

# Top 10 Things You Should Know...

## About the Unemployment Compensation System When Filing Your Claim

Unemployment Compensation (UC) provides temporary financial assistance to qualified individuals who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own and who continue to meet the eligibility requirements of State law.

The program is not a right to all who have lost their job.

Keep these top ten key facts in mind when you are filing for UC benefits to ensure accurate and quick payment of benefits.

For more information, please visit [www.dir.alabama.gov](http://www.dir.alabama.gov) or call 1-800-361-4524 – We're here to help!

### 1. **Accurately Report the Reason You Are Unemployed.**

Accurately report your reason for separation from your job when you initially file your claim for benefits. It is important that you provide the UC office with the precise reason for your separation so that we can best assist you and help you to avoid a fraudulent determination being applied to your claim.

### 2. **Report Any Wages You Are Earning.**

You must report your gross wages (before your taxes are taken out) for each week you work and certify for benefits, even if you won't be paid until later. Be sure to accurately report all earnings during your weekly claim certification—even those from part-time or temporary work. If you collect more UC benefits than you are eligible for because you failed to report earnings, you may be committing fraud and may be prosecuted.

### 3. **Register with the Alabama Career Center.**

Unless exempted by law, most people must register with the Alabama Career Center and keep their application up to date while unemployed to be eligible to collect UC benefits. If you are not required to register, you still may seek help in finding a job from the Alabama Career Center. The Alabama Career Center provides valuable resources for your use, including job referrals, resume building and re-employment services.

### 4. **Actively Search for Work.**

You must search for work each week that you file a claim for benefits. If you do not search for work during a week in which you file a claim, benefits may be denied until you show that you have started looking for work.

**5. Be Available for Work.**

In order to collect benefits, you must certify each week that you are able, available and willing to accept suitable work. Possible conflicts like attending school during normal working hours for your occupation or limitations with child care or transportation could limit your work availability and be an eligibility issue. Report such issues on your weekly claim certifications or by contacting the Inquiry Line at 1-800-361-4524.

**6. Develop an Effective Work Search Plan.**

Many Unemployment Compensation claimants do not have an effective plan for searching for work. The Alabama Career Center is a great place to learn about different types of jobs, their requirements and availability, and how to get training. Contact the Alabama Career Center nearest you in person or visit [www.joblink.alabama.gov](http://www.joblink.alabama.gov) for more information and assistance with planning an effective work search.

**7. Avoid Errors and Ensure Proper Payment of Benefits.**

To prevent errors in payment of UC benefits that may result in an overpayment, it is important that you read all of the information that is provided to you when you file your claim for benefits. Improper payment of benefits will cause a delay or denial of future benefits.

**8. Don't Delay- Immediately Upon Returning to Work, Report Your Return to Work.**

As soon as you begin working, be sure to notify your Alabama UC office if you plan to continue claiming UC benefits: either by answering "Yes" to the return to work question on your weekly claim certification or by calling the Inquiry Line at 1-800-361-4524. Report your return to work no later than the Sunday following your return to work. Do not wait until you receive your first paycheck to report your return to work. The UC agency uses state and national resources to track new hires, so it is in your best interest to report your return to work immediately to avoid the serious consequences of an improper payment, and a potential assessment of a fraud penalty.

**9. Follow the Rules to Prevent Committing Fraud.**

Anyone who collects UC benefits is legally responsible for making sure the requirements set by state law are followed. Failure to follow the rules can result in serious consequences. Consequences for not following UC regulations can include prosecution by government authorities, repaying the benefits with penalties, forfeiting future federal and state income tax refunds, losing future eligibility to collect UC benefits and a possible jail sentence. Look to your [Benefits Rights and Responsibilities](#) booklet for helpful tips to avoid committing fraud!

**10. Know Your Responsibilities and Ask for Help.**

As a recipient of Unemployment Compensation benefits, you have a legal responsibility to know and follow all rules and reporting requirements. Navigating through the UC claims process can be confusing. If you have a question about your responsibilities or the requirements of receiving benefits, your Alabama UC program can be available to help via [frequently ask questions](#) or by calling the Inquiry Line at 1-800-361-4524.