

Coronavirus and Unemployment Insurance Benefits

Alabama Department of Labor

Questions and Answers

Question 1: Will workers qualify for unemployment benefits if the coronavirus (COVID-19) causes an employer to shut down operations?

Answer: Alabama unemployment benefits are available to individuals who are unemployed through no fault of their own. If an employer must shut down operations and no work is available, individuals may be eligible for unemployment benefits.

Question 2: If an employer lays off employees due to the loss of production caused by the coronavirus, will the employees be eligible for unemployment insurance benefits?

Answer: Alabama unemployment benefits are available to any individual who is unemployed through no fault of their 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.

Question 3: If an employee receives unemployment benefits as a result of a coronavirus-related business shutdown, will the employer's unemployment taxes increase?

Answer: At this time, no further guidance has been issued. Until such a time, normal procedures will be followed.

Question 4: If an employee receives unemployment benefits as a result of a coronavirus-related business shutdown, can the benefits be charged to the mutual account?

Answer: At this time, no further guidance has been issued. Until such a time, normal procedures will be followed.

Question 5: If an asymptomatic employee 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 be ineligible. However, the facts of each circumstance are important. 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 6: If an employee is in mandatory quarantine because of suspicion of having the coronavirus, will they be eligible for unemployment benefits?

Answer: Yes, they will be eligible. Certain criteria and exceptions may apply, and are subject to change.

Question 7: If an employee is ill because of the coronavirus and unable to work, will they be eligible for unemployment benefits?

Answer: Yes, they will be eligible. Certain criteria and exceptions may apply, and are subject to change.

Question 8: Is the coronavirus considered a disaster, and can I receive Disaster Unemployment Assistance?

Answer: The president of the United States has declared the coronavirus a national disaster, but at this time there has been no Disaster Unemployment Assistance declaration.

Question 9: What types of proof may be required to substantiate a COVID-19 claim?

Answer: Proof of a medical diagnosis from a health care professional for the claimant and/or the immediate family member, and/or confirmation of quarantine by the employer or applicable government entity.

Question 10: What is a partial claim?

Answer: A partial claim is filed when an employee is laid off for a short period, but is expected to be rehired at the same job. For more information regarding partial claims, please visit <https://www.labor.alabama.gov/uc/Partials/uc-partials.aspx#facts>.

Question 11: How long can I receive benefits?

Answer: Generally, up to three weeks, subject to verification.