

DATE: MARCH 17TH, 2020

TOPIC: COVID-19 & UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE - EMPLOYER

SOURCE:  **EMPLOYMENT AND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

<https://mn.gov/deed/newscenter/covid/employers/>

BACKGROUND

At DEED, we know that many Minnesota businesses have taken extraordinary measures to offer telework, paid leave, and other options to their employees during this time of uncertainty. If your workers apply for unemployment benefits, DEED will let you know.

On March 16, 2020, Minnesota Governor Tim Walz issued an executive order to ensure workers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic have full access to unemployment benefits. Governor Walz's executive order also relieves taxpaying employers of benefit charges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. This means that your UI tax rate will not increase if your workers collect unemployment benefits because of COVID-19.

Given the volume of expected applications, DEED is asking for applicants' patience as they ramp up to meet demand in this unprecedented situation.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE INFORMATION FOR EMPLOYERS AFFECTED BY COVID-19

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1. [Workplace Health and Safety](#)

Businesses and employers can visit the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website](#) for help with preparing for and responding to COVID-19.

The U.S. Department of Labor has developed some [guidelines](#) for how companies can prepare their workplace for COVID-19.

For information on protecting workers and slowing the spread of COVID-19, refer to guidance from the [Minnesota Department of Health](#), measures include telling sick workers to stay home, offering remote work options and increasing space between workers on the job.

2. [If you need to reduce workers' hours](#)

Employers experiencing a slowdown in their businesses or services as a result of the coronavirus impact on the economy may apply for the Unemployment Insurance Shared Work Program. This program allows employers to seek an alternative to layoffs - retaining their trained employees by reducing their hours and wages that can be partially offset with UI benefits. Workers of employers who are approved to participate in the Shared Work Program receive the percentage of their weekly UI benefit amount based on the percentage of hours and wages reduced, not to exceed 60 percent. Visit [Shared Work Program](#) to learn more about its benefits for employers and employees, and how to apply.

3. [If you are planning to close your business or lay off a large number of workers](#)

Employers planning a closure or major layoffs as a result of the coronavirus can get help through the Rapid Response program. Rapid Response teams will discuss your needs with you, help avert layoffs if possible, and provide services to assist workers facing job losses. For more information, visit [DEED's Rapid Response](#) page or call 1-866-213-1422.

4. [If you are a small business that needs assistance](#)

DEED will share information about the U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA) Disaster Loan program once the program has been activated. You can contact The SBA's disaster assistance customer service center at 1-800-659-2955 for the latest information.

Itasca Economic Development Corporation will be your local contact for SBA's disaster assistance. They will provide assistance in the loan application and preparation. Please contact Rob Sjostrand at 218-326-9411 or rsjostrand@itascadv.org for more information.

5. [Executive Order 20-04 Businesses](#)

If you are a bar, restaurant or other worker affected by temporary closures under [Executive Order 20-04](#), effective 5 p.m. on March 17.

Businesses ordered to temporarily close include:

- a. Restaurants, food courts, cafes, coffeehouses, and other places of public accommodation offering food or beverage for on-premises consumption. This excludes institutional and in-house food cafeterias for businesses, hospitals, and long-term care facilities;
- b. Bars, taverns, brew pubs, breweries, microbreweries, distilleries, wineries, tasting rooms, clubs, and other places of public accommodation that offer alcoholic beverages for on-premises consumption;
- c. Hookah bars, cigar bars, and vaping lounges offering their products for on-premises consumption;
- d. Theaters, cinemas, museums, and indoor and outdoor performance venues;
- e. Gymnasiums, fitness centers, recreation centers, indoors sports facilities, indoor exercise facilities, exercise studios, and spas;
- f. Places of public amusement, including amusement parks, arcades, bingo halls, bowling alleys, indoor climbing facilities, skating rinks, trampoline parks, and other similar recreational or entertainment facilities;
- g. Places of public accommodation, including the facilities of country clubs, golf clubs, boating or yacht clubs, sports or athletic clubs, and dining clubs.