

## **Emergency Changes to Georgia Unemployment in Response to COVID-19**

The Georgia Department of Labor announced this week that it passed emergency rules regarding partial unemployment claims and shifted Career Center registration from in-person to online. The rule will remain in effect for 120 days or until the agency proposes or adopts a subsequent rule.

### **Summary of Requirements & Penalties for Employers**

Currently, employers are required to file partial claims on behalf of their full-time employees whenever it is necessary to temporarily reduce work hours or there is no work available for a short period and the employee earns an amount not exceeding their maximum weekly benefit amount plus \$50.

On March 16, the Georgia Department of Labor (GDOL) announced new requirements for employers filing partial unemployment claims. Partial claims filed on or after March 15, 2020:

1. All partial claims must be filed by employers online in the Employer Portal;
2. All employers must file partial claims with respect to any week during which an employee (full or part time) works less than full time due to a partial or total company shutdown caused by the COVID\*19 public health emergency;
3. Any employer found to be in violation must pay to the Commissioner the full amount of benefits paid to the employee.

### **Employees Excluded from this Rule**

The GDOL provides several circumstances in which employers should not file a partial claim. These include employees who:

- Will be paid for the temporary layoff period (e.g., paid salary, paid sick leave, paid vacation or paid family leave);
- Are/were on scheduled leave prior to the layoff period (e.g., a leave of absence or medical leave);
- Are employed by a temporary agency and are currently working at your place of business.
- Were employed in another state in the last 18 months (employees should be directed to apply for unemployment benefits online); and
- Were employed with the federal government or on active military service in the last 18 months (employees should be directed to apply for unemployment benefits online).

### **How to File Partial Unemployment Claims Online**

To submit partial claims, employers not already registered must register online on the GDOL Employer Portal. Once registered, employers can perform the following steps to file partial claims:

1. Log into the Employer Portal.
2. Select the employer account number under Registered Account.
3. Select the File Partial Claims link under Common Links.
4. Follow the on-screen instructions.

For step-by-step registration instructions, there is an Administrator Guide available for download on the Employer Portal page.

Link to the GDOL for additional information:

<https://dol.georgia.gov/blog/new-information-filing-unemployment-partial-claims-and-reemployment-services>