



Attention Employers and Tax Preparers! Time to File On-Line!

It's a new year and the perfect time to consider on-line filing! Visit our WOW website at wow.mt.gov to file your Unemployment Insurance (UI) quarterly tax and wage report and/or make your UI tax payment.

It's quick, easy and free! With WOW you have the flexibility to either manually enter employee wage information OR upload a CSV file converted from products such as Excel or QuickBooks! You will no longer have to calculate your employee's excess and taxable wages or UI tax due as WOW will do it for you!

NEW and exciting this quarter ~ for QuickBooks users, e-filing Montana Unemployment Insurance reports just got easier! Intuit has been developing capability for QuickBooks to create uploadable wage files for some states, and we are pleased to announce the service is now available for Montana employers. If you are an "Enhanced Payroll Subscriber", this service will be included in your QuickBooks updates by March 31. For more information on converting and uploading wage files to WOW, visit wow.mt.gov for step-by-step directions.

Tax Preparers: If your firm is interested in registering multiple clients to file UI reports on-line, just fax a list of your clients, including the names of the businesses along with their UI account numbers and Federal EIN's to the Electronic Filing Unit at 406-444-0629. We will gladly register the client group and link them to your transmitter account. If your firm has multiple locations, we can set up separate transmitter accounts for each location.

If you aren't using WOW yet, give it a try!



Reminder

Update Your Payroll Software

The UI taxable wage base for 2012 is \$27,000 and your UI rate for 2012 probably changed too. Please confirm your software has the new 2012 taxable wage base and your correct tax rate for 2012. If you cannot locate your 2012 tax rate, you may secure the correct rate by using UI4Employers or calling our office at (406) 444-3834.

Students – Are their wages reportable to UI?

Most students working for a private employer are subject to unemployment insurance tax; however, there are a few exceptions. The Unemployment Insurance law provides the following student-related exemptions:

- Services performed in the employ of a school or university if the service is performed by a student who is enrolled and regularly attending classes at the school or university is not subject to UI;
- Service performed by a fulltime student in a internship program taken for academic credit at an educational institution that combines instruction with work experience. To be exempt, the educational institution must have certified to the employer that such service is an integral part of the program.
- Service of a student's spouse is exempt if all of the following conditions are met:

1. The student's spouse is employed by the school, college or university at which the student is enrolled and is regularly attending classes.
2. The spouse's employment is provided under a program designed to give financial assistance to the student.
3. The spouse is advised at the beginning of such employment that: the employment is provided under such a student-assistance program, and the employment is not covered by any program of unemployment insurance.

If the information indicated in item (3) above is not given, the spouse's services would be covered. A particular form for the notice is not required so long as it is reasonable and makes clear to the spouse that the employment is provided under a student-assistance program and that such employment is not covered for unemployment insurance purposes.

Employer Benefit Charges:

The UI Employer Benefit Charging phone line at (406) 444-0399 is available to assist employers with questions, concerns, or responses to potential unemployment insurance charges or actual charges to their accounts. This queue is staffed by knowledgeable claim assistants who process employer charging notices. This service is available Monday – Friday from 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.



Accurate & Legible Wage Listings

Providing correct Social Security Numbers for each of your employees is essential for the efficient administration of the unemployment insurance program. Correct SSN also prevent delays or incorrect monetary decisions when individuals file unemployment claims. For example, wages reported under an incorrect social security number may be used erroneously by another individual who files for benefits.

Additionally, please make sure your wage listings are legible (handwritten wage lists are clearly written; and typed or computer listings are printed with a 10 or larger size font in black ink).

Employee Discharges

When job separations occur, employers are contacted via letter and/or telephone to obtain facts critical to determine claimant eligibility for UI benefits. Prompt participation and complete information from employers allows UI to make proper decisions to allow or deny benefits to those who find themselves unemployed and seeking benefits. Correct decisions on UI benefits eligibility is of great importance to the Unemployment Insurance Division, as well as to the claimants and employers the program serves. Employers play a valuable part in the administration of UI benefits. Workers who worked in insured employment and find themselves out of work without fault depend on employer's quick responses for accurate and fast benefit payments.

Things the UI Division will ask employers to provide:

Final Incident – a detailed description of the final incident that occurred at the time of, and directly led to, the discharge – What happened, when, who was involved etc?

Company Policy – if the claimant was discharged for violation of a company policy, a copy of the violated policy will be requested. It is difficult for an employer to show a policy has been violated if a copy of the policy is not provided.

Written warnings – warnings must pertain to the same problem/action that directly led to the discharge.

Warnings – a warning whether verbal or written should include:

- a description of the action that led to the warning,
- the date of the incident,
- the date the warning was issued,
- the expectations for correction of that particular problem, and the consequences if the problem continues.

If the warning is verbal the person who issued the warning should document the steps above for the employee's file with their signature confirming which of the above warning steps occurred.

A written warning should:

- be signed and dated by the person issuing the warning,
- ask the employee to sign and date the warning acknowledging they received it – even if they don't agree with it. (Giving the employee an opportunity to respond to the warnings can work in the employer's favor.)
- if the employee refuses to sign the warning and someone else was present, include a signed statement by the witness attesting to the fact the warning was issued and the employee refused to sign it.

Remember formal or informal discussions with employees for on-going training or performance enhancement are not warnings. Warnings should clearly put the employee on notice that their job is in jeopardy if the problem(s) continue.

Employer Registration..... 800-550-1513
Contributions Bureau (406) 444-3834

FAX (406) 444-0629
TDD (406) 444-0532