

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Department of Employment Services

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Federal Government Shutdown Frequently Asked Questions January 19, 2018

1. Can I file a new claim while the Federal government is shutdown?

Yes. While the federal government is shut down due to a lapse in federal appropriations for federal government employees, the District government will remain open until further notice. Federal government employees who are furloughed can go online to www.dcnetworks.org to file for their unemployment compensation benefits. All new initial claims for unemployment compensation are encouraged to file online to avoid the anticipated long wait times over the phone.

2. Will furloughed workers who receive unemployment benefits be required to pay them back if they receive retroactive pay?

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.

3. Should I continue to certify my weekly claim?

Yes. Individuals who are currently receiving unemployment compensation benefits should continue to certify for their weekly claims. Claimants will only be able to file their continued weekly claims online at www.dcnetworks.org or telephonically using the automated interactive voice response (IVR) system at 202-478-5937.

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

We strongly encourage claimants to answer all questions carefully and to thoroughly review all answers before submitting weekly claim forms online. If filing weekly certifications telephonically, we encourage claimants to listen carefully when responding to the automatic prompts. Mistakes will delay your payments until the assigned claims examiner is able to address individual issues. During this period of the federal government shutdown, we anticipate an increased call volume, which will also impact the delayed wait for assistance with processing claims.

With an estimated 205,000 federal government employees filing new unemployment claims, combined with the current level of unemployment compensation 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.

5. If I certify on Sunday, when will I receive my payment?

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 account during the week following your certification, given the circumstances, we cannot guarantee any specific day of your deposit or that you will not experience some delay in payment.

6. What is the one-week waiting period?

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. For the purposes of unemployment insurance, a week begins on Sunday and ends on Saturday.

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

Yes. The one-week waiting period applies to all claimants filing for unemployment compensation benefits.

8. When can I realistically expect to receive my first unemployment compensation check?

The first suggested day you can file an unemployment compensation claim is January 21, 2018. The week ending Saturday, January 27, 2018 would be the one-week waiting period week and the week ending Saturday, February 3, 2018 would be the first payable week.

Please note: If you choose to file your claim on January 19, 2018 or January 20, 2018, all wages earned during the week of January 14, 2018 through January 20, 2018 must be reported and may prevent this week from serving as your waiting period week. Absent any wages from the previous week, the week ending Saturday, January 27, 2018 would be the first payable week.

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

DOES expects to receive at least 12 times the normal volume of unemployment claims after January 19, 2018 when the federal government shutdown begins. 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 primarily on two things*:

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

Please be aware that you must submit a copy of your SF-50 and SF-8 with your application, if available. In addition to your SF-50 or SF-8, you will be required to provide additional wage documentation (such as your last two pay stubs and your W-2s), accompanied by a Wage Affidavit or Form 193-Monetary Redetermination, in order to determine monetary eligibility.

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's Rights and Responsibilities Handbook](#) for more details on eligibility requirements.

10. How do I provide my Standard Form-50 and Standard Form-8 if I do not have them at the time I submit my application?

You can submit your SF-50 and SF-8 via email to initial.fed@dc.gov or via fax to (202) 724-7479.

11. Why do I have to provide my Standard Form-50 and Standard Form-8?

The SF-50 and SF-8 is required to determine the employing federal agency, as well as your duty station.

12. How do I determine my duty station?

When reviewing your SF-50, please refer to line 39. If you worked in the United States and line 39 does not state Washington, District of Columbia, please file a claim with the state referenced on line 39.

13. If I work internationally for the federal government, where should I file a claim for unemployment benefits?

If you worked internationally, you should file an unemployment claim with your state of residency within the United States. Links to all State Workforce Agencies can be found using the following link: www.servicelocator.org/OWSLinks.asp

14. How do I determine what employing agency to list on the initial claim application?

On your SF-50, please refer to line 49, which will state the employing department or agency.

15. What if I don't know my 3-digit agency code?

Click the following link to find your 3-digit agency code:
www.dol.gov/dol/shutdown/FIC_chart.pdf

16. As a furloughed Federal employee, will I be required to look for work if I file for UI benefits?

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 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.

17. What number should I call for general questions?

Updates will be posted on our website at www.does.dc.gov and www.dcnetworks.org, or you may call the Customer Navigation Center at (202) 478-5937. 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 all other unemployment insurance benefits customers, in general, may be unable to speak directly with customer service representatives by phone.

18.If I worked for the Pentagon, will I qualify for unemployment benefits in the District?

No. For unemployment insurance purposes, the Pentagon is located in Arlington, VA. If you worked at the Pentagon, please contact the State of Virginia to file an unemployment claim using the following link:
www.vec.virginia.gov/unemployed.

19.If I worked for the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), will I qualify for unemployment benefits in the District?

No. For unemployment insurance purposes, there are no airports within Washington, D.C. to employ TSA workers. If you performed work for Ronald Reagan National Airport, please contact the State of Virginia to file an unemployment claim. Links to the Virginia Employment Commission can be found at www.vec.virginia.gov/unemployed.

20. If I worked for the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), can I file a claim for unemployment benefits?

Yes. In regards to the CIA, workers of the Agency must file a claim with the District of Columbia rather than the State of Virginia to qualify for unemployment benefits.