

MONTGOMERY, Ala. —

Alabama Department of Labor Secretary Fitzgerald Washington on Monday announced that workers in the state who are not able to work due to the coronavirus outbreak will be eligible to file for unemployment benefits.

Based on current guidance from the U.S. Department of Labor, the Department of Labor is modifying existing unemployment compensation rules to allow workers to file a claim for unemployment compensation benefits who are affected in any of the following way:

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- Those who are quarantined by a medical professional or a government agency
- Those who are laid off or sent home without pay for an extended period by their employer due to COVID-19 concerns
- Those who are diagnosed with COVID-19
- Or, those who are caring for an immediate family member who is diagnosed with COVID-19.

The requirement that a laid-off worker be “able and available” to work while receiving unemployment compensation benefits has been modified for claimants who are affected by COVID-19 in any of the situations listed above.

Additionally, claimants will also not have to search for other work provided they take reasonable steps to preserve their ability to come back to that job when the quarantine is lifted or the illness subsides.

The waiting week, which is typically the first week of compensable benefits, will also be waived. Certain criteria and exceptions may apply, and are subject to change. Verification of illness or quarantine may be required.

Workers can file for benefits online beginning March 23, 2020, at www.labor.alabama.gov or by calling 1-866-234-5382. Online filing is encouraged.