



COVID-19 FAQ's for Building Trades Union Members

The safety of Building Trades members is our top priority. The Minnesota Building and Construction Trades continues to monitor the impacts of the coronavirus and the disease COVID-19 on the Minnesota Construction Industry. We have developed the following questions and answers to help union members better understand their rights during the COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 SPECIFIC UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

My employer offered me work, but I don't feel safe returning to work. Can I choose not to return to work and continue to receive unemployment benefits?

If you do not feel safe at work, contact your union. If your employer offers you work and you are able to return to work, DEED has stated that refusing to return to work may affect your continued eligibility for unemployment benefits. If you refuse an offer to return to work, you must disclose this on your unemployment application. If you feel that your employer is not abiding by CDC and MDH guidance or by a required COVID-19 Preparedness Plan, you can contact OSHA.compliance@state.mn.us.

What if I am unable to return to work for a COVID-19 related reason? Am I eligible for unemployment?

Yes.

- Those who cannot work due to sickness, quarantine, an outbreak at work, school closure, or unavailability of childcare due to COVID-19 are eligible.
- For benefit accounts created after March 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020, the one-week waiting period has been waived.
- Requirements for seeking alternative employment have been waived for health and safety reasons, however, it is recommended that you contact your union to get on the out-of-work list in order to stay eligible for unemployment benefits.

What if I am laid-off or my hours have been drastically reduced because of COVID?

Apply for unemployment through the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) by visit www.UIMN.org.

What changes have been made to unemployment by the Federal CARES Act?

- Weekly unemployment benefits were increased by \$600 per week between March 29, 2020 – July 25, 2020.
- Benefits can be received for an additional 13 weeks beyond what state law typically allows; and
- These enhancements are for unemployment for any reason – not just COVID-19.

How do I get the additional \$600 per week in unemployment benefits under the CARES Act?

- The first week you could get the additional \$600 was the week beginning March 29.
- The last week you could get the additional \$600 was the week of July 25, 2020.

How do I get the additional 13 weeks of Unemployment Insurance under the CARES Act?

- If you have exhausted your unemployment benefits for this benefit year, you may qualify for the 13-week benefit extension.
- ***You will need to complete*** a separate application to receive these supplemental benefits.

I am running out of employment benefits. What should I do?

Contact your union if you have exhausted your regular benefits (26 weeks) and the additional benefits (13 weeks).

Additional resources:

[Minnesota Unemployment Insurance, DEED](#)