

Returning to Work Guidance for Claimants



As Florida reopens, you may be called back to work or find new employment opportunities. You may continue to request benefit weeks up to the week in which you start working. When you request the week overlapping with your return to work, you should indicate that you have worked and earned money during the week. If you expect to work full-time and/or earn more than your weekly state benefit amount during the week of overlap, you do not need to request benefits for that week.

- If you currently receive Reemployment Assistance benefits and no longer wish to receive benefits, you do not need to claim your weeks. Payments will stop processing if weeks stop being claimed.
- If you return to work, but you have not received Reemployment Assistance benefits for which you were eligible during your time of unemployment, you can be assured that payments will still be made to your account for the weeks you are eligible.
- Generally, if your employer has called you back to work and you do not return to work, you may be disqualified from receiving further Reemployment Assistance benefits. If you have failed without good cause to accept suitable work or return to work, you will be disqualified from receiving Reemployment Assistance benefits. You should report that you have refused an offer to work when claiming your weeks in the CONNECT system. You will have an opportunity to provide more information about your reason (good cause) for not returning to work. DEO will determine eligibility for unemployment benefits on a case-by-case basis.

Keep in mind that “able to work” means physically and mentally capable of performing the duties of the occupation in which work is being sought. “Available for work” means actively seeking and being ready and willing to accept suitable work. An individual may be considered available for work if there are no limitations placed on the individual that would constitute withdrawal from the labor market.

Frequently Asked Questions

My employer just called me back to work tomorrow. How do I end my benefits?

If you currently receive Reemployment Assistance benefits and no longer wish to receive benefits, do not claim your weeks, and payments will stop.

I’m going back to work but will be working reduced hours. Will I lose my benefits?

Any wages you earn may affect your eligibility to receive benefits or may reduce your weekly benefit amount. If you earn more than your weekly state benefit amount, you will not be eligible for benefits. You must continue to claim your weeks in CONNECT and report any wages you earn. Remember, you must report wages for the week in which you earned them, not the week in which you are paid.

I have been called back to work but am concerned about COVID-19 exposure. What options do I have to remain on Reemployment Assistance?

Generally, you will be disqualified from receiving further Reemployment Assistance benefits if you have failed without good cause to accept suitable work or return to work upon notice by your employer. If your employer has called you back and you did not return to work, you should report that you have refused an offer to work when claiming your weeks in the CONNECT system. You will have an opportunity to provide more information about your reason for not returning to work. DEO will determine eligibility for Reemployment Assistance benefits on a case-by-case basis.

Additionally, guidance from the U.S. Department of Labor provides that an individual who does not return to work due to general concerns about exposure to COVID-19 and who does not meet any of the other COVID-19 related criteria for PUA, is not eligible for PUA.

I believe I am at high risk of being exposed to COVID-19 if I return to my job. Will I lose benefits if I refuse to go back?

If you have a medical condition that puts you at a high risk for severe illness if you are infected with COVID-19, and your employer is not able to offer you a safe workplace or your job does not allow for a reasonable accommodation such as teleworking, you may have good cause for not returning to work and may be eligible to receive benefits. Documentation from a medical professional will be considered as proof of a high-risk medical condition.

You should report that you have refused an offer to work when claiming your weeks in the CONNECT system. You will have an opportunity to provide more information about your reason for not returning to work when you provide your report. DEO will determine eligibility for unemployment benefits on a case-by-case basis.

I have been called back to work, but my children are out of school and I can't leave them alone. Can I refuse to go back to work and keep my benefits?

The CARES Act, signed into law on March 27, 2020, created Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA). PUA may be available to an eligible individual who is unemployed, partially unemployed, or unable to work because a child in the household, whom the individual has primary caregiving responsibility, is unable to attend school or another childcare facility that is closed as a direct result of COVID-19, and the school or childcare facility is required for the individual to be able to work. If you believe you may be eligible for PUA, please visit [FloridaJobs.org](https://www.floridajobs.org) and select "File a Claim" to apply.

My employer has offered me my job back, but I would make more utilizing Reemployment Assistance benefits. Can I refuse to take the job?

No. If you are offered work by your employer and refuse to accept it because you wanted to receive Reemployment Assistance benefits, you will no longer be eligible for benefits.

Additionally, guidance from the U.S. Department of Labor provides that an individual will not be eligible for PUA if they refuse to return to work when called back to work by their employer because the individual wanted to receive unemployment benefits.

What if I am under state quarantine for COVID-19 and my employer has called me back? I'll have to quit to stay in quarantine. Can I still receive benefits?

If you are unemployed, partially unemployed, or unable or unavailable to work because of a quarantine imposed as a direct result of a COVID-19 public health emergency, you may be eligible for PUA.
