

HOT SHEET

APPROVED: March 10, 2020, 2 PM

Unemployment Benefits and COVID-19

Am I eligible for unemployment benefits if I have to quarantine or become sick from COVID-19?

Governor Inslee has announced additional protections for workers and employers financially impacted by COVID-19. The new rules with the Washington Employment Security Department (ESD) go into effect March 10, 2020. The rules include more flexibility within the unemployment insurance program to help ensure benefits are available to individuals experiencing temporary layoffs, isolation and quarantine due to COVID-19.

Employer-provided paid time off is the first and best option if a worker needs to miss work due to illness or quarantine. When that is not an option, an Employment Security Department program under the emergency rules may be able to help with partial wage replacement.

According to Governor Inslee's office:

- Workers will be able to receive unemployment benefits and employers will get relief of benefit charges if an employer needs to curtail or shut down operations temporarily because a worker becomes sick and other workers need to be isolated or quarantined as a result of COVID-19.
- A worker that follows guidance issued by a medical or public health official to isolate or quarantine themselves as a result of exposure to COVID-19 and is not receiving paid sick leave from their employer, may be eligible to receive unemployment benefits.

- If a worker falls seriously ill and is forced to quit, they may qualify for Paid Family Medical Leave while ill under the existing program. Once recovered and available for work, they may apply for unemployment benefits.
- The emergency rules remove the full-time requirement and expands standby ability to part time/less than full-time workers who are isolated.

ESD has shared the [following graph for workers](#) to determine their eligibility under these new emergency rules.

Visit esd.wa.gov/newsroom/covid-19 for the latest updates and eligibility from the Washington Employment Security Department.

Link to press release: [Inslee announces support for workers and businesses impacted by COVID-19.](#)