



The Worker's Guide:

Your Rights During the Coronavirus (COVID-19)

(Last Revised April 8, 2020)*

**LEGAL
AID AT
WORK**

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*This guide is intended to provide accurate, general information regarding legal rights relating to employment in California, as of the date listed above. Yet because laws and legal procedures are subject to frequent change and differing interpretations, Legal Aid at Work, Centro Legal de la Raza, and Bet Tzedek Legal Services cannot ensure the information in this guide is current nor be responsible for any use to which it is put. Do not rely on this information without consulting an attorney or the appropriate agency about your rights in your particular situation. Please note that Coronavirus and COVID-19 are used interchangeably in this document.

1. What if I lost my job or was required to take leave?

➤ You may qualify for Unemployment Insurance Benefits:

If you have lost your job or your employer forced you to take unpaid time off, you may qualify for Unemployment Insurance benefits (UI) through the California Employment Development Department (EDD).

What are the requirements to get unemployment benefits?

- You must be “able and available to work.” That means you must be authorized to work in the U.S. AND you must be healthy.
- Usually, you need to be looking for work to receive the benefits, BUT if you are temporarily out of work because of COVID-19 and expect to go back to the same employer, you may not be required to seek work.

When can I get unemployment benefits?

- The usual 1-week waiting period has been waived by the governor’s executive order. You may start getting benefits as soon as EDD can process your application, which usually takes about 3 weeks (note that this estimate depends on the applicant and the volume of applications, which is now at an all-time high).

How much are unemployment benefits?

- It depends on what your income was when you were working. It can be anywhere between \$40 and \$450 per week. From March 27, 2020 until July 31, 2020, all recipients of unemployment insurance benefits will receive an extra \$600 per week, under the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.¹
- Benefits are available for 26 weeks. The CARES Act provides for an additional 13 weeks.
- To estimate how much your benefits will be, try this online calculator by EDD: <https://www.edd.ca.gov/Unemployment/UI-Calculator.htm>
- For more on how benefits are calculated, check out this guidance from EDD: https://www.edd.ca.gov/pdf_pub_ctr/de8714ab.pdf

Where do I apply? For instructions on how to apply, please see [Question 13](#).

¹ The additional \$600 amount is provided by the CARES Act, which was signed into law on March 27, 2020. This program is still being implemented. As of April 6, 2020, the funds are not yet being distributed. **Please note that because this law is still being implemented, new guidance may be issued that changes the information provided in this guide.**

➤ **You may be entitled to Waiting Time Penalties:**

When your employment is terminated, your employer is required by law to pay you all your wages at the time of layoff/termination, including any vacation pay.

- If you are not paid all of your wages when they are due, you are entitled to one day of wages for every day you wait to get paid up to a maximum of thirty days.
- To claim your waiting time penalties, you need to file a claim with the California Labor Commissioner's office.

2. What if my hours were cut?

➤ You may qualify for Unemployment Insurance Benefits.

What are the requirements for getting unemployment when my hours are cut?

- In addition to the requirements outlined in [Question 1](#), you must meet the EDD's definition of someone who is "partially employed." This means:
 - You are still employed by your employer;
 - You worked less than your normal full-time hours because of lack of work;
 - Your normal pay is reduced because of the lack of work; and
 - Your gross pay, after deducting \$25 or 25% (whichever is greater) of your total earnings, is less than your weekly benefit.
- During the coronavirus crisis, EDD has waived the normal requirement that you submit the additional form "Notice of Reduced Earnings" ("DE 2063").
- Usually, you also need to be looking for work to receive the benefits. However, workers who have a temporarily reduced schedule due to COVID-19 and expected to return to their previous schedule with the same employer may not be required to actively seek work each week.

Where do I apply? For instructions on how to apply, please see [Question 13](#).

➤ You may also be entitled to Reporting Time Pay.

If you report to work as normally scheduled, but your employer sends you home before you work half of your usual or scheduled hours:

- Your employer must pay you for half of your usual or scheduled hours at your regular rate of pay, with a minimum of two hours and a maximum of four hours.
- However, an employer is not liable for reporting time pay if work is unavailable because of interruptions caused by an act of God or other cause not within the employer's control. COVID-19 is likely to be considered something outside your employer's control

3. What if my pay was reduced?

➤ **If your employer reduces your pay without notice** (i.e., without telling you ahead of time that your pay would be reduced):

- Your employer must pay you at your previous rate for any hours already worked;
- If you choose to continue working, it will be considered as if you have accepted this new reduced rate of pay;
- You can try to negotiate for a different rate.

