

Prevent Fraud : Information for Claimants

The D.C. Department of Employment Services (DOES) is the only source of information and support for any unemployment claim in the District of Columbia. If you believe you are the victim of identity theft or have reason to believe your personal information has been compromised, please take the following steps:

Immediately contact the Federal Trade Commission and/or the Attorney General's office

District of Columbia Residents:

Office of the Attorney General for the District of Columbia
4441 4th Street NW, Suite 1100 South
Washington, D.C. 20001
Phone: (202) 442 – 9828
Website: <https://oag.dc.gov>

Out-of-State Residents:

Visit [Report Unemployment Identity Theft](#) to contact the local office.

REPORT THE IDENTITY THEFT

You have the right to obtain any police report filed in the United States regarding this incident. If you are the victim of fraud or identity theft, you also have the right to file a police report.

1. Report the fraud to the U.S. Department of Justice's National Center for Disaster Fraud (NCDF) by completing an [NCDF Complaint Form](#) online, or by calling 866-720-5721.
2. Report the identity theft to DOES: [Report Suspicious UI Communication](#).
 - If you live out of state, please use the State Directory for Reporting Unemployment Identity Theft at the bottom of this [U.S. Department of Labor webpage](#) to find out how to contact the state agency.
 - If possible, report the fraud online. An online report will save you time and be easier for the agency to process.
3. Keep any confirmation or case number you receive. If you speak with anyone, keep a record of with whom you spoke and the date and time.
4. Follow the steps the agency advises.
5. Report the fraud to your employer. Keep a copy of any confirmation you received.

PROTECT YOUR CREDIT

Place a free, one-year fraud alert by contacting one of the national credit bureaus. Use the credit bureau contact information provided. If you contact one credit bureau, they are obligated to share with the other two.

- Check your credit reports regularly at [AnnualCreditReport.com](#).
- Consider the option to get a free credit report every week, through April 20, 2022, from each of the three national credit bureaus.
- Visit [IdentityTheft.gov](#) to file a report and get a personal recovery plan if you find new signs of identity theft, like accounts or transactions you don't recognize.

Please visit the U.S. Department of Labor website to view [Report Unemployment Identity Theft](#).

UNEMPLOYMENT FRAUD AND IMPROPER PAYMENT

WHAT IS UI FRAUD?

If you knowingly collect benefits based on false or inaccurate information that you intentionally provided when you filed your claim, you are committing fraud. Unemployment Insurance fraud is punishable by law and violators could face several serious penalties and consequences. Examples of UI fraud could include:

- Returning to work while collecting UI benefits
- Working a part-time job without reporting earnings to the state, thereby collecting more benefits than allowed
- Performing temporary work while collecting UI benefits without reporting the earnings when filing a weekly claim
- Withholding information or providing false information to the state UI agency
- Applying for UI benefits while in an ineligible status based on the agency's findings

There are federally imposed penalties for fraudulent overpayments that became effective October 1, 2014. Anyone who collects Unemployment Insurance benefits is legally responsible for following the requirements set by state law. Failure to follow the rules can result in serious consequences that will impact you and your family.

WHAT IS AN IMPROPER PAYMENT?

An improper payment of unemployment insurance is when you receive benefit payments to which you are not entitled. When an improper payment of benefits occurs and is identified, you will receive a document from DOES explaining this decision and detailing the full amount of the improper payment(s). Some of the most common reasons for improper payments are:

- Failure to report everything you earned
- Incorrectly reporting how much you earned, for example, reporting "take home" pay, instead of gross pay
- Receiving back pay from your employer for the weeks you received unemployment benefits
- A decision by an Administrative Law Judge in the Office of Administrative Hearings to overturn an earlier ruling that you were entitled to benefits
- Continuing to file for benefits after returning to full-time work

Claimants are responsible for paying back the full amount they were improperly paid. Repayment may be made either in a lump sum or as part of a payment plan agreement with DOES. Future unemployment benefits may also be denied if there is an unpaid balance owed. If repayment is not made, legal action may be taken to collect the payment. Your DC income tax refunds may be used to pay off the amount owed. If you are a District government employee, your wages may be used to repay the amount you owe.

By federal law, if DOES finds that payments made to you were fraudulent because you reported false or dishonest information, you will need to pay back the amount plus 15%. For example, if you received \$400 in improper payment, you would owe \$460 (15% of \$400 is \$60).

If you intentionally provided false information or failed to provide DOES with pertinent information with the intent to obtain or increase benefits, you may be disqualified for up to one year beyond your benefit year ending date. You may also be subject to criminal prosecution and possible jail time.

WHERE DO I SEND MY REPAYMENT?

Please make your check or money order payable to *The Department of Employment Services*. Include your full name and the last four digits of your social security number. All payments to DOES should be sent to: *Department of Employment Services, Benefit Payment Control Branch, 4058 Minnesota Avenue NE - Suite 3100, Washington, DC 20019.*

WHAT HAPPENS IF I DON'T PAY BACK THE IMPROPER PAYMENT AMOUNT AND AN ADDITIONAL 15% PENALTY?

If you fail to repay the improperly paid amount and/or 15% penalty or fail to follow the payment plan you agreed on with DOES, you may be subject to criminal or civil action, interception of income tax refund (both State and Federal), garnishment of wages, and/or deduction from any future claim filed in any state.

If you are trying to repay an improper payment but are unable to make the payments due to financial circumstances, you may request a renegotiation of your payment amount with DOES. You are also can request a waiver. Please note that if your overpayment or improper payment was deemed as a result of fraud, you are not eligible for a waiver.

HOW DO I REPORT FRAUD?

If you think you may have committed UI fraud OR are aware of UI fraud occurring, please let us help you address the issue. Call 1.877.FRAUD.60 (1.877.372.8360) immediately.