



## Quarterly News

### Return to Pre-Pandemic Rules for UI Benefit Claims

With the ending of Montana's pandemic state of emergency in June, unemployment insurance (UI) has returned to pre-pandemic eligibility requirements for benefit claims. No federal pandemic UI programs or additional monies are being applied to benefits for weeks of unemployment after June 26, 2021.

With COVID-19 cases still very much a part of our everyday life, the return to regular UI rules may cause some confusion for employers completing separation or other information requests from UI for employees who are quarantined or unable to work as a direct result of COVID.

Ask yourself these questions: Do I have work available for the employee to do? Are they able to do it while quarantined? If an employee is unable to work when you have work available for them, it's considered a leave of absence and not a layoff.

Examples:

- An employee is quarantined and someone else is completing their job while they are out
- An employee could continue working if they were not quarantined and will return after the quarantine period

In both scenarios, the employee cannot be considered job attached because work is available, but they are not able to perform the duties due to the quarantine. When reporting to UI, these scenarios should be reported as a leave of absence.

To maintain the integrity of the program, it is critical these situations and others are reported accurately. When you are completing any requests for information, remember your responses affect not only you and your employees but all Montana employers. Inaccurate information may result in claims being paid in error. All claims paid have an impact on the UI Trust Fund which ultimately impacts the annual UI Tax rates for all Montana employers.

### Montana Prohibits Discrimination Based on Vaccination Status

[House Bill 702](#) was passed by the 2021 Montana Legislature and became effective when signed by Governor Gianforte on May 7, 2021.

HB 702 prohibits discrimination in Montana based on vaccination status or possession of an immunity passport by a person, governmental entity, employer, or public accommodation.

For more details, consult the FAQ's at [montanadiscrimination.com](http://montanadiscrimination.com) or call the Montana Human Rights Bureau at 1 (800) 542-0807.

### 2022 Taxable Wage Base

The 2022 taxable wage base will be \$38,100, which is 80% of the 2020 average annual wage (rounded to the nearest \$100).

We recommend you do not update payroll software with the 2022 taxable wage base until AFTER you file the UI report for the fourth quarter of 2021.



ASSISTANCE *for*  
**BUSINESS CLINIC**

Assistance for Business Clinics in 2021 will be held in conjunction with SafetyFest Montana. To stream past sessions, go to: <https://dli.mt.gov/resources/abc-clinics>

### Report Fraud

If you suspect a person or business is committing UI fraud, go to [uieservices.mt.gov](http://uieservices.mt.gov) and select [Report UI Fraud](#) under the Helpful Links. **You can remain anonymous!**



### Electronic Filing is Required

If you are a third-party agent (payroll provider, accounting firm, CPA, etc.) filing on behalf of your clients OR an employer with 20 or more employees, your Montana Unemployment Insurance Quarterly Reports must be filed electronically. Refer to [Montana Administrative Rule 24.11.2711](#).

If you are not filing your reports electronically, we can help you get started. Filing electronically improves the accuracy and integrity of the reports you are submitting and prevents delayed processing time. For a full look at our electronic filing options, go online to [uieservices.mt.gov](http://uieservices.mt.gov) and under Handbooks Forms & More, review our [UI Contributions eFiling Handbook](#). Or contact our Customer Support Team at [uieservices@mt.gov](mailto:uieservices@mt.gov) or (406) 444-3834 option 2.

**Quarterly reports filed via paper that are subject to e-filing requirements may be assessed a \$25 penalty.**



### **Coming Spring of 2022, updates to the Separation Exchange and a new and improved SIDES E-Response experience.**

The National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) working with its state partners, employers, and payroll providers from across the country will publish an improved SIDES E-Response portal including updates to the Separation Information Reporting Exchange early next year. Stay tuned for more specifics as we get closer to the roll-out.

In Montana, SIDES participants will continue to access SIDES E-Response through [UI eServices for Employers](#). No changes to usernames, passwords, etc. will be required.

If you are not using SIDES to respond to benefit claims related requests for information, check out our [SIDES FAQ](#) and sign up today!

### **Filing Quarterly UI Reports when you have no wages to report**

If you are an employer who is subject to Unemployment Insurance (UI) in Montana but for one reason or another did not pay wages during any quarter, you are still required to file a “none” or zero report for the quarter.

If you plan to pay wages in the near future, continue to file none reports each quarter until you pay wages again.

If you do not anticipate paying wages again, contact our team at (406) 444-3834 option 1 to inactivate your UI Account.

### **Important Notice on Workers Comp**

With few exceptions, Montana requires employers who have workers in this state to carry workers’ compensation insurance coverage. Penalties for non-compliance are two times the premium amount plus interest and if there is a workplace injury, the employer not only is responsible for the injured worker’s claim but also no longer has the exclusive remedy afforded by having proper coverage.

If you are an out of state employer, it is important to note that Montana doesn’t recognize the All States Endorsement you may have on your insurance policy. You must have a Montana specific endorsement under 3(A) of your policy.

If you have questions or need guidance, please reach out to your insurance professional or you can contact our team in the Employment Relations Division at (406) 444-6543.

## **Questions about Benefit Charges on your account?**

Call the Employer Charging Phone Line at 406-444-0399. We are here to help! Hours 8 am – 4 pm (closed for lunch 12 – 1).