

# Claiming an Unemployment Payment

You must also inform the Social Welfare Office of any change in your circumstances.

Specifically, you must inform the Department if you:

- take up voluntary work
- receive any other benefit or assistance
- return to education
- leave the country
- become unable to take up employment
- your family circumstances change

If you receive an overpayment, you may be asked to repay it regardless of whether the fault was yours or the Department's. The amount repaid weekly is subject to rules that state you cannot be left with less than the current rate of Supplementary Welfare Allowance. Should an overpayment arise contact your local unemployed centre or the INOU for information.

## REMEMBER

To qualify for an unemployment payment you must be genuinely seeking, available for and capable of full time employment.

It is important that you keep a record of all attempts you have made to find employment. Get a scrapbook or a folder and note all phone calls you have made, letters you have sent, copies of ads in the newspapers you have answered and letters you have received from employers.

Under the provisions of the national Employment Action Plan (EAP), you may be called for an interview, where you may be offered a number of options eg. a job, a training/education programme, an employment programme or work experience, etc. or you may be referred to the Local Employment

Service (LES) for more intensive guidance.

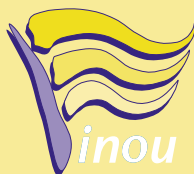
You may wish to note that under the EAP:

- The Department of Social and Family Affairs writes to each person on the live register at 6/9 months unemployment threshold. This letter includes an interview time with FÁS
- FÁS will inform the Department if you fail to attend the interview but will take no action themselves. The Department may require you to attend interview in the local labour exchange Your payment may be discontinued if you can give no reasonable explanation for not attending the FÁS interview
- If you attend interview but do not take up an option offered to you, FÁS will inform the department through its regular tracking reports
- The Department may interview you themselves to determine the result of your failure to attend a FÁS interview

If you require any advice or have any queries in relation to the contents of this leaflet, please contact either the INOU or your local Resource Centre for the Unemployed

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**This leaflet is designed to assist people who have recently, or are about to, become unemployed. If you become unemployed, it is vital that you register immediately with both FÁS and your local Social Welfare Office**

## In order to receive an unemployment payment you must be:

- Aged 16 or over for Unemployment Benefit or 18 and over for Unemployment Assistance
- Unemployed for at least three days out of any six
- Available for full time work
- Capable of full time work
- Genuinely seeking full time work

## UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT

Unemployment Benefit is based on an individual's contribution record or 'stamps'. You must have paid 39 contributions since starting work, and 39 contributions within the governing contribution year. The governing contribution year is the tax year preceding a claim. If you have used up your unemployment benefit, you need to work and pay 13 contributions before you can claim a new unemployment benefit payment.

If you are receiving the following payments and you have the required contributions, you may claim half the personal rate of unemployment benefit:

- One Parent Family Payment
- Widow/er's Contributory Pension
- Widow/er's Non-Contributory Pension
- Deserted Wives Benefit

No increase is paid for child dependants.

## UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE

Unemployment Assistance is a means tested social welfare payment for those who do not have sufficient contributions to claim unemployment benefit.

The following are counted as means:

- Cash income, including income earned by spouses, occupational pensions, renting a room in your home
- The value of any property except the home you live in
- Investments, savings, capital
- The value of benefit and privilege arising from food and lodging in a parent's home

NB: There are some disregards and exceptions. Check with the INOU, your local unemployed/ resource centre or social welfare office.

You must provide information on your means when asked or your claim may be delayed or refused

## What you need in order to claim an unemployment payment

- A P45 or a letter from your employer saying when you finished work. A letter from your employer indicating that you finished work through no fault of your own may help speed up your claim.
- Your long form birth certificate
- Proof of your address (eg. ESB bill, phone bill, etc.)

- For Unemployment Benefit, you also need to bring your P60 (ie. the record of your earnings in the relevant tax year)
- Proof that you are seeking full time employment. You will be asked what sort of work you are looking for and what hours you are available to work. If possible be flexible. You must show that you are looking for full time employment and are willing to accept any "reasonable" offer of employment
- If you have children you may be asked what childminding arrangements you have in place, as you must show you can take up work at short notice
- Proof that you are registered with FÁS
- School leavers are not entitled to Unemployment Assistance for three months following the completion of their Leaving Certificate or from the time they ceased education
- Parents on unemployment payments will continue to receive the child dependent allowance during this three-month period

## INTERIM PAYMENTS

While you are waiting for your claim to be decided you may be entitled to an Interim Payment, or an Exceptional or Urgent Needs payment from the Health Board. Ask about this in the Employment Exchange when you are claiming your Unemployment payment.

## WITHDRAWAL OF AN UNEMPLOYMENT PAYMENT

You can lose your entitlement to an unemployment payment if:

- You refuse a suitable job offer, including Community Employment or a suitable FÁS course
- You are suspected or convicted of fraud in relation to a social welfare payment.