Pressroom

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Governor Bullock Announces Emergency Rules to Streamline Unemployment Benefits for Workers Impacted by COVID-19

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Governor Steve Bullock today announced emergency rules to make unemployment benefits accessible to workers laid off due to COVID-19 and waive the typical one week waiting period before receiving benefits.

“The rules we’ve implemented today will ensure that workers impacted by COVID-19, whether it’s because they’ve been laid off, are quarantined, or need to take care of a family member, can do so without worrying about how they will make ends meet during these difficult times,” Governor Bullock said. **“We will continue to do everything we can to support workers and businesses as we begin to fully understand the impacts of COVID-19 in Montana.”**

The United States Department of Labor approved a request from the Montana Department of Labor & Industry to support workers financially impacted by COVID-19. The rules filed today with the Secretary of State’s office will go into effect immediately.

The rules allow a claimant directed by their employer to leave work or not report to work due to COVID-19 to qualify as being temporarily laid off by the employer and eligible for benefits. Workers who must quarantine or who need to take care of a family member due to COVID-19 are also considered temporarily laid off and eligible for benefits.

Additionally, the emergency rules allow DLI to waive the one week waiting period before typically receiving benefits to ensure Montanans don’t experience a long gap without a paycheck.

Montana employers will also receive help through these rules. Individual claims will not be chargeable to a specific employer’s account. The rules also include a provision that could extend the time employers have to file wage reports and pay unemployment insurance contributions if the delay is related to COVID-19.

Claimants are responsible for staying in contact with their employer and return to work when they have the opportunity. Claimants are not eligible for benefits if they could work from home but choose not to.

People who think they are eligible for these benefits can apply for benefits online at: montanaworks.gov or contact the Unemployment Insurance Division over the phone at for UI benefits online or over the phone at: (406) 444-2545.

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Office of Governor Steve Bullock

OFFICE OF GOVERNOR
STEVE BULLOCK

Site Maintenance

Office of the Governor
PO Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620-0801
Toll Free: 855-318-1330
Phone: 406-444-3111
FAX: 406-444-5529

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