

April 2, 2020

Georgia Department of Labor Expanded Rules & Regulations Overview

Virtual Conference - [VIEW VIDEO](#)

Speakers on this Virtual Conference

- Mark Butler, Georgia Department of Labor (GDOL) Commissioner
- Chris Clark, Georgia Chamber President & CEO (host)

Chris Clark, President & CEO of the Georgia Chamber provided an update from a Call with the White House and State Chamber of Commerce Executives:

- Small businesses and nonprofits will have access to Payment Protection Loans (PPL), tomorrow April 3rd, regulations will be released today.
- On April 10th, independent contractor and single proprietorships will be able to get Paycheck Protection Loans.
- For employers who have laid off employees, you may rehire those employees if they were fired after February 15th for full coverage from PPL.
- Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL) can be rolled into PPL.

Mark Butler, Commissioner GDOL presented highlights to the expanded rules & regulations during Covid-19 and answered questions from participants

- Due to confusion and overwhelming need, many individuals have had a hard time getting in touch with GDOL; GDOL is seeing up to 80,000 phone calls in a single day. However, with technology and bandwidth improvements, GDOL has been able to process over 250,000 claims in two weeks (used to be 5000 claims a week).
- In order to alleviate mass filings, the employers of furloughed (still employed but unpaid) workers can be filed collectively by the employer. This speeds claims and allows speedy re-employment.
- On the CARES Act, the GDOL is awaiting guidance on the administration of the CARES Act programs, specifically the \$600 in federal money provided to Unemployment Insurance (UI) beneficiaries each week. Some workers will be getting \$600 in addition to their Georgia unemployment. Others, specifically 1099s, are going to be eligible for the \$600 a week, however the GDOL is NOT currently set up to payout to individuals that have not "paid in" (i.e. W-2 employees). GDOL is working to overhaul systems to meet this new need.
- If a company hires a new employee, they should do the standard new hire reporting to the GDOL; then the GDOL can crosscheck to make sure they aren't pulling unemployment from a previous employer. It is also incumbent upon the employee to tell both the former employer and the new employer of their UI status.

- If an employee is a new hire, or has been employed in another state recently, they can apply for UI with Georgia and they can work with the Interstate Claims System. In some cases, it might be better for them to claim with the previous state. These claims will take longer than others.
- Georgia has never had a waiting period for UI benefits and has temporarily suspended a work search requirement. No one should report to a Career Center; they are closed and will remain so until the crisis passes.
- Non-profits that are self-insured (i.e. do not pay into UI system) for Unemployment Benefits will not be charged for UI coverage during this time.
- The GDOL has frozen UI taxes for businesses and non-profits. No benefits offered during this time will count against a business's account.
- Non-profits that are not reporting now, and not paying UI taxes, will be covered by CARES Act. GDOL is waiting on guidance from federal DOL.
- For employees that "walk-off" the job for any number of acceptable reasons, there will not be an individual tax rate increase for the business they left.
- It's possible that some rates and fees will go up next year because the GDOL Trust Fund is taking a huge hit during this time.
- If an employee is commission-based, an employer should go ahead and an apply for "partial" UI for them with GDOL. If they earn commission during this time, that can be subtracted from their UI benefit calculations.
- Employers should use the GDOL's employer hotline and preferably, the GDOL employer-help email address for questions during this time. This can be found on the GDOL website.

The Georgia Chamber seeks to provide access to recommendations, regulations, services and expertise to its members. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this mission remains constant. Prior to acting, members should consult their own professional advisors for information and counsel specific to the individual and unique situations faced by organizations, individuals and corporations. The opinions, interpretations and recommendations of the Georgia Chamber are informational only and should not be relied upon by the recipient as legal or professional advice. The Georgia Chamber makes no representations as to the accuracy or reliability of the content contained herein. Users of this information accept any and all risks associated with the use of such information and agree that the Georgia Chamber has no liability to user.