

Federal Government Shutdown FAQs

Q: Can I file a new claim while the Federal government is shutdown?

A: **Yes, you can. While the federal government is shut down due to a lapse in federal appropriations on federal government employees, the District government will remain open until further notice. Federal government employees who are furloughed can go online to www.ui.dc.gov to file for their Unemployment Compensation benefits. Residents who are eligible to file new unemployment claims with the District of Columbia may also file for their Unemployment Compensation benefits, as well. All first time applications for Unemployment Compensation benefits MUST be filed online and will ONLY be accepted online.**

Q: Should I continue to certify my weekly claim?

A: **Yes. Individuals who are currently receiving unemployment insurance benefits should continue to certify their weekly claims. Claimants will only be able to file their continued weekly claim online or over the telephone using the automated interactive voice response (IVR) system at 202-724-7000. Claimants currently receiving unemployment insurance benefits will not be able to mail in their weekly claim forms.**

Q: If I make a mistake while filing for my weekly benefits, will I still receive my unemployment compensation benefits?

A: **We strongly encourage claimants to answer all questions carefully, to thoroughly review answers before submitting weekly claim forms online, and to listen carefully when responding to the telephone automatic prompts, if filing weekly certifications via the telephone. Mistakes will delay your payments until the staff is able to address individual issues. During this period of the federal government shutdown, limited staff will be available to assist with the overall operations of processing claims. With an estimated 205,000 federal government employees filing new unemployment claims, combined with the current level of unemployment insurance claims in the system, we will not be able to thoroughly review new submissions and respond in a timely manner to individual claimants who have mistakes/issues with their claims.**

Q: If I certify on Sunday, when will I receive my payment?

A: **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 during the week following your certification, given the circumstances, we cannot guarantee any specific day of your deposit nor that you won't experience some delay in payment.**

Q: What is the one-week waiting period?

A: 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.

Q: As a Federal government employee, does the one-week waiting period apply to me?

A: Yes it does.

Q: When can I realistically expect to receive my first unemployment compensation check?

A: The first day you can file for an unemployment compensation claim is Tuesday, October 1, 2013. The week ending Saturday, October 5, 2013 would be the one-week waiting period week; however, any wages earned during the period of September 29, 2013 through October 5, 2013 may prevent this week from serving as your waiting week. Absent any wages from the previous week, the week ending Saturday, October 12, 2013 would be the first payable week.

If you earned ANY wages from Sunday, September 29, 2013 through Saturday, October 5, 2013, the week ending Saturday, October 12, 2013 would be the one-week waiting period week and the week ending Saturday, October 18, 2013 would be the first payable week.

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

To date, DOES has received at least 12 times the normal volume of unemployment claims since October 1, 2013 when the partial federal government shutdown began. The number of unemployment claims filed is expected to increase even further the longer the shutdown continues. DOES has planned for the increase in demand through technological and program enhancements and by increasing resources.

Processing these claims as quickly and effectively as possible depends mainly on two things*:

- (1) Ensuring the employee is filing in the jurisdiction where he/she physically works (your physical duty station), AND
- (2) How quickly DOES receives accurate wage information from the employee's Standard Form 50, Standard Form 8, pay stubs, W-2s, or other wage documentation.

Please be aware that you must submit an ORIGINAL COPY of your SF-50 or SF-8 Form with your application. Submitting anything other than your ORIGINAL SF-50 or SF-8 Form will cause a delay in processing your claim, as all SF-50 and SF-8 Forms will be verified for authenticity. If you do not have an original copy of your SF-50 or SF-8 Form, you will be required to provide additional wage documentation (such as pay stubs, W2s, etc.), accompanied by a [Wage Affidavit](#) or Form 935, in order to determine monetary eligibility.

By law, the District is required to process unemployment claims within 21 days. Receiving the required information outlined above may allow for DOES to process claims more expeditiously than this prescribed timeline. However, the extreme and unusually high demand may cause delays during these uncertain times.

*Assuming all other eligibility requirements are met. See Claimant Handbook for more details on eligibility requirements:
<http://does.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/does/publication/attachments/UI%20Book.pdf>

Q: As a furloughed Federal employee, will I be required to look for work if I file for UI benefits:

A: While on furlough, an individual remains an employee of the Federal Government. Therefore, executive branch-wide standards of ethical conduct and rules regarding outside employment continue to apply when an individual is furloughed (specifically, the executive branch-wide standards of ethical conduct (the standards), at 5 CFR part 2635). Furloughed federal employees will not be required to obtain job search contacts if they file for unemployment benefits in the District of Columbia.

Q: What number should I call for general questions?

A: Updates will be posted on our Web site at www.does.dc.gov and www.ui.dc.gov. You can also call 202-724-7000 to hear updated messages. Please be aware that due to the anticipated high call volume and long wait times related to questions regarding the impact of the federal government shutdown on current UI claimants, federal employees who are furloughed during this time, as well as unemployment insurance benefits, in general, customers may be unable to speak directly with customer service representatives by phone.

Q: Will I receive my weekly benefits despite the Federal government shutdown?

A: Yes, you will. Notwithstanding, the waiting week, you will receive benefits until you return to work or your claim expires or you have fully exhausted all of your eligible benefits.

Q: Will furloughed workers who receive benefits be required to pay them back if they receive retroactive pay?

A: 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.