



Document, document, document

Effective documentation is crucial. Many times employers may have the burden of proof with the state agency. Documentation may help in matters outside Unemployment Insurance (UI) such as Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) matters and employment litigation. Documentation in discharges and voluntary quit situations are different. In the majority of cases involving discharge, documentation (meeting the burden of proof) is the only means an employer may have to back up the decision to terminate. Retain documents for at least 18 months. Provide policies to employees and obtain a signed acknowledgement of policies or any changes to policies.

Compose effective written warnings

Warnings are an aspect of progressive discipline that effectively ensures an employee understands what is expected of them. State unemployment agencies look for warnings, in most instances, to determine if the claimant was discharged for misconduct and effective, clear, non judgmental warnings help the employer meet the burden of proof in discharges. Elements of a good written warning include the violation, expected action to improve, the consequences if the standard is not met, employee's action plan and comments, signature of employee, signature of witness and signature of issuer.

Utilize your Equifax partnership to your full advantage

Equifax is your partner and works with you at every stage of the unemployment process claims, appeals, hearings, charge audits, best practices, unemployment reports and client education. Don't hesitate to ask any questions of your service team or Client Relationship Manager. Insight web reporting provides the tools to stay abreast of unemployment activity and costs. www.equifax.com features ongoing blogs, e-seminars and industry highlights. Your contract may offer guidance, preparation and participation in hearings from contracted hearing representatives who will assist you in the appeal. Providing timely and sufficient information to Equifax, especially at the initial level of the claim, can help you avoid penalties, loss of appeal rights and being charged for benefits collected.

Track unemployment costs and budget appropriately

Use Equifax reports and services to track claims, claim costs and to budget appropriately for unemployment expenses. Be familiar with the base period and benefit year in your state so adequate money can be set aside to cover all employees eligible for unemployment benefits.

Be prepared for hearings

Hearings require first-hand testimony as to the facts and events under consideration. Hearsay evidence is generally not persuasive and may not be considered at all. Depending on your contracted services, provide all information to your Equifax hearing representative when they contact the individuals at your organization to prepare for a hearing. Have all documents readily available during the hearing.

Appeal when warranted

An appeal is your request to the state to assign a hearing officer to review the facts of a particular case because you believe the eligibility rules have not been properly applied. Appeal if you disagree with a decision allowing the claimant benefits. You must be prepared to present facts and evidence.

Weigh the consequences of partial employment, layoffs and independent contractors

Know when employees are eligible for partial weeks of unemployment. In the case of layoffs, helping severed employees find jobs benefits the employer and employee. Independent contractors may file for unemployment and the employer needs to be able to prove he or she is not an employee of your municipality.