➤ **If your employer reduces your pay with notice:**

- Your options are limited to: accepting, negotiating for a different rate, or quitting your job.
- If you decide to quit your job, you may qualify for Unemployment Insurance Benefits if the EDD determines that you had “good cause” to quit your job based on a “substantial reduction” in pay. There is no set rule as to what amounts to a “substantial reduction.” To determine if there was “good cause” for a voluntary departure based on a reduction in pay, EDD may consider factors such as, but not limited to:
 - Amount of the the wage reduction;
 - The claimant’s prospects for securing other work at a wage about equal with prior earnings;
 - Loss of seniority or other rights associated with a wage level;
 - Opportunities for advancement.
- Please see [Question 1](#) above for the other requirements to receive UI.

4. What if my child's school or child care is closed and I have to miss work to care for them?

➤ **You may be eligible for Unemployment Insurance Benefits**

EDD is advising people to apply for Unemployment Insurance Benefits if they have lost income because they miss work to care for a child and have exhausted all other care options.

- Please see [Question 1](#) above for the requirements to receive UI.
- You may need to provide documentation to EDD that you have exhausted your child care options.
- For instructions on how to apply, please see [Question 13](#).

➤ **You may qualify for paid leave under the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act (EPSLA), part of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFRCA).²**

What is the paid leave available under the EPSLA?

- Starting April 1, 2020, your employer is required to keep paying at least part of your wages or salary even while you are not working, for up to two weeks (80 hours) if you qualify.

Who qualifies for paid leave under the EPSLA?

- To qualify, you must be currently employed and either working or voluntarily taking time off from work. You **do not** qualify for EPSLA paid leave if you have been fired, furloughed, told there is no work, or your worksite has been shut down before you apply.
- You must work for an employer with less than 500 employees. Some small businesses with less than 50 employees are exempt, as are some healthcare providers or emergency responders.
- Some localities, like Los Angeles, have expanded EPSLA leave to all employers regardless of the number of employees.
- You must need to miss work or take leave for one of the following reasons:
 1. You are subject to a Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19;
 2. You have been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19;
 3. You are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and are seeking diagnosis;

² The FFCRA is a federal law which went into effect April 1, 2020. **Please note that because this law is still being implemented, new guidance may be issued that changes the information provided in this guide.**

4. You are caring for an individual who is subject to a quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19 or an individual who has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19;
5. You are caring for your child whose school or place of care is closed, or child care provider is unavailable, due to COVID-19 related reasons;
6. You are experiencing any other “substantially-similar condition” as specified by the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

How much is the EPSLA paid leave?

- How much you are entitled to for your paid leave depends on the reason you are taking the leave AND your normal wage or salary.
 - a. If you are taking leave for reasons 1 - 3 above, you are entitled to your normal hourly wage or salary or minimum wage for each hour of leave, for a maximum of \$511 per day, or \$5,110 total.
 - b. If you are taking leave for reasons 4 - 6 above, you are entitled to 2/3 of your normal hourly wage or salary, for a maximum of \$200 per day, or \$2,000.

I think I qualify. How do I get paid leave under the EPSLA?

You must request EPSLA leave from your employer. You should do so in writing as soon as you know you will need to take leave.

- Your employer CANNOT require that you take other paid time off such as vacation time before taking Emergency Paid Sick Leave.
- Your employer CANNOT require that you search for a replacement.

➤ **You may qualify for paid leave under the Emergency Family Medical Leave Act Expansion Act (EFMLEA)³**

What is EFMLEA paid leave?

- The EFMLEA requires an employer to pay up to 10 weeks of paid leave at 2/3 the employee’s regular rate of pay if they need to miss work because they need to care for a child whose regular school or childcare is closed because of COVID-19, up to \$200 per day or \$10,000 total.
- Your employer isn’t required to pay for the first 10 days of your leave.
- These benefits and protections expire on December 31, 2020.

Who qualifies for EFMLEA paid leave?

