



MEDIA RELEASE

CT Department of Labor *Communications Office*
Sharon M. Palmer, Commissioner

Labor Department Offers Tips When Filing for Benefits During Peak Season

WETHERSFIELD, December, 29, 2015 – Traditionally, the peak period for filing unemployment insurance claims with the Department of Labor takes place between now and mid-February – often leading to longer wait times for those needing to file for unemployment benefits. With this in mind, the Connecticut Department of Labor offers the following tips when using the agency’s *TeleBenefits* or *WebBenefits* filing systems.

When to use WebBenefits (Internet Service):

Those who have already established an initial claim and are now eligible to file a weekly continued claim will find the online WebBenefits service to be the quickest method. The online service, available 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday-Friday and 12 a.m. to 11 p.m. on Sundays, can be found on the CTDOL website – www.ct.gov/dol, by clicking on *unemployment services*, then selecting *filing your claim online*, and then *click here to access*.

Those with a basic inquiry related to an unemployment claim – including address change, tax status change, reporting their return to work, or if they missed filing a weekly claim – can visit the UI Online Assistance Center at www.filectui.com for a variety of inquiry topics.

When to Use TeleBenefits (Phone Service):

Those filing an initial claim will need to call the TeleBenefits line. After answering a series of preliminary questions, callers will speak with a Customer Service Representative to complete the claim. To help reduce wait times, best times to call the TeleBenefits Center are shortly after 7:30 a.m. and soon after 1 p.m. Mondays are traditionally the busiest day of the week while Thursdays tend to be the least busy.

If the wait time will be exceeding 10 minutes, callers can use the *Call Back Option*. When this option is offered, individuals can elect to have a representative return their call at a specified time later that day or the following day. Callers getting a busy signal should continue to dial into the system, during the best times and days of the week to file.

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“We always appreciate efforts to use our online services since this helps to free up agency employees to help those needing to speak with a Customer Service Representative,” said State Labor Commissioner Sharon M. Palmer. “However, if you must speak with a staff member to complete your claim, our Call Back system has made a positive difference in terms of improved customer service.” According to Palmer, last month the average time saved by callers using the service was 58 minutes.

Initial claims can be filed on the *TeleBenefits* phone system 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday-Friday. Prior to calling, please have the following information handy:

- If available, the separation notice and most recent paystub.
- Name(s) of employer(s) in the past 6-18 months of employment.
- Dates of employment for employers in the past six months.
- Hours and wages for the most recent *calendar* week of employment.

Currently, the agency is issuing close to 38,000 payments weekly, totaling more than \$12 million in benefits. The agency no longer issues paper benefit checks, but instead provides payments via direct deposit or debit card. The change has allowed the agency to save postage and printing costs and increased the integrity of the program by eliminating lost or stolen checks.

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