

APRIL 9, 2020

COVID-19 update

Impact on unemployment

Sedgwick is committed to keeping our clients informed on key legislative changes impacting claims programs as we all navigate the coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis. One area of concern for many employers is the impact on unemployment compensation. The COVID-19 outbreak has introduced new challenges for employers to manage, including the influx in unemployment claims, changes in work search requirements, specific separation issues and many other scenarios — all while maintaining a focus on employee health and safety.

New legislation

Recently, the federal government enacted two relief packages — the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) on March 18 and the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act on March 27. Together, they seek to provide temporary relief for workers affected by COVID-19 by easing eligibility requirements and providing additional income for longer periods of time to more individuals than provided under regular unemployment compensation law.

Key changes related to unemployment benefits under the new laws:

- Certain waiting week requirements are waived
- Certain work search requirements are waived
- Part-time employees, freelancers, independent contractors, gig workers and the self-employed are eligible
- A \$600 supplemental weekly unemployment insurance payment will be paid across the board to all eligible applicants through July 31, 2020 (this is in addition to what the states pay)
- An additional 13 weeks of extended unemployment insurance benefits will be paid to eligible applicants through December 31, 2020
- 50% benefit relief for government entities and non-profits

Social distancing guidelines

The guidelines below from the Society for Human Resource Management are in place until April 30:

- Avoid in-person meetings by using teleconferencing, web meetings or emails
- Unavoidable in-person meetings should be brief, in large meeting spaces and attendees should sit six feet apart. Avoid shaking hands or any other contact
- Eliminate unnecessary travel; postpone nonessential meetings, training sessions and workshops
- Do not congregate in breakrooms or other areas. Maintain six feet of distance when at all possible

- Avoid public transportation if at all possible
- Limit recreational activities which are likely to have close contact with others

With the recent increase in the number of unemployment claims being filed, some employers are faced with administration challenges while being short-staffed or closed. We urge you to leverage your unemployment vendor for guidance and support. If you do not have a vendor or are unsure who to contact, Sedgwick can help. Our expert team can provide consulting and assistance with:

- Your organization's unemployment process
- State-specific guidance on COVID-19 unemployment
- COVID-19 unemployment claim questions

Additional COVID-19 resources:

State agencies are enacting COVID-19 specific claim procedures to simplify the process, increase the speed of payments for individuals and provide financial relief to employers. These updates vary from state to state. Below are links to national and state-specific resources.

US DOL: www.dol.gov/coronavirus

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/>

Department of Homeland Security: <https://www.dhs.gov/employee-resources/covid-19-workforce-information>

Alabama: <https://labor.alabama.gov/covid19resources.aspx>

Alaska: <https://labor.alaska.gov/unemployment/COVID-19.htm>

Arizona: <https://des.az.gov/services/coronavirus>

Arkansas: <https://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/programs-services/topics/covid-19-guidance-for-employers>

California: https://www.edd.ca.gov/about_edd/coronavirus-2019.htm

Colorado: <https://covid19.colorado.gov/>

Connecticut: <http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/DOLCOVIDFAQ.PDF>

Delaware: <https://laborfiles.delaware.gov/c19/UI-FAQ.pdf>

District of Columbia:

https://does.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/does/publication/attachments/COVID19_DOES_Scenarios.pdf

Florida: <https://covid19.floridajobs.org/>

Georgia: <https://dol.georgia.gov/gdol-covid-19-information>

Hawaii: <http://labor.hawaii.gov/get-the-latest-covid-19-workplace-updates/>

Idaho: <https://www.labor.idaho.gov/dnn/COVID-19>

Illinois: <https://www2.illinois.gov/ides/Pages/COVID-19-and-Unemployment-Benefits.aspx>

Indiana: <https://www.in.gov/dwd/19.htm>

Iowa: <https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/updates-and-resources-about-covid-19>

Kansas: <https://www.dol.ks.gov/covid19response>

Kentucky: <https://govstatus.egov.com/kycovid19>

Louisiana: http://www.laworks.net/PublicRelations/COVID_19_Information.asp

Maine: <https://www.maine.gov/labor/covid19/>

Maryland: <https://www.dllr.state.md.us/employment/uicovidfaqs.shtml>

Massachusetts: <https://www.mass.gov/resource/information-on-unemployment-and-coronavirus-covid-19>

Michigan: [https://www.michigan.gov/documents/uia/160 - Claiming UI Benefit In Michigan - Jan2014 444213 7.pdf](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/uia/160_-_Claiming_UI_Benefit_In_Michigan_-_Jan2014_444213_7.pdf)

Minnesota: <https://mn.gov/uimn/applicants/needtoknow/news-updates/covid-19.jsp>

Missouri: <https://labor.mo.gov/coronavirus>

Montana: <http://www.dli.mt.gov/employer-covid-19>
Nebraska: <https://dol.nebraska.gov/PressRelease/Details/141>
Nevada: [https://detr.nv.gov/Page/COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\) Information for Claimants and Employers](https://detr.nv.gov/Page/COVID-19_(Coronavirus)_Information_for_Claimants_and_Employers)
New Hampshire: <https://www.nh.gov/covid19/>
New Jersey: <https://www.nj.gov/labor/worker-protections/earnedsick/covid.shtm>
New Mexico: <https://www.dws.state.nm.us/COVID-19-Info>
New York: <https://www.labor.ny.gov/unemploymentassistance.shtm>
North Carolina: <https://des.nc.gov/need-help/covid-19-information>
North Dakota: <https://www.nd.gov/ndins/covid-19-coronavirus-and-insurance>
Ohio: <https://unemploymenthelp.ohio.gov/employer/>
Oregon: <https://www.oregon.gov/employ/Pages/COVID-19.aspx>
Pennsylvania: <https://www.uc.pa.gov/COVID-19/Pages/default.aspx>
Rhode Island: <http://www.dlt.ri.gov/pdfs/COVID-19%20Workplace%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>
South Carolina: <https://www.scdhec.gov/infectious-diseases/viruses/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>
South Dakota: <https://dlr.sd.gov/ra/default.aspx>
Tennessee: <https://www.tn.gov/workforce/covid-19/employers.html>
Texas: <https://twc.texas.gov/news/covid-19-resources-job-seekers>
Vermont: <https://labor.vermont.gov/covid19/employers>
Virginia: <https://www.virginia.gov/coronavirus-updates/>
Washington (State): <https://esd.wa.gov/newsroom/covid-19>
West Virginia: <https://workforcewv.org/covid19>
Wisconsin: <https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/covid19/public/ui.htm>
Wyoming: <http://wyomingworkforce.org/data/epidemiology/coronavirus/>