

# GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Department of Employment Services

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## **Federal Government Shutdown Frequently Asked Questions** Revised-January 16, 2019

### **1. Can I file a new claim while the Federal government is shut down?**

Yes. While the federal government is shut down due to a lapse in federal appropriations for federal government employees, the District government will remain open until further notice. Federal government employees who are furloughed and not reporting to work can go online to [www.dcnetworks.org](http://www.dcnetworks.org) to file for their unemployment compensation benefits. All new initial claims for unemployment compensation are encouraged to file online to avoid the anticipated long wait times over the phone.

### **2. If I am working without pay, may I apply for unemployment insurance benefits?**

Federal workers in the District of Columbia who are currently working full-time but are not being paid during the partial government shutdown, are not eligible for unemployment benefits because they are considered fully employed. Everyone has the right to file an unemployment insurance claim. If you are working without pay, you must still accurately report the hours you worked and the gross wages you expect to receive each week on your weekly claims, regardless of when you get paid. If you are employed part-time, you may be eligible for some unemployment benefits depending on the amount of your gross earnings.

### **3. I am a federal contractor that is affected by the federal shutdown. Should I file for unemployment benefits?**

If you work for a company that is contracted by the US government, you are not considered a federal employee. However, if your company furloughs you during the shutdown, you may be eligible for unemployment benefits if you have enough wages in your base period from your employer.

### **4. Will furloughed workers who receive unemployment benefits be required to pay them back if they receive retroactive pay?**

Yes. If workers receive retroactive pay from an employer, they will be required to pay back unemployment benefits. This would occur when the retroactive pay is awarded.

**5. Should I continue to certify my weekly claim?**

Yes. Individuals who are currently receiving unemployment compensation benefits should continue to certify for their weekly claims. Claimants will only be able to file their weekly continued claim forms online at [www.dcnetworks.org](http://www.dcnetworks.org) or telephonically using the automated interactive voice response (IVR) system at 202-478-5937.

**6. If I make a mistake while filing for my weekly benefits, will I still receive my unemployment compensation benefits?**

We strongly encourage claimants to answer all questions carefully and to review all answers before submitting weekly claim forms online thoroughly. If filing weekly certifications telephonically, we encourage claimants to listen carefully when responding to the automatic prompts. Mistakes will delay your payments until the assigned claims examiner can address individual issues. During this period of the federal government shutdown, we anticipate an increased call volume, which will also impact the delayed wait for assistance with processing claims.

**7. If I certify on Sunday, when will I receive my payment?**

All banks will be open during the Federal government shutdown. During this time, DOES will make every effort to process claims in an expedited manner. However, the anticipated exponential increase in the number of new claims filed could cause a slight delay in the processing of claims. While your benefits normally will be deposited in your bank account during the week following your certification, given the circumstances, we cannot guarantee any specific day of your deposit or that you will not experience some delay in payment.

**8. What is the one-week waiting period?**

Under District law, there is a one-week waiting period before benefits are paid. The waiting period is the first week for which you would otherwise be eligible. Generally, this is the first week of your claim. No payment is made for the waiting period. For the purposes of unemployment insurance, a week begins on Sunday and ends on Saturday.

**9. As a Federal government employee, does the one-week waiting period apply to me?**

Yes. The one-week waiting period applies to all claimants filing for unemployment compensation benefits.

**10. When can I realistically expect to receive my first unemployment compensation check?**

The first suggested day you can file an unemployment compensation claim is December 23, 2018. The week ending Saturday, December 29, 2018 would be the one-week waiting period week and the week ending Saturday, January 5, 2019 would be the first payable week.

**Please note:** If you choose to file your claim on December 22, 2018, all wages earned during the week of December 16, 2018 through December 22, 2018 must be reported and may prevent this week from serving as your waiting period week. If there are no wages reported for the previous week, the week ending Saturday, December 29, 2018 would be the first payable week.

**11. How long does it take to approve my unemployment compensation application?**

The District is required to process unemployment claims within 21\* days. Receiving the required information outlined below may allow for DOES to process claims more expeditiously. However, the high demand may cause delays during these uncertain times. Please assist us with the processing of your application by providing one of the options listed below.

Please provide the **required** documentation to assist us in the review of your claim:

- 2017 W-2
- Five (5) of your most recent paystubs

If available, the below documentation is also used to assist us in the timely processing of your claim:

- Standard Form 8
- Standard Form 50

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

**12. As a furloughed employee, what type of paperwork can I expect to receive after I file my initial claim for unemployment insurance benefits?**

Please be aware that all furloughed federal government employees who file an unemployment insurance benefits claim will likely receive an automated Monetary Determination Notice through the US mail after filing. This initial determination will state that you are Monetarily Ineligible to receive benefits. Normally, we can obtain the specific information needed from the federal payroll

offices, but many are closed until the shutdown ends. Instead, after you apply for your unemployment insurance benefits, you will be emailed an “Affidavit of Federal Civilian Service Wages and Reason for Separation” form. You will need to return this form along with the following:

- Your 2017 W2
- Five (5) of your most recent pay stubs.
- SF-8 or SF-50 forms, if available.

Please email the documents to [poe.does@dc.gov](mailto:poe.does@dc.gov) or fax them to (202) 724-1348.

**13. How do I provide my Standard Form-50 and Standard Form-8 if I do not have them at the time I submit my application?**

You can submit your SF-50 and SF-8 via email to [poe.does@dc.gov](mailto:poe.does@dc.gov) or via fax to (202) 724-1348.

**14. Are my Standard Form 8 and Standard Form 50 required?**

The SF-50 and SF-8 determine the employing federal agency, as well as your duty station.

**15. How do I determine my duty station?**

When reviewing your SF-50, please refer to your duty station listed on line 39. If you worked in the United States and line 39 does not state Washington, District of Columbia, please file a claim with the state referenced on line 39.

**16. If I work internationally for the federal government, where should I file a claim for unemployment benefits?**

If you worked internationally, you should file an unemployment claim with your state of residency within the United States. Links to all State Workforce Agencies can be found using the following link: [www.servicelocator.org/OWSLinks.asp](http://www.servicelocator.org/OWSLinks.asp)

**17. How do I determine what employing agency to list on the initial claim application?**

On your SF-50, please refer to line 49, which will state the employing department or agency.

**18. What if I don't know my 3-digit agency code?**

Click the following link to find your 3-digit agency code:  
[www.dol.gov/dol/shutdown/FIC\\_chart.pdf](http://www.dol.gov/dol/shutdown/FIC_chart.pdf)

**19. As a furloughed Federal employee, will I be required to look for work if I file for UI benefits?**

Effective as of December 22, 2018, furloughed federal employees and federal contractor employees will not be required to obtain job search contacts if they file for unemployment benefits in the District of Columbia during the federal government shutdown period.

**20. What number should I call for general questions?**

Updates will be posted on our website at [www.does.dc.gov](http://www.does.dc.gov) and [www.dcnetworks.org](http://www.dcnetworks.org), or you may call the Customer Navigation Center at (202) 478-5937.

**21. If I worked for the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), will I qualify for unemployment benefits in the District?**

No. For unemployment insurance purposes, there are no airports within Washington, D.C. to employ TSA workers. If you performed work for Ronald Reagan National Airport, please contact the State of Virginia to file an unemployment claim. Links to the Virginia Employment Commission can be found at [www.vec.virginia.gov/unemployed](http://www.vec.virginia.gov/unemployed).

**22. If I worked for the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), can I file a claim for unemployment benefits?**

Yes. In regards to the CIA, workers of the Agency must file a claim with the District of Columbia rather than the State of Virginia to qualify for unemployment benefits.