

Federal Government Shutdown FAQs

Post-Shutdown Information Regarding Unemployment Compensation

Q. Will I receive my benefits for the period of time when I was furloughed and the government was shut down?

A: No. Due to the end of the lapse of federal funds, all affected federal employees have returned to work. As a result, the Department of Employment Services will no longer process or accept unemployment insurance claims for previously furloughed federal employees. In order for you to avoid an overpayment of unemployment insurance benefits and any subsequent penalties (such as repaying of benefits with penalties or loss of future eligibility), we will not process your claim.

Q. When will I receive my benefit payments for the weeks that I certified and I was unable to work due to the shutdown?

A: The Department of Employment Services will no longer process unemployment insurance claims for previously furloughed federal employees. Since you will be receiving back pay for the period of the furlough as well as wages from work beginning October 17, you will not receive benefit payments.

Q. Why was I told that I was eligible and am now being told that I am not eligible to receive benefits?

A: Since the federal furlough has ended and you are no longer unemployed, you are not eligible to receive unemployment benefits.

Q. Will I be responsible for repaying any benefit amounts that I received during the shutdown?

A: Yes. All unemployment benefits paid to you must be paid back. You will receive retroactive pay (back pay) for the period of the furlough.

Q. Why do I have to pay back these unemployment benefits?

A: Federally furloughed employees during the shutdown were eligible for unemployment when the shutdown began. The approved Congressional Continuing Resolution (CR) to fund regular government operations through January 15, 2014 includes a provision that provides back pay for federally furloughed employees during this period (October 1 – October 17). Therefore, because workers will be paid, they are no longer eligible for unemployment insurance for this period and any benefits paid during this period must be paid back.

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 for the period of the furlough, they will be required to pay back unemployment benefits. This will occur when the retroactive pay is awarded.

Q. Will I be given an opportunity to pay back the benefits that I received during the shutdown? If so, when?

A: Yes. If you received unemployment benefits you will receive a letter in the mail with further instructions.

Q. Will I receive a payment arrangement or will I be required to pay back the money in one lump sum?

A: DOES will certainly accept payments in one lump sum. You will receive a restitution agreement by mail to repay within sixty (60) days. Those who have hardships must communicate them to DOES as early as possible and throughout the restitution agreement period in order to receive additional time to repay. However, failure to adhere to restitution agreements could result in future garnishment of wages, as DOES is legally required to recover these funds.

Q. I received a payment from DOES but I want to pay it back now to avoid having to pay if back later, how can I do that?

A: Send a check or money order in the amount of the payment to: *Department of Employment Services, Benefit Control Branch, 4058 Minnesota Avenue, Suite 3100 Washington, DC 20019*. In the memo section of the payment, please include the claimant's full name and last four digits of the social security number. Once the check is received and processed, an automated receipt will be mailed to the claimant's address on file within a week.

Q. When will I receive the retroactive pay?

A: The date you will receive retroactive pay is determined by your employer.

Q. What if I am not paid retroactively? Will I still be required to pay back the unemployment benefits?

A: No. Individuals who do not receive retroactive pay are not required to pay back unemployment benefits.

Q. What number should I call for general questions?

A: Updates will be posted on our website 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 were previously 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.