

Staff Furloughs Q&A

Schedules and General Information	Unemployment Programs	Wages and benefits
<p>What is the schedule for furlough days?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thursday, July 2, 2020 • Friday, July 10, 2020 • Friday, July 17, 2020 • Friday, July 24, 2020 • One day in August 2020 (to be determined) • One day in September 2020 (to be determined) • One day in October 2020 (to be determined) • One day in November 2020 (to be determined) 	<p>Who is eligible for unemployment benefits?</p> <p>All permanent employees or those on their way to becoming permanent employees (in a probationary or WMS Review period) will be eligible to apply for unemployment benefits through the Employment Security Department (ESD). Part-time employees are also eligible for unemployment benefits.</p> <p>Unfortunately, non-permanent employees are not eligible for Shared Work benefits. Human Resources will work directly with our non-permanent employees.</p>	<p>Will state employee receive wage increases?</p> <p>Most state employees are scheduled to receive a 3% general wage increase on July 1, 2020, as approved by the Legislature last year. Governor Inslee's directive 20-08 canceled pay raises for agency directors, all employees in Exempt positions and Washington Management Service employees.</p>
<p>“The furlough plan exempts those in critical positions for which the state would have to bring in relief help to cover for a furloughed employee.” How do they define critical positions?</p> <p>The operative word in this statement is “relief”. DOL does not have relief positions.</p> <p>In essence, a relief position is a position for which a replacement worker (the relief) must be brought in as coverage if the incumbent employee calls in sick. It cannot be left vacant due to statutory or regulatory staffing requirements.</p> <p>Agencies may exempt additional employees from furloughs if the employees are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioned officers with WSP, • Working under a federal work authorization where a furlough would jeopardize their eligibility to work, • ESD employees working on unemployment claims, • Working in direct response to the pandemic at MIL and DOH including those directly involved in seeking FEMA reimbursements, and, • Providing direct protective services to children and vulnerable populations where a furlough would likely result in significant public safety concerns. 	<p>I’m hearing a lot about unemployment insurance, the Shared Work program and the CARES Act. What is the difference?</p> <p>The Employment Security Department (ESD) is the state agency responsible for unemployment insurance in Washington State. ESD handles unemployment claims for all employers and workers in Washington State.</p> <p>Regular unemployment insurance is available when an employee is laid off from work. This means the employment relationship is severed and the previous employee can access unemployment insurance for a specific period of time while they are looking for other work.</p> <p>Shared Work is a program offered by ESD to employers who do not have full-time work for their employees, but they likely will in the future. Workers stay employees of the agency, and they do not need to look for other work opportunities. An employee can be paid up to 50% by the employer and 50% wage replacement benefits (not full pay) through ESD's Shared Work program.</p> <p>The CARES Act is a federal benefit in response to COVID-19. The CARES Act offers a \$600 weekly benefit through July 25, 2020. In Washington State, CARES is administered through a Shared Work eligible employer.</p> <p>When you apply for Shared Work benefits through ESD, you are automatically applying for the CARES Act benefit as well. You do not need to apply separately.</p> <p>Please note, you may only receive one CARES benefit. If you have multiple employers, you will only receive the CARES \$600 once.</p>	<p>Will the furlough hours count as hours worked for retirement credit calculations?</p> <p>See below:</p> <p>PERS 2 and 3: You must receive compensation for 90 hours in a month, in a retirement eligible position, to receive one full month of retirement service credit. You must receive compensation for 70 hours to receive a half month's service credit and if you receive compensation for less than 70 hours but more than zero hours you will receive a quarter month's credit.</p> <p>PERS 1: You must receive compensation for 70 hours in a month, in a retirement eligible position, to receive one full month of retirement service credit. If you receive compensation for less than 70 hours but more than zero hours you will receive a quarter month's credit.</p> <p>The amount of service credit you earn per month may be impacted if you have a reduction in work hours or you are on temporary layoff/furlough.</p> <p>For other questions regarding your retirement accounts, including eligibility for withdrawals, visit the Department of Retirement Systems' website: https://www.drswa.gov/coronavirus/ or for specific questions call (360) 664-7000 or (800) 547-6657.</p>