³ The Emergency Family Medical Leave Expansion Act (EFMLEA) is a federal law that went into effect April 1, 2020 as part of the FFCRA. **Please note that because this law is still being implemented, new guidance may be issued that changes the information provided in this guide.**

- To qualify, you must be currently employed and either working or voluntarily taking time off from work.
- You must be unable to work or telework because you are caring for a child whose school or daycare is closing or unavailable because of the coronavirus.
- You must work for an employer with less than 500 employees. Some small businesses with less than 50 employees are exempt, as are some healthcare providers or emergency responders.
- You must have worked for your employer for 30 days.

I think I qualify. How do I get paid leave under the EFMLEA?

You must request EFMLEA leave from your employer. You should do so in writing as soon as you know you will need to take leave.

➤ **If you do not qualify for UI or EPSLA leave, you may qualify for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance.** See [Question 5](#) for more information on this benefit.

➤ **Your job may be protected under the Family School Partnership Act**

This protects you from losing your job while you need to miss work. If your employer has at least 25 employees, you may be eligible to receive up to 40 hours of job protection per year. (see Labor Code [section 230.8](#)).

5. What if I am a gig worker, self-employed, or an independent contractor? Am I eligible for unemployment insurance?

➤ You may be eligible for **Unemployment Insurance** if you are misclassified as an independent contractor.

Generally, only employees are eligible to receive unemployment insurance, not independent contractors. However, many workers are misclassified as independent contractors when they are, in fact, employees under California law and entitled to employee protections and benefits such as unemployment insurance.

If you think you may have been misclassified as an independent contractor you should apply for Unemployment Insurance Benefits.

The EDD will decide whether you were misclassified by applying a recent California law, widely referred to as AB 5. For more information about whether you are misclassified, go to the EDD website here: <https://www.labor.ca.gov/employmentstatus/workers/>

➤ Make sure to also check the other requirements for unemployment benefits in the response to [Question 1](#).

➤ You may be eligible for **Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA)**, provided by the CARES Act.⁴

If you are sure that you are truly an independent contractor, are self-employed, or don't qualify for UI benefits because you are a part-time worker or don't have enough employment history, you may qualify for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance.

What is PUA?

- PUA is monetary assistance for workers that are excluded from Unemployment Insurance Benefits, including:
 - a. Self-employed workers, including independent contractors
 - b. Gig workers
 - c. Freelancers
 - d. Workers seeking part-time work
 - e. Workers who do not have a long enough work history to qualify for unemployment benefits.
- PUA is available from January 27, 2020 until December 31, 2020
- PUA is NOT available for undocumented workers.

⁴ PUA is available as part CARES Act, which was signed into law on March 27, 2020. As of April 6, 2020, it is not yet possible to apply for this program.

Who qualifies for PUA?

- You must be legally authorized to work in the U.S.
- You must be unable to telework with pay and cannot be receiving paid sick pay.
- You can't work because of one of these reasons:
 1. You or a member of your household have been diagnosed with COVID-19, you have been advised to quarantine by a healthcare professional, or you are caring for someone diagnosed with COVID-19;
 2. Your place of employment is closed as a direct result of COVID-19;
 3. You had to quit your job as a direct result of COVID-19;
 4. You were scheduled to start employment and do not have a job or cannot reach their place of employment as a result of a COVID-19 outbreak;
 5. You have become the breadwinner for a household because the head of household has died as a direct result of COVID-19.

How much is PUA?

- The minimum you will receive will likely be around \$190 per week (½ the average weekly benefit for UI), plus the extra \$600 per week under the CARES Act until July 31, 2020.
- If eligible, claimants will be able to receive up to 39 weeks of benefits.

How do I apply for PUA? You will be able to apply through the Employment Development Department ("EDD"), but **as of the date of this guide, it is not possible to apply yet**. EDD is awaiting guidance from the federal government to implement the program. In the meantime, you should create an account on EDD's website so you are ready to apply when the program is available. For how to set up an online account, see EDD's guide here: https://www.edd.ca.gov/pdf_pub_ctr/de2338h.pdf

➤ **You may also be eligible for other benefits:**

- CalFresh (food stamps): Apply here: <https://www.getcalfresh.org/>
- General Assistance: More here: <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/county-offices>

6. How can I get money if I am sick or am quarantined?

You may be eligible for several forms of monetary relief if you get sick or are quarantined, including California Paid Sick Days, EPSLA Paid Leave, State Disability Insurance, and Workers Compensation.

