

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Department of Employment Services



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Federal Government Shutdown Frequently Asked Questions Post-Shutdown Information Regarding Unemployment Compensation *January 28, 2019*

1. When will I receive my unemployment benefit payments for the weeks that I certified, and I was unable to work due to the federal government shutdown?

Under District law, there is a mandatory unpaid one-week waiting period before benefits are paid. For the purposes of unemployment insurance, a week begins on Sunday and ends on Saturday. Your first eligible week will be counted as your waiting period, and no payment will be issued. Benefits will be paid for all subsequent weeks in which you are eligible.

For example, if you filed for unemployment compensation on Sunday, January 6, 2019, then the first week you may be eligible for benefits would be the week ending Saturday, January 12, 2019. This would be your one-week waiting period, and the week ending Saturday, January 19, 2019 would be the first *payable week.

Payments will begin as soon as we receive and process all your wage documentation. The wage documentation is needed to determine monetary eligibility.

*Assuming all other eligibility requirements are met. See [Claimant's Rights and Responsibilities Handbook](#) for more details on eligibility requirements.

2. If I receive retroactive pay (back pay) from my employer, will I be responsible for repaying any unemployment benefit amounts that I received during the federal government shutdown?

Yes, you must repay all unemployment compensation benefits paid to you if you receive retroactive pay (back pay) for the period you were furloughed, and the government was shut down. At this time, the Department of Employment Services (DOES) will begin recovery efforts on February 19, 2019.

3. Why do I have to pay back the unemployment benefits I received during the federal government shutdown?

Federal government employees were eligible for unemployment compensation when the shutdown began on December 22, 2018 January 25, 2019. The approved Government Employee Fair Treatment Act of 2019 includes a provision to provide retroactive pay (back pay) to federal employees who were furloughed during the period of December 22, 2018 to January 25, 2019. Therefore, because federal employees will be paid, they are no longer eligible for unemployment insurance benefits for this period pursuant to D.C. Code §51-101(5), which prevents the payment of benefits and full-time wages during the same period.

However, if you are a contractor, working in a Federal Government agency, and you were furloughed as a result of the shutdown, and you are not being paid retroactively by your contracting employer, then you do not have to pay back the unemployment benefits you received during the period of the shutdown.

4. Will I be given an opportunity to pay back the benefits that I received during the federal government shutdown? If so, when?

Yes. If you received unemployment benefits, you will receive a letter in the mail from DOES with instructions regarding repayment of funds.

5. Will I receive a payment arrangement or will I be required to pay back the money in one lump sum?

DOES will certainly accept payments in one lump sum. However, you will be sent a Notice of Determination of Overpayment and a restitution agreement by mail allowing you to repay your debt within sixty (60) days. Those who have hardships must communicate them to DOES as early as possible. Please be aware that you must keep DOES updated on your status throughout the restitution agreement period in order to receive additional time to repay. However, failure to adhere to the restitution agreement could result in future garnishment of wages, as DOES is legally required to recover these funds.

6. Will I still be required to pay back the unemployment benefits if I am not paid retroactively?

No. Individuals who are not entitled to receive retroactive pay are not overpaid and are therefore not required to pay back unemployment benefits.

7. I filed my claim and did not receive benefits. Now that I have returned to full-time employment, how do I close my claim?

If you have returned to full-time work, please STOP filling your weekly certifications. If you should become unemployed again, please log into your

claimant profile at www.dcnetworks.org or call (202) 724-7000 to reopen your claim.

8. If the federal government shuts down again on February 15, 2019, what should I do?

If you filed a claim for unemployment insurance benefits between December 22, 2018 and January 25, 2019, you should reopen your existing claim and certify for weekly benefits for the duration of the subsequent shutdown.

If you did NOT file a claim for unemployment insurance benefits between December 22, 2018 and January 25, 2019, you should file a new initial claim for benefits online at www.dcnetworks.org or by calling (202) 478-5937.

9. What number should I call for general questions?

You can call (202) 724-7000 to hear updated messages or visit our website at www.does.dc.gov and www.dcnetworks.org.

IMPORTANT: In an effort to avoid overpayments, repayment of unemployment benefits, wage garnishments, deduction of benefits from future claims, the interception of federal and state tax refunds, penalties, loss of future unemployment eligibility and/or legal or civil action, the Department of Employment Services **strongly encourages** previously furloughed workers to report your return to full-time work on your weekly certification and immediately discontinue certifying for benefits.