



June 7, 2013

For Immediate Release

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LABOR DEPARTMENT ISSUES REMINDER TO VT EMPLOYERS OF DEADLINE FOR UI DISASTER RELIEF

The Vermont Department of Labor is reminding Vermont employers of the potential benefit that may be available to them if they were impacted by storm-related layoffs in any of the 3 federally declared disasters in 2011 (i.e. the April and May 2011 flooding events, and Hurricane Irene in August 2011). If any of these 3 disaster events resulted in employee layoffs, the legislation provides up to 8 weeks of SUTA Tax relief to the Employer's UI Tax Rate, but only if the layoffs were directly related and immediately following a disaster.

Employers seeking to apply for the SUTA relief for up to 8 weeks must complete an application to the Vermont Department of Labor. The Department has already mailed information and instructions on how to apply to employers in the 14 counties that were under federal disaster declarations. The deadline for the application is June 10th. For more information, check out the Vermont Department of Labor website at <http://www.labor.vermont.gov/VTSUTADisasterRelief>

The legislation provides provide partial State Unemployment Tax Act (SUTA) relief to Vermont employers impacted by the disasters of 2011. The 2011 storms impacted employer operations across the state, and 14 counties were cited in the federal disaster declaration(s): Addison, Bennington, Caledonia, Chittenden, Essex, Franklin, Grand Isle, Lamoille, Orange, Orleans, Rutland, Washington, Windham, and Windsor Counties.

The three covered disaster incidents are as follows:

1. Storms & Flooding
 - a. Disaster Incident Begin Date: April 23, 2011
 - b. Counties: Addison, Chittenden, Essex, Franklin, Grand Isle, Lamoille, and Orleans
2. Storms & Flooding
 - a. Disaster Incident Begin Date: May 26, 2011
 - b. Counties: Caledonia and Washington.
3. Hurricane Irene
 - a. Disaster Incident Begin Date: August 27, 2011
 - b. Counties: Addison, Bennington, Caledonia, Chittenden, Franklin, Lamoille, Windham, Orange, Orleans, Rutland, Washington, and Windsor

Labor Commissioner Annie Noonan said that this legislation will significantly help some of the affected employers. "During Hurricane Irene, the average length of layoff - for the vast majority of impacted businesses - was 7 weeks. This legislation relieves up to 8 weeks of disaster-related UI experience rating. Those employers who fall within the 'norm' of under 8 weeks will not suffer from UI increases as a result of those layoffs; while other employers whose business operations were down longer will not see quite as much help from this program. Prior to this bill, Vermont did not have a UI disaster relief provision, so we had to fashion this remedy from start to finish – adopting enabling legislation, researching the data on storm-impacted layoffs, determining if the UI Trust Fund could absorb the costs of this disaster relief, and then reaching out to Vermont employers to inform them of the program benefit. I hope that Vermont employers will send in their application – by June 10th - to see if this program can help them."