➤ California Paid Sick Days

What are California paid sick days?

- In California, all employees have a right to at least 3 paid sick days. An employee starts accruing paid sick days when the employee starts work, and the employee can use the sick days after they have worked for the employer for 90 days.

When can I use paid sick days?

- Employees are entitled to use accrued sick days for absences due to:
 - Their own illness;
 - Diagnosis, care, or treatment of an existing health condition; or
 - Preventative care (includes self-quarantine if recommended by civil authorities and time off due to potential exposure or travel to high risk areas).
 - You may also use paid sick days when your workplace closes because of COVID-19, so long as you have not been fired. However, your employer cannot force you to take paid sick days, it is your choice as a worker to take those days.

How many sick days do I get?

- Employers may limit sick days an employee can use to 3 days, unless the employer is operating in a city that provides additional sick days, for example:
 - In the City of Los Angeles, employees are entitled to 6 paid sick days.
 - Places like [Berkeley](#), [Emeryville](#), [Oakland](#), [San Diego](#), [San Francisco](#) and [Santa Monica](#) require employers to provide more than 3 sick days.

How do I use my paid sick days?

- Provide notice to your employer as soon as you can once you know you need to miss work. You do not need to provide a doctor's note.
- Your employer CANNOT *retaliate* against you for using your paid sick days.
- Your employer CANNOT *force* you to take paid sick days.

➤ **You may qualify for paid time off under the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act (EPSLA).**

The EPSLA requires employers to pay up to 2 weeks (or 80 hours) of paid leave if you have been diagnosed with COVID-19, are experiencing symptoms and seeking diagnosis, you have been advised by a healthcare provider to self-quarantine, or you are caring for someone experiencing symptoms or advised by a healthcare provider to self-quarantine.

The EPSLA applies if you are currently working or voluntarily taking leave from work, and, in some locations, only if your employer has less than 500 employees. See the response to [Question 4](#) for more information.

➤ **You may qualify for income replacement from State Disability Insurance (SDI)**

What is Disability Insurance (SDI)?

- If you are sick or required to quarantine, you may qualify for SDI.
- SDI pays you up to 60% or 70% of your wages, up to \$1,300 per month depending on your former income, for up to 52 weeks.

What are the requirements to get State Disability Insurance?

- You must be employed or actively looking for work at the time your disability begins.
- You must have medical certification of illness, disability, or required quarantine.
- You must have paid into SDI during the base period. How do you know if you paid into SDI? Take a look at your paycheck. If there is a deduction for “CA SDI,” you paid into SDI.
- **Workers that are undocumented MAY QUALIFY.** Undocumented workers can apply using a paper application and leaving the box requesting a social security number blank. You may need to provide your W2s.

When can I get State Disability Insurance benefits?

The usual 1-week waiting period has been waived by the governor’s executive order. You may start getting benefits as soon as EDD can process your application.

Where do I apply?

Apply with EDD online here: https://www.edd.ca.gov/Disability/SDI_Online.htm. If you are undocumented, you may apply using a paper application and leaving the box requesting a social security number blank.

➤ **If you got sick at work, you may qualify for Workers' Compensation**

If you contract coronavirus on the job during the regular course of your work, you may be eligible for workers' compensation benefits, including:

- Disability payments: Payments are generally 2/3 of the gross wages you lose while you are recovering from a work-related illness or injury, up to a maximum weekly amount set by law.
- Medical treatment

To file a workers' compensation claim an employee must file a DWC-1 claim form with their employer. Learn more about your eligibility for workers' compensation here:

<https://www.dir.ca.gov/InjuredWorkerGuidebook/InjuredWorkerGuidebook.ht>

7. If I can't work because I need to take care of a family member who is sick, how can I get money?

There is more than one way to get income replacement when taking care of a sick family member, including Paid Sick Days, EPSLA Paid Leave, and Paid Family Leave.

➤ **California Paid Sick Days**

You can take paid sick days for 1) taking care of family members (including a parent, child, spouse, registered domestic partner, grandparent, grandchild, or sibling); 2) school closure; 3) quarantine; and 4) self isolation. Please see our response to [Question 6](#) above for more details.

