March 23, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

 Due to the high volume of calls to Union Local Chairman and Officers, this letter is being sent out to help answer some common questions and provide some important information concerning your rights to the benefits you are entitled to under the Railroad Retirement Board (RRB).

 To start, if you have not already done so, please go to the <https://www.rrb.gov/> and set up [myRRB](https://www.rrb.gov/Benefits/myRRB) account. To create your account, visit **[myRRB](https://rrb.gov/Benefits/myRRB%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)**and click on the button labeled **SIGN IN WITH LOGIN.GOV.** The RRB encourages employees to establish their myRRB accounts while still working to expedite the filing process for future unemployment benefits, and for access to other online services. (You will have to create an account with a two authrization process. Then verify your information with a picture of your driver license and SSN.)

 Below you will find the instruction for **applying** for Sickness and Unemployment Benefits. Once you have set up a myRRB account you will be able to make **claims** for benefits online.

 Hopefully this answers any questions or concerns about applying and claiming benefits.

As always, please feel free to contact your Local Chairman, myself, or any Local Officer anytime with questions, comments or concerns.

Fraternally,

Matt Deaton

Winton Local Lodge 94

Local President

.**HOW TO GET SICKNESS BENEFITS**

*File an application for sickness benefits by mail, and claim sickness benefits online or by mail.*

* **Application process:**You can obtain an *Application for Sickness Benefits* [**(Form SI-1a)**](https://www.rrb.gov/sites/default/files/2017-05/SI1ab.pdf)from your employer, labor organization, online, or any RRB office. An application and statement of sickness signed by a doctor are required at the beginning of each period of continuing sickness for which benefits are claimed.

The RRB suggests keeping an application for sickness benefits on hand, and making sure your family has access to it and knows how to use it. If you become unable to work because of an illness or injury, complete the application and have your doctor complete the attached *Statement of Sickness* (SI-1b). If you are too sick to complete the application yourself, someone else may do it for you. In such cases, a member of your family should also complete a *Statement of Authority to Act for Employee* (Form SI-10) which accompanies the statement of sickness.

Mail your completed forms to the RRB’s headquarters in Chicago within 10 days from when you become sick or injured. Upon receipt, the RRB will process your application and determine if you are eligible for sickness benefits.

An application for sickness benefits [**(Form SI-1a)**](https://www.rrb.gov/sites/default/files/2017-05/SI1ab.pdf)is available online or can be obtained from railroad employers, railroad labor organizations, or any RRB office. An application and a doctor's statement of sickness are required at the beginning of each *period of continuing sickness*for which benefits are claimed. The RRB suggests that you keep an application form on hand for use in claiming sickness benefits, and that your family knows where the form is kept and how to use it.
* **Biweekly claims:**  After processing your application, the RRB will provide you with biweekly claims which will be made available online and mailed to you, as long as you remain unable to work due to illness or injury and are eligible for benefits.

If you have an account for using **[myRRB](https://rrb.gov/Benefits/myRRB%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)**[,](https://rrb.gov/Benefits/myRRB) log in to conveniently file your sickness claims online. To create your account, visit **[myRRB](https://rrb.gov/Benefits/myRRB%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)**and click on the button labeled **SIGN IN WITH LOGIN.GOV**. The RRB encourages employees to establish their myRRB accounts while still working to expedite the filing process for future sickness benefits, and for access to other online services.

The RRB must receive your claims within 30 days of the last day of the claim period, or within 30 days from when your claim was made available online or mailed to you, whichever is later. Once you submit a claim for sickness benefits online, all subsequent claims will be made available online only, and will no longer be mailed. You risk losing benefits if your application and/or claims are not filed on time. If you know in advance that you may be filing an unemployment or sickness application or claim late, you should include a signed statement explaining why you are unable to meet the required time frame.

As with claims for unemployment benefits, the RRB must notify your base-year employer each time you file a claim for sickness benefits. That employer has the right to submit information relevant to your claim before the RRB makes its initial determination. The RRB will also notify your current employer (if different from your base-year employer). In addition, the RRB notifies your base-year employer each time sickness benefits are paid to you.

**HOW TO GET UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS**

*File an application for sickness benefits by mail, and claim sickness benefits online or by mail.*

* **Apply online:**  If you already set up an account for using **[myRRB](https://rrb.gov/Benefits/myRRB%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)**[,](https://rrb.gov/Benefits/myRRB) log in to conveniently apply for unemployment benefits online. To create your account, visit **[myRRB](https://rrb.gov/Benefits/myRRB%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)**and click on the button labeled **SIGN IN WITH LOGIN.GOV**. The RRB encourages employees to establish their myRRB accounts while still working to expedite the filing process for future unemployment benefits, and for access to other online services.
* **Apply by mail:**You can obtain an *Application for Unemployment Benefits*[**(Form UI-1)**](https://www.rrb.gov/sites/default/files/2017-03/ui1.pdf)from your employer, labor organization, online, or any RRB field office. Once complete, the application should be mailed to your local field office as soon as possible.

You must file an application within 30 days from the date you become unemployed or the first day for which you wish to claim benefits. You risk losing benefits if you do not file your application and/or claims timely.

Whether you file online or by mail, the local field office will review your application and notify your current employer, and base-year railroad employer if different. Your employer has the right to provide information about your benefit application.

* **Biweekly claims:**  After your application is processed, the RRB will provide you with biweekly claims as long as you remain unemployed and eligible for benefits. These biweekly claims are available online and mailed to you, and should be filed only on or after the last day of the claim. Your completed claim must be received by the RRB within 15 days of the end of the claim period, or within 15 days of the date the claim was made available online or mailed to you, whichever is later. Do not file both an online and a paper claim for the same claim period. Once you submit a claim for unemployment benefits online, all subsequent claims will be made available online only, and will no longer be mailed.

Before making an initial determination, the RRB must notify your base-year employer (and current year employer if different) each time you file a claim for unemployment benefits and give that employer an opportunity to submit information relevant to the claim. The RRB will also notify your base-year employer each time benefits are paid to you.

You only need to file one application during a benefit year even if you become unemployed more than once. However, in that case, you must request a new claim form from the RRB within 30 days of the first day for which you want to claim benefits. These claims may then be filed online or by mail.