



RRB News

U.S. Railroad Retirement Board

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Coronavirus Relief Act Impacts Railroad Workers

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, or CARES Act, signed into law by President Trump on March 27, boosts unemployment and sickness benefits for railroad workers impacted by the pandemic.

Under the CARES Act, the 1-week waiting period required before railroad workers can receive unemployment or sickness benefits is temporarily eliminated. This applies to an employee's first 2-week registration period for a period of continuing sickness or unemployment beginning after the effective date of the law and ending on or before December 31, 2020.

In addition, the amount of the unemployment benefit is increased by \$1,200 per 2-week period. This is in addition to the current biweekly maximum of \$733.98 received by most claimants. This increased amount applies to any 2-week registration periods beginning on or after April 1, 2020, through July 31, 2020.

The CARES Act includes a separate appropriation of \$425 million to pay for this added "recovery benefit," with an additional \$50 million provided to cover the cost of eliminating the waiting period. If these funds are exhausted, the new provisions will no longer apply.

The CARES Act also authorizes payment of extended unemployment benefits to rail workers who received unemployment benefits from July 1, 2019, to June 30, 2020.

Under the legislation, railroad workers with less than 10 years of service may be eligible for up to 65 days of extended benefits within 7 consecutive 2-week registration periods. Workers with 10 or more years of railroad service, who were previously eligible for up to 65 days in extended benefits, may now receive benefits for up to 130 days within 13 consecutive 2-week registration periods.

Since RRB offices are currently closed to the public due to the COVID-19 pandemic, railroad employees are encouraged to file for unemployment benefits online by establishing an account through **myRRB** at **RRB.gov**. Otherwise, applications and claims for benefits will need to be submitted by regular mail. Applications for sickness benefits must be submitted to the agency by mail, or by fax at 312-751-7185. Subsequent claims may be completed online by those with **myRRB** accounts.

(More)

The RRB will also pay sickness benefits and, in some cases, unemployment benefits, to rail workers who have tested positive for COVID-19 or been subject to a quarantine order. Further guidance on these types of situations is available at **[RRB.gov/Benefits/Coronavirus](https://www.rrb.gov/Benefits/Coronavirus)**.

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