

Unemployment Claims Guide for Employees and Employers Affected by the Maui Wildfires

Q: If I lay off employees because my business has been impacted by the Maui Wildfires, will they be able to collect unemployment insurance (UI)?

If you lay off employees, they can apply for unemployment insurance benefits. To receive benefits they must meet certain criteria and that determination is made by the State. Employees who are laid off as a result of a major disaster are eligible to receive UI benefits, assuming other benefit eligibility criteria are met.

Q: My business is temporarily shut down or operations are limited due to the Wildfires. Are employees able to receive UI benefits while they are temporarily furloughed?

Yes. Employees who remain “attached” but whose hours are temporarily reduced may file for partial unemployment benefits. When employees file for partial UI benefits, the State will send a request to the employer to verify the employee’s status and the date that they will be returned to full-time work. ProService receives these requests and will complete and submit to the State on your behalf. If we require any additional information from you in order to complete the request for information, our UI team will reach out to you.

Q: How do I file an unemployment claim?

The best way to file a claim is online; if internet access is an issue, claims can also be filed by phone. If neither of these are options, claims can be filed in person at a State unemployment office. We don’t encourage filing in person as this will likely involve lengthy wait times and also please be aware that photo identification is required for in person filing.

(Online) *Our UI Claims Team is able to assist employees by helping to walk them through the process of creating an account and filing a claim through the State website. While our team is offering assistance, your employee will need to be able to access the State website from a smartphone, tablet, computer or other device (as they will be the one to actually submit the claim.)*

(Phone) *Employees also have the option of filing a claim by calling the State Unemployment Call Center at any of the following numbers (Select Option 0):*

(833) 901-2272 (808) 762-5751
(833) 901-2275 (808) 762-5752

The State is currently offering extended call hours 7 days a week from 7 am - 6 pm for employees affected by the Maui Wildfires.

(In-person) *To file in person, employees can visit the Maui Unemployment Insurance Office, which is located in Wailuku at the State Building at 54 South High Street, Room 201. They are accepting walk-ins, but we are advised that wait times may be lengthy. To file a claim in person, photo identification such as driver’s license, passport or State ID card, is required. Photocopies will be accepted.*

Q: How much does UI pay?

Full unemployment pays up to a maximum of \$763 per week. Your weekly benefit amount will be calculated by the State by dividing the wages in the highest quarter of your base period by 21 (up to the maximum weekly benefit amount of \$763).

Q: How long can an individual receive benefits?

A person can receive up to 26 weeks of benefits in the one year period called a “benefit year” - this is one year from the date the claim application is filed.

Q: If I have filed for UI benefits before, can I file a new claim?

If you previously filed a UI claim and are still within your benefit year, you will be directed to reactivate your claim rather than file a new initial claim. Don't worry if you aren't sure, when you log into your account you will be directed to the appropriate option.

Q: What do I report as the “Type of Separation” when I file my claim?

If you are still attached but working reduced hours (from any employer), you will select the option for “Still Attached.” If you are not working any hours, select the option for “Temporary Layoff - Partial Claim.”

Q: What information will I need when I file a claim?

- Employer name
- Social security number
- Mailing address (if your mailing address is in an impacted area, the Wailuku Post Office will hold your mail for pick up)
- Email address
- Dates of employment over the past 18 months
- Past employer's names, addresses, and phone numbers
- Reason for separation (see question above)
- Direct deposit info (account type, account, and routing number)
- If filing in person; photo identification such as driver's license, passport or State ID card, is required. Photocopies will be accepted
- After your claim is submitted, you will receive an email confirmation with follow up instructions to verify your identity through login.gov, which you will have 7 days to complete.

Q: I do not have access to my mail so how will I receive my UI benefit payments?

Unemployment benefits are paid from the State through direct deposit into your bank account. At the time you apply for unemployment benefits, you will be directed to provide your banking information.

Q: Are unemployment benefits taxable?

Yes, unemployment benefits are taxable but you must elect to have the taxes withheld; if you do not then you will owe taxes at the beginning of the year (following the year the benefits were received).

Q: Do I need to post my resume on HireNet Hawaii and meet the job search requirement?

No. For employees filing claims due to the wildfires, the State is waiving the requirement of registering with HireNet and completing job searches. When you file your claim certifications, however, the State instructs that you answer the questions as follows (as answering NO will hold up your claim)

- Did you post an online resume on HireNet Hawaii? **YES**
- Did you look for work? **YES**
- How many employers did you contact? **3+**
- Are you keeping written records of your job contacts? **YES**

Q: If I don't qualify for State UI benefits, are other unemployment benefits available?

The State Department of Labor and Industrial Relations announced on August 24, 2023 that the department is now accepting applications for Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA), which is a federally funded program available for certain individuals who have lost their job or had their work hours reduced or interrupted due to the wildfires and who do not qualify for regular unemployment insurance.

Q: How do I apply for Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) and what information is required?

You may apply for DUA online through huiclaims.hawaii.gov/# or in person at the following locations:

Family Assistance Center

Hyatt Regency Maui (Ka'anapali Beach) – Monarchy Ballroom 200 Nohea Kai Drive, Lahaina, HI 96761

Maui Claims Office

54 South High St. Rm. 201, Wailuku, HI 96793-2198

Phone: (808) 984-8400

American Job Center Hawaii-Maui

110 Ala'ihi St. #209, Kahului, HI 96732

Phone: (808) 270-5777

The application deadline for DUA is September 25, 2023. Applications submitted after the deadline without good cause for the delay may be denied due to untimeliness.

Required Documents. You must have the following documentation/information to apply:

- *Government-issued identification (driver's license, passport, alien registration card, etc.)*
- *Social Security number*
- *A copy of your most recent federal income tax form*
- *Check stubs or other documentation to support that you were working or self-employed when the disaster occurred (such documentation can be obtained from banks or government entities or affidavits from individuals having knowledge of their businesses)*
- *Banking information (routing and account numbers) for direct deposit*

More information is available here:

<https://labor.hawaii.gov/ui/disaster-unemployment-assistance-dua-benefits-are-available/>