

UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS & RETURNING TO WORK COVID-19 PANDEMIC QUICK TAKES

If a workplace reopens following a COVID-19 shutdown, must employees return to work?

- As long as eligibility requirements under the CARES Act are met, individuals are not required to return to work and may continue to receive unemployment benefits. These requirements may include:
 - If you have tested positive for COVID-19;
 - If a member of your household has been diagnosed with COVID-19;
 - If you are providing care for a member of your household who was diagnosed with COVID-19;
 - If you do not have childcare due to COVID-19;
 - If you are unable to reach your place of employment due to an imposed quarantine, or because advised by medical provider to self-quarantine due to COVID-19.
- States may have identified special return-to-work timelines for vulnerable individuals, such as those over the age of 65 or those with medical conditions. Check with your state labor department.
- The Occupational Safety and Health Act requires workplaces to be “free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm.” Employees may refuse to work if they believe they are in “imminent danger.”