



COVID-19 and Unemployment Insurance Frequently Asked Questions for Employers

Note: This information is updated frequently. Please check back for updates.

I may have to shut down operations temporarily due to COVID-19. Can someone walk me and my employees through the process?

Yes, Rapid Response Workshops are designed to provide immediate aid to companies and affected workers from layoffs and worksite closings. Advance notice gives the business and workers time to adjust, and if necessary find a new job and receive skills training to compete in the job market. To schedule a Rapid Response Workshop contact Stacie Smith at stacielsmith@utah.gov or 385-272-7798.

Are my workers eligible for unemployment benefits?

Generally, individuals are eligible for unemployment benefits if they meet each of the following criteria:

- Individuals who have been connected to the workforce for long enough to meet monetary eligibility rules (generally at least 5 quarters)
- Individuals who are able and available for suitable employment
- Individuals who were laid off through no fault of their own

Specific to COVID-19, the following individuals should apply and may be eligible:

- Individuals whose employer temporarily ceases operations with the expectation that the employee will return to work
- Individuals who are quarantined, but not showing symptoms, and will return to work for the employer
- Individuals who are able and available (not showing any symptoms of COVID-19), but is unable to go to work as their place of employment has been quarantined

How do my workers apply for unemployment benefits?

Filing for unemployment benefits is done online at jobs.utah.gov/ui/home.

Who does not qualify for unemployment benefits?

Generally unemployment benefits may be denied for the following:

- Individuals on paid leave. An individual who is on paid leave is considered employed.
- Individuals who are not able and available, including those who have COVID-19, may not be eligible. These claims will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, but these individuals should still file a claim.

What does “able and available” mean?

In the context of unemployment benefits, being “able and available” is a federal requirement intended to ensure that individuals filing for benefits remain attached to the labor market by being able to work and available to work for their employer after a temporary separation, or to a new employer if an individual is not attached to a former employer.

As an employer, if I need to shut down operations temporarily because of COVID-19 can my workers file for unemployment benefits?

Yes. Filing for unemployment benefits is done online at jobs.utah.gov/ui/home.

If I shut down operations temporarily because of COVID-19, and my workers file for unemployment benefits, will they be required to make the four new job contacts weekly?

Your workers may be eligible to receive unemployment benefits and not required to search for work. Work search requirements will be reviewed when they file their claim and they may be granted a work search deferral. This deferral helps you maintain your skilled workforce while providing partial-wage replacement for your workers.

As a contributory employer, will this affect my unemployment insurance tax rate?

Depending on your situation, it may. There are many variables to be considered. Please contact an unemployment insurance representative through the ‘Live Chat’ button at jobs.utah.gov/ui/home.

I am a reimbursable employer. If I have to shut down operations temporarily because of COVID-19 and my workers are eligible for unemployment benefits, am I liable for all benefit costs associated with the claim?

Reimbursable employers elect to be liable for direct reimbursement to the unemployment insurance trust fund for benefits paid to individuals formerly in their employ. This direct reimbursement is in lieu of paying quarterly contributions. Reimbursable employers are liable for their prorated portion of benefit costs. For example, if 50% of the wages included on the claim were paid by a reimbursable employer, it would be responsible for 50% of the benefit costs.

What is the best way to reach an unemployment insurance representative?

Live chat is the best way to reach a representative by clicking the 'Live Chat' button at jobs.utah.gov/ui.

My employee said they are staying home, but we have not started to send anyone home due to the coronavirus yet. Do they qualify?

Any employee who refuses to come into work may be considered to have quit their employment and an eligibility decision for quitting will have to be determined by Workforce Services. Every case of quitting is uniquely dealt with. Depending on the reasons for their refusal to report to work, an individual may not be eligible for benefits if they lack good cause for leaving, like a public safety order or need for quarantine.

My employee said they have to stay home to take care of their children. Can they file for unemployment benefits and do they qualify?

The Governor's Office encourages employers to be accommodating to staff needs in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Generally speaking, any staff who are working with their employer to address temporary separations for public safety related to COVID-19 may be eligible for unemployment benefits, provided they meet all other requirements.

What if my worker needs to take time off work because they contracted COVID-19?

If they are receiving paid leave while taking time off from work they are not eligible for unemployment benefits because they are not considered unemployed. If they are not receiving paid leave, then they may be eligible for unemployment benefits, provided they meet all other eligibility requirements.