<p>Can I select my furlough days?</p> <p>Not for July furloughs. For operational and support needs, it was better for us to shutter the agency one day a week rather than stagger shifts and back-office support for employees. We will try and be more flexible for the one furlough day per month after July. The agency has designated specific furlough days during the month of July and will be closing these days, including our Licensing Services Offices (LSOs).</p>	<p>There is a requirement to apply before July 1st in order to get Shared Work benefits. Our first furlough day is on July 2. Will I be eligible for unemployment?</p> <p>This means that <u>the employer</u> must apply to be part of the Shared Work program in order for our employees to be eligible to access it. DOL applied to use the Shared Work Program and ESD has given us a Shared Work effective date of June 28. The agency has met the deadline so our employees will be eligible.</p>	<p>I am overtime exempt and represented by a union. Will I get the 3% raise in July?</p> <p>Yes. The Exempt status referred to means positions that are Exempt from civil service rules. These are the Director and Deputy Director, and most Assistant Directors, Deputy Assistant Directors, Administrators and Special Assistants to Assistant Directors.</p>
<p>How does this impact my flex schedule?</p> <p>All staff will be placed on a five-day, 8-hour schedule between June 28 and July 31, 2020. This is to ensure that only 8 hours are deducted on a furlough day. Flexible hours for the 8-hour days will continue to be available, if business needs allow. Work with your supervisor to flex your work schedule during July – you do not need to submit a schedule change request.</p>	<p>If an employee was recently hired and has not worked at least 680 hours for their employer, will they still be eligible to receive the \$600 per week additional CARES Act benefit when they take the furloughs?</p> <p>If an employee has worked for the state for less than 680 hours, but was previously employed elsewhere—even in another state—they may still be eligible for the CARES Act benefit. The application for unemployment benefits asks the employee about work in other states, previous federal employment and recent military service, any of which could combine with Washington wages to achieve the 680 hours.</p>	<p>I am Y rated, will I get the 3% general wage increase?</p> <p>No, unless your salary falls within the salary range assigned for your position. Please reach out to your Division Consultant in HR if you have further questions.</p>

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<p>For employees on a Friday-flex schedule, will this Friday, June 26, still be a flex day?</p> <p>If Friday is your regular flex Friday off, yes. Eight hour days will start on Monday, June 29th.</p>	<p>If an employee lives in another state, will they qualify for these benefits?</p> <p>Yes, because the employer is in Washington State.</p>	<p>Are temporary employees subject to furloughs?</p> <p>Yes. While temporary employees are not eligible for the Shared Work Program, they will still be required to take the furloughs. HR will contact these employees directly.</p>
<p>Can I take the furlough days required through November up front all in a row and be done with it?</p> <p>No. The directive requires that at least one furlough day per week be taken between June 28 and July 25. Beyond that, although combining some anticipated furlough days may be feasible from an operational perspective for an employer, the Shared Work Program provides benefits only to employees that experience a 10-50% reduction in hours in a particular week.</p>	<p>What happens after the CARES Act expires on July 25? Will I still be eligible for unemployment benefits?</p> <p>Yes, you will still be eligible to file for Shared Work benefits with ESD for the one furlough day per month in August, September, October, and November.</p> <p>It is important to know that the ESD Shared Work benefit is a portion of your regular wages, it will not fully replace the 20% salary reduction from the furlough. You may want to plan ahead for furlough reduced pay checks in upcoming months.</p>	<p>What will the hourly wage impact be to my salary/paycheck?</p> <p>This depends on each person's hourly wage. Essentially you will see a 20% reduction in pay from DOL, but will receive offsets from Employment Security benefits through the Shared Work Program, and the additional \$600 weekly benefit from the federal CARES Act through July 25, 2020.</p>
