

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

*COVID-19 Guidance for Vermont Employers and Employees*

*As of March 19, 2020*

## EMPLOYERS

**Q: What if I am forced shut down my business due to COVID-19 impact? Are my employees eligible for unemployment benefits?**

A: If you are forced to temporarily shut down business operations, your employees will likely be eligible for unemployment benefits, assuming they meet all other eligibility criteria, and have a return to work date that occurs before the 10-week maximum. Under this circumstance, unemployment insurance claims made by impacted employees will be charged against the employer's account.

**Q: What if I need to temporarily reduce my employees' hours due to slow-down in business as a result of COVID-19? Are my employees eligible for unemployment benefits?**

A: If you experience a slow-down in business, causing a reduction in available work hours for employees, your employees may be eligible for partial unemployment benefits. unemployment insurance claims made by impacted employees will be charged against the employer's account.

**Q: What if I need to temporarily shut-down my operations as a result of COVID-19? Are my employees eligible for unemployment benefits?**

A: If you need to shut down operations temporarily because an employee becomes sick and other employees need to be isolated or quarantined, your employees may be able to receive unemployment benefits. unemployment insurance claims made by impacted employees will be charged against the employer's account.



**Q: What if I permanently close my business because of COVID-19 coronavirus?**

A: The Vermont Department of Labor, Workforce Development Division, provides Rapid Response services to businesses in transition, downsizing, laying off workers and/or closing a facility. This includes coordination with key state and regional partners to explore alternative layoff aversion strategies if possible.

**Q: My business has to reduce staff or close due to the global impact that COVID-19 has caused. Is there anything that can help my affected workers:**

A: The Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Program is a federal entitlement program that assists U.S. workers who have lost or may lose their jobs as a result of foreign trade. This program seeks to provide adversely affected workers with access to funding opportunities to obtain the skills, credentials, resources, and support necessary to become reemployed.

**Q: Is there any support to help me cover my operating expenses while I am shut down?**

A: The federal Small Business Administration (SBA) may be able to provide assistance through the **Economic Injury Disaster Loans** program to businesses that have suffered substantial economic injury in an eligible disaster area. Congress approved up to \$7 billion in low-interest disaster loans specifically to assist small businesses impacted by COVID-19. These loans can help small businesses meet financial obligations and cover operating expenses.

**Please contact the Agency of Commerce and Community Development website for more information.** <https://accd.vermont.gov/about-us/disaster-planning/covid-19-guidance-vermont-businesses>