



## Unemployment and Life After COVID-19

As Employers move towards getting back to work, and our “new normal”, there are several important issues they will be confronting. Ironically, many of these issues can lead to new, valid Unemployment Compensation claims.

- **Vaccines** – What is your policy going to be? Are you going to require an employee to show proof of vaccination before returning to the workplace? How are you going to handle those situations where employees can’t or won’t get vaccinated? Many Employers are working on permanent work at home solutions. If this is not an option in your workplace, an Employee who is unable to return to work (in your particular type of business) may be able to file a valid Unemployment Compensation claim even though you have work available.
- **Workplace Safety** – Making the workplace a safe place to be and implementing tough safety rules that are consistently enforced is important. Employees won’t come back to work if they don’t feel safe. These Employees could file Unemployment Compensation claims that may be valid. Many States are redefining what they consider to be “able and available” for suitable work and what constitutes a “refusal of suitable work,” in many instances making it easier for claimants to successfully file UC claims.
- **Increased Flexibility with PTO and Absences** – The “new normal” moving forward will be different, and Employee time off needs will be different. PTO/Absence/Tardiness Unemployment Compensation claims are some of the most difficult claims to win in the past. With COVID-19 being a permanent part of the landscape moving forward, they are only going to be more difficult.
- **UC Tax Rate Increases for Employers** – The States are out of money and at some point, the Federal Aid will stop. Employers can expect significant UC Tax Rate increases in calendar years 2022-2026 as the States tax Employers to replenish their General Funds.

As you navigate through the first three issues, be flexible and document, document, document. On the tax side, since UC Tax Rates are all benefit driven, it is important for all Employers to be proactive in monitoring, auditing, filing for Relief from Charges (where applicable) and protesting unwarranted charges on your Unemployment Compensation accounts.

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