<p>I am a part-time employee, do I have to take a full furlough day?</p> <p>Part-time employees also need to reduce their hours by 20% in a furlough week. Example: If a part-time employee works 20 hours per week, then they will need to reduce their work schedule by four hours. HR will work directly with part-time employees and their supervisors to assist.</p>	<p>If someone is receiving a pension, will they still be eligible to receive the Shared Work benefit?</p> <p>Maybe. This will be situation specific to the employee receiving the pension. It will depend on when they started receiving the pension and other factors. ESD will make the determination on eligibility when you submit your unemployment claim.</p>	<p>Will employees be approved for overtime during a furlough week?</p> <p>No.</p>
<p>What if I'm required to work on a furlough day in order to meet a deadline?</p> <p>Employees may not work more than 32 hours in a furlough week, and are not expected to do their 40 hour per week job in fewer hours. Deadlines and expectations should be adjusted accordingly.</p>	<p>Can I create an unemployment profile now?</p> <p>If you already have SAW access, you can create a profile through there, but you cannot claim anything yet.</p>	<p>They mentioned a pay cap of \$53,000 annually pertaining to the 3% increase, correct?</p> <p>This only applies for positions EXEMPT from civil service. No DOL employees fall into this category.</p>
<p>Will furlough days impact those returning to work in LSOs?</p> <p>During July, all employees, including LSO employees, will move to a Monday through Friday schedule. The LSO's that are open to the public will be operating Monday through Thursday only. Our Communications & Outreach team will notify our customers of this change.</p>	<p>How do I apply for unemployment?</p> <p>DOL received permission to implement the Shared Work Program through the ESD. The Shared Work Program is different than regular unemployment insurance for layoffs, and allows employees who are temporarily furloughed the right to apply for unemployment benefits.</p> <p>In addition to your official furlough notification, Human Resources will also provide your hourly rate and instructions on how to apply by June 30. ESD will also be offering webinars for employees to learn how to apply for unemployment benefits. These will provide essential information for you to apply for unemployment insurance.</p> <p>You cannot submit your request for unemployment benefits until AFTER the first furlough week.</p>	<p>How do I know if I am in the "represented employees" group receiving the 3% increase?</p> <p>All employees in positions covered by unions are represented, whether they pay union dues or not. It's easier to say which positions are excluded from the pay increase: Washington Management Service and employees in Exempt positions, as well as employees who are Y-rated above the salary range of their position will not receive the general wage increase. Everybody else will receive the 3% increase.</p>
<p>What happens if a furlough day falls on a holiday?</p> <p>We will shift the furlough day. Example: The Fourth of July Holiday is observed on Friday, July 3, therefore the furlough day is shifted to Thursday, July 2.</p>	<p>Should I use my DOL email or my personal email to create my ESD profile?</p> <p>You can use your DOL email. If you already have an ESD profile created with your personal email, continue to use that profile.</p>	<p>When should I expect my first reduced paycheck?</p> <p>Your first reduced DOL paycheck will appear on your July 24 earnings statement.</p>
<p>What about staff on paid protective leave or paid family leave?</p> <p>Like the rest of the agency, staff who are on protected leave must also take unpaid furlough days. Protected leave entered in the leave system will need to be adjusted. Contact HR Protected Leave for assistance.</p>	<p>When should I expect the formal notification from Human Resources?</p> <p>All employees should have received the formal notification on June 22, 2020. If you did not receive the e-mail notification from either the HR Inbox or Amanda Wallace, please let Human Resources know immediately.</p> <p>Human Resources will send an additional e-mail with your hourly rate by June 30. You need this hourly rate to apply for Shared Work. We need to wait until the 3% general wage increase is in the system.</p>	<p>Do furloughs have any impact on my health insurance or retirement benefits?</p> <p>There will be no impact to your health insurance as long as you are in pay status one day per month. PERS-2 and PERS-3 retirement service credits will not be impacted if you are in pay status more than 90 hours in a month.</p>

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<p>What about voluntary furlough days?</p> <p>DOL is not yet ready to make voluntary furloughs available. Voluntary furlough days have to meet business needs. Stay tuned for information from Human Resources.</p>	<p>Will there be a waiting period?</p> <p>No.</p>	<p>I'm planning on retiring soon, do the furloughs impact my retirement compensation?</p> <p>We don't know yet. It may affect the average final compensation calculation. We have not received specific direction from the Department of Retirement Service on this.</p>