➤ **Emergency Paid Sick Leave**

The EPSLA requires employers to pay up to 2 weeks of paid leave if you are caring for someone who is subject to a quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19 or has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19. You may qualify for Emergency Paid Sick Leave if paid leave if you are currently working or voluntarily taking leave from work, and, in some locations, only if your employer has less than 500 employees. See [Question 4](#) for more details.

➤ **Paid Family Leave (PFL)**

What is Paid Family Leave?

- Paid Family Leave pays part of your wages or salary if you need to take unpaid time off work or are unable to look for work because you are bonding with a new baby or caring for a close family relative who has a serious health condition. This includes caring for a child, parent, parent-in-law, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, spouse, or domestic partner.

How much is Paid Family Leave?

- Paid Family Leave can give you 60% or 70% of your income, up to \$1,300 per week, for up to 6 weeks.
- Applicants who file after July 1, 2020 will be eligible up to 8 weeks of PFL.

Who is eligible for Paid Family Leave?

- You must be employed or actively looking for work at the time your family leave begins.
- The serious health condition must be certified by a healthcare provider or a public health officer.
- You must have paid into State Disability Insurance (noted as "CA SDI" on paystubs) in the past 5 to 18 months.

- For a complete list of requirements, go to the EDD website:
https://edd.ca.gov/Disability/Am_I_Eligible_for_PFL_Benefits.htm
- **Citizenship and immigration status do not affect eligibility**

Where do I apply?

Apply online with EDD [here](#). If you are undocumented, you may apply using a paper application and leaving the box requesting a social security number blank. You may need to provide your W2s.

8. Is my job protected if I get sick or am quarantined?

There are several laws that may protect your job (and possibly your health benefits) so what when you come back from time off, your job or a similar one will be waiting.

➤ **California Family Rights Act (CFRA) & Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)**

What is the CFRA / FMLA?

- The CFRA and FMLA can each provide unpaid leave for up to 12 weeks to care for a serious health condition. This protects your job while you are on leave, which means that you cannot be fired & at the conclusion of your leave you have the right to be reinstated to the same or comparable position (regardless of layoffs). The 12 weeks do not have to be taken all at once.
- During your leave, your employer must continue your health benefits.

Who is eligible for CFRA / FMLA leave?

- A worker that has a serious health condition that requires time off from work.
 - Coronavirus is a serious medical condition, but FMLA / CFRA leave is not available for people who are quarantined or complying with shelter-in-place orders who do not have any symptoms.
- The worker must have worked for the employer for at least 1 year (but the year of service doesn't need to be consecutive)
- The worker worked at least 1250 hours for the employer in the previous year;
- The worker's employer must have more than 50 employees within a 75 mile radius of the worker's job location.

How do I request CFRA / FMLA leave?

- Contact your employer in writing (for example, by text or email) and communicate your desire for leave under the FMLA / CFRA.

➤ **Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA) & Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

What is the FEHA / ADA?

- Under the FEHA / ADA, your employer may be required to provide you with unpaid leave from work as an accommodation for your medical condition.
- There is no requirement under the FEHA or ADA that your employer continue your health benefits.

Who is protected under the FEHA / ADA?

- The worker's employer must have at least 5 employees (under the FEHA) and 15 employees (under the ADA).

- The worker must have an “actual disability,” which may include having a compromised immune system, or if you are experiencing severe complications from coronavirus, such as pneumonia.

How do I get protection under the FEHA / ADA?

- Contact your employer in writing (for example, by text or email) and explain that you have a disability under the ADA and FEHA definition and that you are requesting an accommodation of unpaid leave. You need to state when you expect to return to work (e.g., 8 weeks).

9. Is my job protected if I need to take care of a sick family member?

There are state and federal laws that protect your job when you take care of sick family members, making sure that you can go back to your job after your leave.

➤ **California Family Rights Act (CFRA) & Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)**

- Up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave is available under the CFRA / FMLA for workers that need to take time off work to care for a parent, spouse, domestic partner, minor child, adult dependent child with a serious health condition. This protects your job while you are on leave. It also requires that employers continue your health benefits.
- For requirements and eligibility, see [Question 8](#) above.
- You may also be entitled to all or part of your salary while you are on leave. See [Question 8](#) above for more information.

10. What if my employer discriminates or retaliates against me for being sick?

If your employer discriminates or retaliates against you because you are sick, there are several laws that may protect you.

➤ **Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA) / American with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

What is protected under the FEHA and ADA?

