

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) PROCEDURES TO FILE OR RE-OPEN A CLAIM

Q. How should I file a claim for unemployment insurance benefits?

A. There are two primary steps to receiving unemployment insurance. First you must file an application to establish or reopen a claim. If you are out of work due to the Coronavirus crisis then you will select **“Lack of Work”** as the reason for separation. Secondly, you access the program each week to claim unemployment insurance payment.

You should file your application or reopen your previous claim by visiting our website at www.vec.virginia.gov . This method is the preferred way to access the unemployment insurance application during this time of very heavy claim activity.

If you utilized the online system previously, the user name and passwords will remain the same.

Unemployment Insurance Learn more about UI >

Unemployment Insurance Benefits

File your initial or continued claim online:

- English >
- Español >

You may also file by telephone:

- For **initial claims**, call between 8:15am and 4:30pm, Monday - Friday (closed state holidays): 1-866-832-2363
- For **continuing claims**, call: 1-800-897-5630

To view a comprehensive list of everything you need to get started with your application including special forms and telephone numbers for the hearing impaired, please visit our [Claimant Resources page](#).

I'm Unemployed! Now What?

It might have happened this way: Your boss just told you that within the next two weeks the company is closing its doors forever. Or, perhaps the company is downsizing and you just lost the only job you've had for the past decade or more.

However it occurred, it may be your first time to be "out of work." So, what do you do now?

[Here are some basics on how to deal with being unemployed >](#)

You may file your claim through our Customer Contact Center by calling 866-832-2363. (Monday through Friday 8:15am – 4:30pm.) ** Please be aware of long wait times at our Customer Contact Center as a result of the Coronavirus crisis. If you must file by telephone, please continue to call back if lines are busy.

Q. What happens after I complete my unemployment insurance application or re-open my previous claim?

A. If this is your first time filing a claim you will receive three important documents. The Benefit Rights document explains eligibility requirements and what you need to do each week to claim your benefits. The Monetary Determination document shows how much money you may be eligible to receive. You will also receive a PIN. You need the PIN to claim weekly benefits and to make inquiries about your claim.

Q. How soon before I can expect a benefit payment?

A. This answer speaks to the second of the two primary steps mentioned that need to be taken to receive payment of benefits. The week must have ended before you can seek payment. Your first payment will be for the week after the effective date of your claim.

For example, I lost my job on March 17, 2020 and I filed my application for UI benefits. All claims filed that week have the effective date of March 15, 2020. The first week I can claim for payment is the week beginning March 15, 2020 and ending March 21, 2020. You will need to go online www.vec.virginia.gov or call the interactive voice response system 800-897-5630 to claim that week and receive payment after the week is complete. *** **Note:** Governor Northam has directed that the one week waiting period be **suspended**, as well as the requirement to conduct a weekly job search by those receiving unemployment insurance benefits. If you are eligible for benefits, a payment should be processed shortly after you claim this first full week.