<p>Are there going to be any future furlough days?</p> <p>We don't know yet.</p>	<p>Is there a "Capped Amount" on income for Shared Work program?</p> <p>No.</p>	<p>I collect standby pay, can I collect it for a day I'm furloughed?</p> <p>No. We are looking for other options.</p>
<p>Have unions been involved in this decision?</p> <p>Yes. State Human Resources has been in regular contact with the three labor unions representing DOL employees.</p>	<p>Does the \$600 payment from CARES Act count towards the employee's 2020 income? Is this payment taxed?</p> <p>Yes, it is taxable income. You may want to work with a financial professional to determine impacts to your taxes.</p>	
<p>Will I have to fill out a Time Attendance Record (TAR) sheet for furlough days?</p> <p>Yes, every employee has access to TARs and must submit a TAR for furlough weeks. For those who don't know how to fill one out, Payroll will be sending out step-by-step instructions.</p>	<p>Will the Shared Work benefit be taxed?</p> <p>Yes, it is taxable income. You may ask ESD to withhold a portion of your benefit to be sent to the IRS.</p>	
<p>Will there be a new leave code in HR Cafe for furlough use or do I use LWOP?</p> <p>Yes, there will be two new leave codes in HR Cafe. These codes are currently under development and will be available on June 29. HR will give you information about which codes to use.</p>	<p>Can I use my state-issued computer to apply for unemployment benefits?</p> <p>Yes.</p>	
<p>What furlough leave code do I use in HR Café?</p> <p>Employees eligible for Shared Work program will use LWOP Temp Layoff\ShrdWork.</p> <p>Non-permanent employees who are NOT eligible for Shared Work program, will use LWOP Temp Layoff/Agency Action.</p>	<p>When can I apply for unemployment benefits?</p> <p>You can apply the week AFTER you have taken a furlough day. HR will provide additional information and instruction on when and how you can request unemployment benefits. There is no benefit in applying early as ESD will reject your claim. You will submit an unemployment claim each week.</p>	
<p>How do the furloughs apply to employees using their accrued leave or protected leave entitlements?</p> <p>Previously approved leave on a furlough day should be rescinded.</p> <p>Staff who are on protected leave will also be required to take unpaid furlough days. Protected leave entered in the leave system will need to be adjusted. Contact HR Protected Leave for assistance.</p>	<p>What is the first day I can submit an unemployment claim?</p> <p>The first day you can file an unemployment claim is Sunday, July 5. However, ESD would like everyone to submit their unemployment claims on the following Monday of each week.</p>	
<p>Will furlough options be added to HR Café?</p> <p>Yes.</p>	<p>Will there be a liaison to talk to about how to apply for unemployment?</p> <p>Yes, we will have contacts within HR to help employees apply for unemployment benefits.</p>	
<p>Can I take paid leave (sick or annual) on my furlough day?</p> <p>No.</p>	<p>Do I still apply for unemployment benefits after July 25?</p> <p>Yes, you can still apply for unemployment benefits for the week in which you have taken a furlough, but the \$600 from the Federal CARES Act will no longer be available.</p>	
<p>Are there any impacts to my leave accrual?</p> <p>Your accruals may be later in the month, but would not be reduced for full-time employees.</p>	<p>How far behind is ESD on payments?</p> <p>We don't know. The ESD Shared Work program has shared that once a claim is approved, it takes 7-10 days to get benefits out to people. The National Guard has also been deployed to help with unemployment claims.</p>	

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<p>Are there any impacts to part-time employee leave accruals?</p> <p>Yes, accruals for part-time employees are based on hours worked, so it will impact part-time leave accruals.</p>	<p>How can those employees who already reported fraudulent unemployment claims, now file legitimate claims due to furloughs?</p> <p>ESD will provide webinars to help our employees file their unemployment claims successfully, including if you are a victim of unemployment fraud. ESD will also provide a PIN number to access the unemployment account.</p>	
	<p>What if I work more than two jobs, am I still eligible for unemployment benefits?</p> <p>It depends. ESD will determine if you are eligible as it depends on if both employers are with the Shared Work Program. The federal CARES Act \$600 benefit is only available once for each employee.</p>	