- Under the FEHA and ADA, an employer may not discriminate or retaliate against an employee because of the employee's disability. This includes discriminating against an employee for being associated with someone with a disability.
 - For example, an employer may not:
 - Fire an employee because they have or have been exposed to coronavirus.
 - Fire an employee because they have a family member who has been exposed to coronavirus.
- If you have a disability (as defined by the FEHA / ADA), you have the right to reasonable accommodation, such as telecommuting.
- Your employer must keep employee medical information confidential and private.
- Employers may not ask employees who do not have coronavirus symptoms if they have medical conditions that put them at increased risk of coronavirus.

Who is protected under the FEHA and ADA?

- The FEHA and ADA only apply to employers of a certain size. The FEHA applies to employers with 5 or more employees, and the ADA applies to employers with 15 or more employees
- The employee must have a "disability" as defined by the law, be "regarded as" having a disability, or be associated with a person with a disability.

11. What benefits can I receive if I am undocumented?

➤ **If you otherwise meet the requirements, you may be eligible to receive:**

- [State Disability Insurance](#)
- [California Paid Sick Days](#)
- [Paid Family Leave](#)
- [Workers' Compensation](#)

➤ **Do I qualify for Unemployment Insurance Benefits?**

No. You are not eligible for UI benefits unless you have some form of work authorization.

There is a statewide movement to provide benefits to undocumented workers, but as of the time of this guide, no benefits are available except those listed above. There are some informal relief funds to help; ask your local social or legal services provider if there are any that you may qualify for.

Some resources are available at these websites:

- Legal Aid at Work
 - Relief Funds: <https://legalaidatwork.org/blog/relief-funds/>
 - Employment Rights: <https://legalaidatwork.org/factsheet/undocumented-workers-employment-rights/>
- California Immigrant Youth Justice Alliance: <https://ciyja.org/covid19/>

➤ **Public Charge Rule:** United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has stated that it will not consider treatment or preventative care related to COVID-19 as part of the public charge inadmissibility determination. State benefits that are not funded by federal dollars will not be considered under the Public Charge rule.

- For more information on how obtaining benefits may impact your application for adjustment of status, consult an immigration attorney.

12. What if I am pregnant and I need to take leave?

If you are pregnant and need to take leave, you may be eligible for job protection and income replacement.

➤ **Job Protection: Pregnancy Disability Leave (PDL)**

What is pregnancy disability leave?

- The Pregnancy Disability Leave Act provides a worker up to 4 months of unpaid leave if they are “disabled by pregnancy.” A worker can be “disabled by pregnancy” if there is a risk to the pregnancy or after successful completion of pregnancy.
 - You may qualify if your pregnancy is at risk due to possible exposure to the coronavirus.
- During your leave, your employer must continue your health benefits.
- If you need more than 4 months of leave, the California Family Rights Act may provide additional job protection. See more information in [Question 8](#) above.

Who does it protect?

- California’s Disability Leave law applies to most employers with 5 or more employees.

➤ **Income: State Disability Insurance (SDI) and Paid Family Leave (PFL)**

- During your pregnancy and after birth, you may be eligible for income replacement through State Disability Insurance. See [Question 6](#) for details.
- After your baby’s birth, you may be eligible for Paid Family Leave while you are bonding with your baby. See [Question 7](#) for details on requirements.

13. How do I apply for unemployment?

You can apply for unemployment benefits online, by fax, by mail, or by phone.

- Online: https://www.edd.ca.gov/Unemployment/UI_Online.htm
- Phone: English 1-800-300-5616
Spanish 1-800-326-8937
- By Mail or Fax: You can find the forms online here:
https://www.edd.ca.gov/Unemployment/Forms_and_Publications.htm#FillInForms

For instructions please see the following videos provided by EDD:

- English:
 - Benefit Programs Online Overview and Registration for New Users
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l0O37hyLU5Y&feature=youtu.be>
 - UI Online Overview and Registration
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-00AJsrLjw&feature=youtu.be>
- Spanish:
 - Benefit Programs Online Overview and Registration for New Users
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kkdtgavMjgl&feature=youtu.be>
 - UI Online Overview and Registration
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FnZF_dOcRIY&feature=youtu.be

