate calculations and the impact of benefit charges, please call 573-751-1995 or email [esemptax@labor.mo.gov](mailto:esemptax@labor.mo.gov).

**Question 7:** Will an employee be eligible for unemployment benefits if they are in mandatory quarantine because of suspicion of having the coronavirus?

**Answer:** In most situations, yes. Weekly work search eligibility requirements are not required when there is a recall date within eight weeks of the temporary lay-off.

**Question 8:** If an asymptomatic individual imposes a self-quarantine because of the coronavirus, 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 not be eligible. However, the facts of each circumstance are essential. 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 9:** If an individual leaves work to care for children due to school/daycare closures as a result of COVID-19, are they eligible to receive 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 is not available for work due to caring for children and would be ineligible. However, the facts of each circumstance are essential in determining eligibility for unemployment benefits.

**Question 10:** If an individual is ill because of the coronavirus, will they be eligible for unemployment benefits?

**Answer:** Maybe. The facts of each circumstance are essential in determining eligibility for unemployment benefits and each situation must be handled on a case by case basis.

**Question 11:** Can an individual receive Disaster Unemployment Assistance due to the coronavirus?

**Answer:** If the President of the United States declares the coronavirus a national disaster with individual assistance available, and if the individual experiences a loss of work in Missouri as a result, they may be eligible for unemployment benefits and/or Disaster Unemployment Assistance.

NOTE: The March 13, 2020, national disaster emergency declaration did NOT include individual assistance.

**Question 12:** When should an individual file for unemployment benefits?

**Answer:** Once the individual is separated from work, they should immediately file a claim for unemployment benefits.

**Question 13:** If an individual has exhausted unemployment benefits for the benefit year, are they eligible for additional unemployment benefits due to the Coronavirus?

**Answer:** Not at this time.

**Question 14:** What if a claimant is required to participate in the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program?

**Answer:** If an individual is required to participate in the RESEA program the RESEA interview will be completed over the phone at this time. Claimants should contact the MO Job Center at the phone number listed on the appointment letter. If the individual is unable to participate, they may reschedule their interview appointment by contacting the job center at the phone number listed on their appointment letter.

**For additional questions about COVID-19, please visit:**

**[www.health.mo.gov/coronavirus](http://www.health.mo.gov/coronavirus)**