

COVID-19 WASHINGTON STATE EMPLOYEE BENEFITS AND PROGRAMS

PAID SICK LEAVE – This is the first and best option for employees who need to miss work due to illness, or if the employee is quarantined due to being exposed or a government shutdown. This is an employer paid sick leave in which an employee earns one paid hour of paid sick leave for every 40 hours worked. If an employee did not use all of the paid sick leave earned by the end of 2019, the balance not to exceed 40 hours is carried over to 2020. An employee is paid the same for a sick leave hour as a regular work hour.

PAID FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE – When the Paid Sick Leave is not available, Paid Family and Medical Leave may be available. This is a new benefit in 2020 in which the employee can file a claim with the Employment Security Department for up to 90 percent of their weekly pay – up to a maximum of \$1,000 a week. This benefit is available when an employee is ill with COVID-19 or is caring for a sick family member.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE – Emergency rules were enacted to support employees and employers affected by COVID-19. Employees who have been quarantined, or whose employers have shut down or slowed down due to a government mandated quarantine or lack of demand are able to apply for benefits. The one week waiting period has been removed.

If employees are laid off work temporarily or if hours are reduced, they may be able to go on Standby and receive unemployment benefits. Standby means the employee does not have to look for another job while collecting benefits. Emergency rules allow employees up to 12 weeks of standby.

INDUSTRIAL INSURANCE (LABOR AND INDUSTRIES) – Under certain circumstances, claims from health care providers and first responders involving COVID-19 may be allowed. Other claims that meet certain criteria for exposure will be considered on a case-by-case basis. In most cases, exposure and/or contraction of COVID-19 is **not** considered to be an allowable, work-related condition.

For further information, please refer to this website, which has a link to COVID-19 programs and a comparison guide listing the above benefits and how they may apply to the most common COVID-19 scenarios. <https://esd.wa.gov/>

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