

Information for railroad unemployment claimants in benefit year July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021

Telephone 1-877-772-5772 RRB Automated Services: 1-877-772-5772 – option 1. Website: WWW.RRB.GOV

INTERNET APPLICATIONS AND CLAIMS:

Our office is encouraging railroad employees to register for an online account. Go to RRB.gov/myRRB and click on the button labeled SIGN IN WITH LOGIN.GOV. Once your account is created, you will be able to electronically file your application for unemployment benefits and also your unemployment or sickness claims. To avoid late filing, you should submit a paper application if you do not have an online account established at the time you need to begin benefits. **Please remember: if you file your unemployment application and/or any unemployment or sickness claims online, you will no longer receive paper claim forms in the mail. You must check your online account timely to file claims that are available. If you need to request a paper claim form, please call us.**

CARES ACT: Please see our website for updated specifics regarding the CARES Act and its impact on benefits.

STATUS INQUIRIES:

You can check the status of your sickness or unemployment claims through our automated system. Call 877-772-5772 and select option 1. You will need your PIN number and SS Number to access this service. PIN numbers are mailed to you at the time of your initial filing and are located in item 7 on the back of each paper claim we mail to you.

BASE YEAR - BENEFIT YEAR:

Base year: January 1, 2019 through December 31, 2019 Benefit year: July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021.

HOW DO I QUALIFY?

By earning **\$4012.50** in railroad wages during base year 2019, in at least 3 separate months counting no more than **\$1605.00** in any month. If 2019 was the first year you ever worked for a railroad you need 5 months of railroad service in 2019 to qualify in the benefit year beginning July 1, 2020.

WAITING PERIOD:

A “waiting period” of 7 days is required for both unemployment and sickness benefit claims. Claimant should file a claim as soon as possible to fulfill their waiting period. **Please note that the CARES Act waives this waiting period for benefits with a registration period that begins 3/27/2020 or later and ends before 12/31/2020.**

MAXIMUM DAILY BENEFIT AMOUNT:

\$80 per day or **\$800.00** for a completed 14 day claim. (FIRST FULL CLAIM PAYS **\$560.00** before sequestration)
The Maximum Daily Benefit starts at **\$80** per day.

- The daily payable rate is **\$75.44** (after **5.7%** reduction for sequestration). The waiting period claim pays **\$528.08** and subsequent full claims pay **\$754.40**, if all 14 days are claimed as days of unemployment or sickness.

BENEFITS ARE PAYABLE:

Up to 26 weeks (130 paid days) in a benefit year, up to a total of \$10,400.00 but, no more than what you had in base year earnings. The 130 paid days apply to both unemployment and to sickness benefits. If you have more than 120 months of railroad service you may receive an additional 13 weeks or 65 days of “Extended” benefits.

EARNINGS & MILEAGE RESTRICTIONS:

If you have total earnings of more than \$1605 during a 14-day registration period unemployment benefits are not payable. This includes vacation pay & non-railroad work as well as railroad work. The earnings restriction does not apply to the waiting period. The mileage restriction for train & engine people is 1300 miles in a 14 day period.

CLAIMING UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS:

You must complete an application and submit it to our office within 30 days. The 14 day claim cards must be received in a Board office within 15 days of the last day on the claim or the date released to you, whichever is later. However, do not mail your claim card before the ending date of the card. Always start your claim with a day of unemployment only.

CLAIMING SICKNESS BENEFITS: (on or off the job injury)

Obtain a sickness benefit application from your employer, labor organization or the Railroad Retirement Board. Complete your portion of the application and have your doctor complete his portion. You must be off work for at least 4 consecutive days to start a claim for sickness benefits and a total of 5 days during the 14 day registration period. If you are registered for our Benefit Online Services, you can complete your sickness claims online.

IF EITHER APPLICATION OR CLAIM CARDS WILL BE LATE, PLEASE PROVIDE A STATEMENT IN WRITING EXPLAINING WHY IT IS LATE. IF WE DO NOT RECEIVE A STATEMENT, YOUR BENEFITS WILL BE DENIED.

EARNINGS & UNEMPLOYMENT:

ALL earnings and/or work MUST be reported to the Board when you are claiming unemployment benefits. They must be reported regardless if they are railroad, non-railroad, full time or part time employment. We do maintain active program to check for any unreported employment both with the railroads and with all 50 of the states.

CONDITIONS PREVENTING THE PAYMENT OF RR UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS:

1. Inability to work because of illness or injury
2. Unavailable for work.
3. Voluntary quit.
4. Legal strike of less than 15 days.
5. Strike in violation of the Railway Labor Act.
6. Delayed filing of claims or applications.
7. Failure to report for interviews
8. Separation payments
9. Receiving unemployment benefits from the state.
10. Fraudulent claims.

You must be both able to work and available for work to claim unemployment benefits. If you retain rights to return to work for the railroad and are expected to be recalled to work in the spring you may be considered “available for work” on that basis. If you are a BMW employee, you should be checking with your call center on a daily basis if you have not filed your Rule 9. If you fail to bump or you file your Rule 9 before the 10th day, and there is work available for you, we may need to investigate why you did not accept such work. Filing of Rule 9 immediately proceeding furlough or not exercising your seniority may disqualify you from receiving unemployment benefits. Please keep a written documentation with your efforts to obtain work during your seasonal layoff. In all other cases you must be actively seeking employment in the local job market to show us that you are “available for work” unless you are suspended or discharged seeking reinstatement through your union.

APPEALS:

If you are denied unemployment benefits and you disagree with our determination you have the right to ask for reconsideration. Requests for reconsideration must be received within 60 days.

TAXATION OF RR UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS:

Railroad unemployment benefits are subject to federal income taxes & you will receive a Form 1099G from the Board. Sickness benefits resulting from an on-the-job injury are not taxable. All other Sickness Benefits are subject to federal income taxes & you will receive a Form W-2. In the Board’s legal opinion, railroad unemployment benefits are not subject to any State income tax.

SEQUESTRATION:

In March 2013, the RRB began reducing Unemployment and Sickness Benefits due to federal budget cuts. The most current rate of reductions began October 1, 2019 at **5.7%**. The current rate will remain in effect through September 30, 2021 (End of our fiscal year), or until amended by legislative or executive action. Reductions in future fiscal years, should they occur, will be calculated based on applicable law. The **5.7%** reduction in Unemployment and Sickness Benefits will reduce the total maximum payable in a 2-week period with 10 days of unemployment from **\$800.00** to **\$754.40**.