

Standby: What business owners need to know:

Standby is a way for your employees to collect unemployment benefits without having to look for other work. Standby is available for employees who have been laid off or had their hours reduced.

- Available for full and part-time employees. (See [emergency rules](#)).
- While on standby, workers must accept any work you offer that they can do without breaking isolation or quarantine.
- Emergency rules have increased the maximum amount of time for standby.
- It's now available for up to 12 weeks.

How do I request standby for my employees?

Employers and claimants can both request [standby](#).

- For initial requests of up to 12 weeks, use eServices.

For an individual employee:

- Use the *Request for Separation Information* letter.
- We send this letter to you after your employee submits their claim and requests standby.
- Depending on your preferences in Secure Access Washington (SAW), you may receive this letter electronically or by mail.

For a group of employees:

- Fax your standby request to 1-800-301-1796.
- Identify all employees on the request by name and SSN (or claim ID).
- You must provide an expected return to work date with your request.

How do I request an extension of standby?

ONLY employers can request an extension beyond the first 12 weeks.

- Send written requests for extension to SystemPolicy@esd.wa.gov.

How do I designate my employee to be on standby for the maximum amount of time?

All you need to do is request standby for your employees with an expected return to work date.

My employees were denied standby and they should have been able to get it.

Effective March 20, workers are allowed up to 12 weeks of standby. Since then, we've fixed the incorrect denials and issues from March 8 forward. If our systems initially denied your employees in error, those issues should be fixed by now.

If your employees are still being denied standby, they may have made a mistake when they requested it.

- The most common mistakes are not providing a return to work date or asking for too many weeks (beyond 12).
- They'll need to call the claims center to fix the issue.
- Your employees should keep filing their weekly claims.



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How do we change original standby dates?

The best way—for claimants and employers—is through eServices, where you can submit a new request or request additional weeks. You can also contact the claims center to update the dates your employees will be returning to work.

What do we do if our employees are on standby but we have to lay them off because we aren't reopening?

Employers should contact us if they don't plan to reopen. We can take their employees off standby.

We are an essential business. What are your availability requirements for our standby workers?

If you are an [essential business](#) and your employees are choosing not to go to work, we need to know the reason they aren't working to know if they are eligible for benefits.

Is there a specific amount of notice an employer needs to give their standby employee to come to work?

This is Labor & Industries' area of expertise. [Visit their website](#) for more information.

Requesting relief of benefit charges:

You must send us a written request for relief of benefit charges.

You can send it online or via fax or mail.

Online via eServices

Fax: 800-301-1796

Mail

ESD—Experience Rating/Benefit Charging Unit
PO Box 9046
Olympia, WA 98507-9046

We need to get your request no later than 30 days after we first mailed your Benefit Charging Notice.

This document was created on 4.2.2020, for the most updated information around rule changes go to: <https://esd.wa.gov/newsroom/covid-19-employer-information>.



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