14. What information will I need to start a claim for Unemployment Insurance?

- Personal Information: Social Security Number, drivers license or State ID card number, work authorization documents (if not a United States Citizen).
- Work History Information: Employer information including legal company name, supervisor's name, address (mailing and physical location) and phone number.
 - Try to use the official name of the business on your paycheck or W-2.
 - Information on all the employers you worked for during the past 18 months, including name, address (mailing and physical location), the dates of employment, gross wages earned, hours worked per week, hourly rate of pay, and the reason you are no longer working.
- Helpful employment related documents to have on hand:
 - Last paystub and W-2 from last employer (or 1099 if you believe you were improperly paid as an independent contractor)

- Also see the EDD checklist at this link: https://www.edd.ca.gov/pdf_pub_ctr/de2326.pdf

15. What if I am required to work but I do not think that it is safe to do so?

➤ **You may qualify for Emergency Paid Sick Leave**

The EPSLA requires employers to pay up to 2 weeks of paid leave if you are caring for someone who is subject to a quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19 or has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19. You may qualify for Emergency Paid Sick Leave if paid leave if you are currently working or voluntarily taking leave from work, and, in some locations, only if your employer has less than 500 employees. See [Question 4](#) for more details.

➤ **You may have protections under under Labor Code Section 6311.**

Under Labor Code Section 6311 a worker may refuse to perform unsafe work as long as it is hazardous enough that any reasonable person would think that their health and safety would be in danger. Here are some steps you can take:

- First, offer to do the work only if the employer is willing to make work safe. Under the current circumstances, that may be only to offer to work from home. Alternatively, the employer should provide proper equipment to make the work safe.
- If the employer refuses, and the worker refuses to do work because they reasonably find it to be unsafe, the worker should offer to do other work that they considered to be safe.

16. Can my employer force me to take Paid Time Off, Vacation Time, or Paid Sick Time?

If a worker is quarantined due to the virus, an employer cannot require that the worker use paid sick leave; that is the worker's choice.

If the worker decides to use paid sick leave, the employer can require they take a minimum of two hour of paid sick leave. The determination of how much paid sick leave will be used is up to the employee.

HOWEVER, employers may require employees to use their vacation or PTO before they are allowed to take unpaid leave.

17. What if I still need to pay my taxes?

Deadline to File: In response to COVID-19, the IRS has moved "Tax Day" (the deadline to file your taxes) from April 15, 2020 to July 15, 2020.

- If you cannot file by July 15th, request an extension so you do not get a penalty. If the extension is granted, you will likely need to file by October 15, 2020.
- If you OWE any taxes, you still need to pay by July 15, 2020.

Deadline to Pay: The April 15, 2020 deadline to pay any taxes you may owe with your return has also been extended to July 15, 2020.

- The IRS will begin to assess penalties and interest on taxes you may owe, on July 15, 2020 if they go unpaid.
- **If you are expecting a refund, file your return as soon as possible.**

MORE RESOURCES ON TAX ISSUES:

IRS: <https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus>

California Franchise Tax Board:

<https://www.ftb.ca.gov/file/when-to-file/due-dates-personal.html>

18. Other Resources

GENERAL RESOURCES

Benefits Summary for Workers Impacted by COVID-19:

<https://www.labor.ca.gov/coronavirus2019/#chart>

Legal Aid at Work FAQs about coronavirus: <https://bit.ly/2IJOd5F>

Labor & Workforce Development Agency: <https://www.labor.ca.gov/Coronavirus2019/>

Labor Commissioner: <https://www.dir.ca.gov/dlse/2019-Novel-Coronavirus.htm>

EDD: https://edd.ca.gov/about_edd/coronavirus-2019.htm

Cal-OSHA: https://edd.ca.gov/about_edd/coronavirus-2019.htm

FOR GIG WORKERS / MISCLASSIFIED WORKERS

Gig Workers Rising: <https://gigworkersrising.org/get-informed/covid19-resources/>

GENERAL RESOURCES FOR UNDOCUMENTED CALIFORNIANS

California Immigrant Youth Justice Alliance: <https://ciyja.org/covid19/>

Legal Aid at Work:

- Relief Funds: <https://legalaidatwork.org/blog/relief-funds/>
- Employment Rights:
<https://legalaidatwork.org/factsheet/undocumented-workers-employment-rights/>

OTHER GENERAL RESOURCES

Western Center on Law and Poverty:

<https://wclp.org/covid-19-coronavirus-information-response-and-considerations/>