

How to Apply for UI (Unemployment Benefits) Transcript

Welcome to one of the biggest programs at the California Employment Development Dept. I'm Loree Levy, a Deputy Director here at EDD. If you are looking to apply for Unemployment Insurance benefits in California, you're in the right place...and we're here to help you.

This is one of six call centers throughout California that helps you receive your important benefits. When you place a call or push the send button on your computer to file an Unemployment Insurance claim, this is where it goes.

Unemployment is a stressful time and the process of filing for unemployment benefits can often seem a bit daunting. In fact, during this recession demand for unemployment services is at an all-time high. We are currently getting far more calls than we ever typically receive.

So in this video, we've summarized the most important information you'll need to know and we put it on a "Checklist." Using this "Checklist" will help make your experience as easy as possible...and help us better serve you.

If your job has ended or your employer has cut back your work hours (through no fault of your own), you may be eligible to collect unemployment benefits to help you get by while you look for a new job.

To collect these benefits, you must:

- have worked and received enough wages during the last year and a half;
- be able, available, and looking for work; and
- meet these requirements each week you collect benefits.

How much you can earn in benefits depends on how much you earned in wages over the course of a 12-month period...we call it the base wage period. The weekly benefit ranges from \$40 to \$450 a week, with an extra \$25 a week added on right now thanks to the federal stimulus package.

There are basically three ways to file for unemployment benefits.

- First: You can phone in to a call center like this one,
- Second: You can visit our Web site and apply online, or
- Third: Print out a hardcopy of the application or fill it in on the computer, and mail it or fax it back to us.

But applying online is the fastest and easiest way to file a claim. A vast majority of unemployed workers should be able to use this option.

Now remember the “Checklist” we talked about? The first thing we’d like you to do (if you haven’t already done so) is to print it out so you can follow this video and make any notes you might need. Look for the icon on your computer screen that says “Checklist.” Click and print.

Providing us with the information on the “Checklist” gives us the details we need to know about your job separation and your earnings so we can determine your eligibility.

In order to make filing for benefits as fast and easy as possible, please take the time to collect all of the information on the “Checklist” before sitting down at the computer or picking up the phone to file a claim.

Now at the top of the “Checklist” there’s a friendly reminder: It says to apply for unemployment benefits immediately when your job has ended or your employer has cut back your work hours. That’s because the start date of your claim is based on when you file, not when the job ended. Claims start on the Sunday of the week in which you apply.

The rest of the “Checklist” is divided into two sections...information about you, **the claimant**, and information about **your employer**.

CLAIMANT (your) INFORMATION

Let’s start with your information:

- First, we’ll need your Social Security Number.
- Then we need your name including all other complete names you may have used in the course of work in the last year-and-a-half like nicknames, initials, or maiden names.
- We’ll need your mailing address.
- ...and your telephone number.
- Next, we’ll need your driver’s license or ID card number.
- If you are not a citizen, we’ll need your alien registration number and expiration date.
- And, if you’ve served in the military or worked for the federal government in the last 18 months, we’ll need some specific documents from you relating to your employer. You can find details on our Web site.

EMPLOYER (their) INFORMATION

Regarding your last employer, we need the name of the company that you worked for most recently. If you worked today, you should indicate the name of the company that you worked for today even if it was a temporary or part-time employer.

- The last employer's name you should use is the name as it appears on your pay check stub or W-2 form. This could be a payroll or staffing agency.
- We're also going to need your last employer's complete mailing address, including zip code.
- Their phone number.
- And the name of your last supervisor.
- ...as well as the reason you are no longer working for that employer or, are working reduced hours.

Finally, if you had more than one employer during the last 18 months, we'll also need information about that employment history. Providing this information will help you avoid delays with your claim.

- It includes the names of ALL employers you worked for as they appear on your pay check stub or W-2 Form.
- You will also need to know the start and end dates of each period of employment in the last 18-month period.
- And, it's important to report the GROSS earnings you were paid by those employers, how you were paid, for instance, hourly, weekly, or monthly, and any additional payments you received, or are expected to receive, from your last employer like holiday pay or severance pay.

Having all of this information readily available will help make applying for your benefits much easier. After you file, please allow 10 days for processing. You should receive some items in the mail including:

- An unemployment insurance handbook that provides a great deal of helpful information about unemployment benefits, your rights, and responsibilities.
- A verification of the details you're reporting to us.
- The benefit amount you could be eligible for.

- And, if there are any eligibility issues associated with your claim, you will also receive a notice of a scheduled phone interview so we can get some further information from you.

If by any chance you don't receive anything in the mail from EDD within 10 days of filing your application, please contact us. You can call one of our call centers through the toll-free phone number at 1-800-300-5616 or you can visit our Web site at www.edd.ca.gov and submit an online inquiry through the "Contact EDD" feature on the front page.

Look on our Web site for access to other educational videos, as well as tip sheets to help you properly complete your bi-weekly claim form and access your check information by telephone.

We hope this checklist and the other information we've given you will make your experience of applying for unemployment insurance benefits as easy as possible.

At EDD...we're here to help.