



Quarterly News



Answers to Common Questions

The Unemployment Insurance (UI) Division has received inquiries from employers regarding how to answer the following questions when responding to Separation Information Requests via SIDES E-Response:

- What were the total wages earned by the claimant after [a specified date]?
- What were the total hours worked by the claimant after [a specified date]?

Answer: Provide only the total gross wages earned and hours worked for **one week**, starting with the date in the question through the following Saturday. Typically, this is the first week of a new claim or a reactivated claim.

Examples:

- What were the total wages earned by the claimant after 11/07/2021? Provide the amount of total gross wages earned from 11/07/2021 through 11/13/2021.
- What were the total hours worked by the claimant after 11/07/2021? Provide the total number of hours the claimant worked between 11/07/2021 and 11/13/2021.

UI Benefit weeks begin on Sunday and end at midnight the following Saturday; all earnings must be reported in the week they are earned. This information is used for several reasons and may cause errors if reported incorrectly by either claimant or employer.

CHANGES ARE COMING to SIDES E-Response

March 23, 2022, the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) and its partners will implement changes to the SIDES Separation Exchange and the SIDES E-Response portal. The modernization efforts aim to streamline and improve the overall experience with SIDES E-Response and specifically the Separation Exchange. More details will be provided as we get closer to the go-live date!

2022 Contributions Rates

UI Contribution rates for calendar year 2022 will be calculated **December 17th, 2021**.

Governor Gianforte's infusion of an additional \$8.5 million of Coronavirus Relief Funds into the UI Trust Fund will allow the Contribution rates for 2022 to remain on rate Schedule I. The lowest tax rate schedule allowed.

Employers can view their 2022 rate (including a copy of your notice) online through **UI eServices for Employers** (uieservices.mt.gov), beginning December 18th. Paper notices will be mailed the week of December 20th.

Third party providers participating in the Fiscal Rate Exchange can request the 2022 rates for their clients AFTER January 1, 2022.

If you are not already, we strongly encourage all third-party payroll providers to participate in our Fiscal Rate Exchange to electronically request and receive the UI rates for your clients as often as needed. Our exchange file also includes credit balance information. Refer to our [Fiscal Rate Exchange Handbook](#) for more information or call (406) 444-3834, option 2.

2022 Taxable Wage Base

The 2022 taxable wage base will be **\$38,100**, which is 80% of Montana's 2020 average annual wage (\$47,670) rounded to the nearest \$100.

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

Report Fraud

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



Helpful Tip: Do not upload password-protected documents as part of any SIDES response. We cannot retrieve or use documents that are password protected, they will be deleted!

Report Work Refusals and Declined Interviews

If an individual is receiving Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits and then refuses an official offer of work or misses a scheduled interview, it may impact their ability to continue receiving benefits. Employers are encouraged to notify UI by completing an electronic [Unemployment Reporting Form](#) through the State of Montana Self-Service Portal. Visit our Employer Resources page at uid.dli.mt.gov/employers to access the form.

Employers who submit information about declined or missed interviews may be contacted by fraud investigators for more information. However, the outcome of the audit will remain between the claimant and the department.

If you have any questions, call (406) 444-0399 for assistance.

Confidential Information

The Montana Unemployment Insurance Division must notify employers that wage information and other confidential unemployment insurance information may be requested and used for governmental purposes other than unemployment compensation. For example, federal and state law allows use of confidential UI information to verify an individual's eligibility for other government programs.

We take our responsibility to protect the confidentiality of employer and claimant information very seriously. Confidential UI information, including your name, address, FEIN, UI account number, wage information, and social security numbers of individuals, is released only after careful verification of the requesting authority.

It's our job to help you do yours safely!

Montana Department of Labor & Industry's
Safety & Health Bureau

In Montana, approximately 25,000 work-related injuries are reported each year, resulting in numerous missed days of work, millions of dollars in lost production, and countless other potential losses for both employer and employee.

Work-related injuries and the resulting losses can be significantly reduced and, in many instances, prevented altogether with the proper identification and elimination (or control) of safety *and health* hazards. The Montana Safety & Health Consultation Program is available to partner with private and public sector employers committed to safe workplaces for their employees. We provide free and confidential (we're not OSHA) on-site safety consultations performed by our team of experts.

Visit www.montanasafety.com to view a short video highlighting a few Montana businesses who have benefitted from our services. You can request your safety consultation through the previously mentioned website or call (406) 494-0324.



ASSISTANCE *for* BUSINESS CLINIC

Assistance for Business Clinics in 2021 were held in conjunction with SafetyFest Montana. The clinic sessions were conducted remotely and recorded.

To stream past sessions, go to:

<https://dli.mt.gov/resources/abc-clinics>

Are you a Health Care business having trouble recruiting skilled talent?

Check out the Governor's Health Care Workforce Recruitment Program:

<https://arpa.mt.gov/Economic>

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).