



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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UNEMPLOYMENT CLAIMANTS CALLED BACK MUST ACCEPT SUITABLE WORK

MONTPELIER, VT – The Department of Labor reminds unemployed Vermonters that they must return to work if called back by their employer. While exceptions do exist for employees, such as those who have been exposed to COVID-19, or individuals who must care for a family member, those who refuse to return to suitable work may risk losing benefits. Additionally, individuals who have been laid off or furloughed, and are being paid because their employer has been accepted into the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), are not eligible for unemployment benefits. Refusing to accept employment wages, as provided by the PPP, will also be construed as a refusal of work, regardless of whether you will make less than you would collecting unemployment benefits.

“As businesses are allowed to slowly reopen safely across the state, per the Governor’s Executive Order, we have heard from employers that individuals are refusing to work or accept their employment wages because they are ‘making more’ on unemployment,” said Interim Commissioner Michael Harrington. “The Department wants to remind individuals that refusing suitable work (if you are able and available to work) or refusing employment wages through their employer, may disqualify them from receiving benefits and may constitute fraud which will be investigated.”

More information on employee exemptions, and proper recourse employers can take to report improper actions may be found at <https://labor.vermont.gov/unemployment-insurance/refusal-return-work-covid-19>. If an employer believes an employee is unjustly refusing working, they may report this activity by reporting fraud through the link above, and by clicking on the “Submit a Work Refusal Report” button.

The Department of Labor advises claimants called back to work to simply stop filing a weekly claim. Vermonters that return to work but see reduced hours, may be eligible to file a weekly claim for lost wages. These Vermonters must report all gross earnings and hours worked for the week to determine eligibility.



The CARES Act specifically provides serious legal consequences for fraudulent claims. Individuals are responsible for paying back benefits deemed to have been overpaid due to material misstatements or omissions and may face other legal penalties.

For more information please visit the Department of Labor's website at <https://labor.vermont.gov>.

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