	<p>I'm a victim of the unemployment insurance fraudulent activity that happened a couple months ago. What do I do?</p> <p>DOL received the following information from ESD:</p> <p>ESD is working on a process and will send instructions to your employees via their state email address. We'll explain the situation, how they can unlock their SAW account and how to apply for benefits. We'll send those instructions before June 28. Until then:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you know you were a victim of unemployment imposter fraud, please do not try to access your eServices account or apply for benefits until you receive instructions from ESD. • If you know for sure that you are no longer a victim of imposter fraud, you can create your account. You will know that you no longer have an issue with fraud if you reported the fraud to ESD, and ESD notified you that we resolved the issue. If so, you can go to esd.wa.gov and scroll to the bottom to create an eServices account. • If you try to create or log into your account and find it has been locked and you were not aware that you were a victim of fraud, please email your agency's point of contact (POC) who will then funnel your information to ESD. • If you have questions, please send them to your agency's POC who will then funnel your questions to ESD. <p>ESD's Shared Work team is working hard to identify ways to make this process as smooth and seamless as possible for you and your staff who are impacted by the furloughs.</p>	
	<p>When can I expect to receive payment for SharedWork after I've submitted my weekly claim?</p> <p>If your weekly claim is filled out correctly, you can expect payment in about five business days. You will receive it on a debit card or by EFT direct deposit, depending how you requested it on your initial application.</p>	
	<p>I am a full-time permanent employee who worked on June 29,30, and July 1 and took the mandatory layoff on July 2. On my Shared Work weekly claim, will I enter 8 hours of holiday pay (July 3) and 24 hours for hours worked?</p> <p>Yes. If you already submitted your weekly claim, and said "no" to holiday pay and entered 32 hours under hours worked, you are OK. No correction is needed. If you submitted both 8 hours of holiday pay and 32 for hours worked, contact your DOL Shared Work Representative to make a correction.</p>	
	<p>Will I have to do any math to submit my weekly Shared Work claim?</p> <p>Yes. You will need to calculate your holiday, sick or vacation pay by multiplying your hourly rate by the number of hours. For example, in the box for Holiday Pay, employee "X" will enter the answer to this: $\\$16.45 \times 8 \text{ (hours)} = \\131.60.</p>	
	<p>For Shared Work claims, is a personal holiday or personal leave day considered vacation hours?</p> <p>Yes.</p>	

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	<p>If I make an error when submitting my SharedWork claim, should I contact my SharedWork Representative in HR before calling ESD?</p> <p>Yes.</p>	
	<p>If I have been impacted by unemployment insurance fraud or received the message below when trying to submit my initial claim to ESD, what should I do to submit my SharedWork claim?</p> <p><i>Message: You must register with the SSN that you entered on your SEAP account.</i></p> <p>“You will receive an email from ESD to your WORK email with instructions on how to submit your claim. Please refer to the email sent to all staff on July 1 from HR Director, Laurie Milligan.</p>	
	<p>What should I answer to the following questions on my SharedWork weekly claim?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Did you refuse any offer of work from your SharedWork employer? 2. (Under Hours and Earnings) Did your work for this employer end, even temporarily? 3. Other than Social Security, did you apply for or have a change in a retirement plan not previously reported? (This is not about you saving for retirement.) <p>Answer NO unless you're receiving retirement pay.</p>	
	<p>In July 2020, do I have to fill out a Time and Attendance Report (TAR) if I am overtime exempt?</p> <p>Yes. All employees need to submit a TAR so payroll can reconcile payments to employees with ESD payments. It is called positive time reporting. You report hours worked, hours of leave, and hours for holiday each day and submit it to your supervisor by the last day of the pay period. Instructions for completing a TAR was emailed to all staff on 6/30 from DOL Human Resources.</p>	
	<p>I want my money now, so should I fill out my weekly claim for Shared Work as fast as possible?</p> <p>No! Filling out your weekly claim quickly is a bad idea! Take your time to thoroughly read and understand each question before answering. Check your entries to make sure you're entering hours or pay values correctly. Errors can cause significant delays and extra work for ESD and DOL's HR team. If you have questions, refer to this presentation, emails, and FAQs first; then ask your representative if you are still uncertain. The most common mistakes are caused by rushing!</p>	