



RRB News

U.S. Railroad Retirement Board

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No. 20-9

For Immediate Release
May 2020

RRB Begins Paying CARES Act Recovery Payments for Unemployed Rail Workers

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, or CARES Act, recently signed into law by President Trump, authorized a “recovery payment” for unemployed railroad workers in the amount of \$1,200 per 2-week registration period. After making necessary programming changes to claims processing systems, the U.S. Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) started making the payments on the evening of May 28.

In the initial round of processing, the agency made retroactive payments of \$1,200 per 2-week registration period to individuals who had previously filed claims beginning on or after April 1. Those individuals had previously received unemployment insurance (UI) benefits in the amount of \$733.98 to most claimants. The RRB estimates that the total amount of retroactive payments will be about \$32 million. While the regular UI amount of \$733.98 is reduced from \$780 due to sequestration, the additional \$1,200 recovery payment is not subject to reduction. However, it is subject to income taxation and garnishment for tax and other legally established debt.

Once these payments are completed, the RRB plans to start paying the additional \$1,200 for new benefit claims the following day. The additional amount is payable on claims for days of unemployment through the 2-week claim period beginning July 31, 2020.

The CARES Act includes an appropriation of \$425 million to pay for this added recovery payment. If these funds are exhausted before August 13, the end of the last eligible registration period, the added payment will no longer apply.

The CARES Act also authorized payment of extended benefits to rail workers who received UI benefits between July 1, 2019, and June 30, 2020. The RRB started paying the extended UI benefits on May 11, once again beginning with retroactive payments to individuals who had previously exhausted their regular UI benefits, before moving on to new claims.

The final piece of the CARES Act for the RRB is the elimination of a 1-week waiting period to receive benefits, funded by an additional \$50 million appropriation to cover this provision. The agency continues to diligently work on the needed programming for this provision, and hopes to have it completed in the near future. Again, the agency will initially make retroactive payments to individuals who had previously submitted UI claims before quickly moving on to processing new claims without the waiting period.

(More)

The RRB identified any eligible employees who previously received UI benefits for days of unemployment after April 1, 2020, so that the payments could be issued without the employee submitting additional information. For initial claims in the coming months, employees are encouraged to file them online through **myRRB** on the agency website, **RRB.gov**.

Since RRB offices are currently closed to the public due to the pandemic, railroad employees are encouraged to file for UI benefits by setting up an online **myRRB** account if they have not already done so.

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