

CONCISE EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Claimant Handbook

REASONS FOR ADOPTING RULES

The filing is intended to eliminate the requirement that the department send a copy of the claimant handbook by regular mail to every individual who files an application for benefits. The handbook will be online and each claimant will be provided notice by email or regular mail with instructions for obtaining a copy. Hard copies will be mailed upon request.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PROPOSED RULES AND ADOPTED RULES

Minor changes to WAC 192-270-035 for consistency with WAC 192-120-010. The changes are not substantive.

SUMMARY AND RESPONSE TO COMMENTS RECEIVED

Comment: The claimant handbook informs individuals of their rights and responsibilities. Simply making the handbook available online, rather than sending a hard copy, is not adequate. Fraud will be difficult to prove if claimants are held accountable for knowing the contents of a handbook that is not mailed to them. Has concerns that the department will end up paying out more in benefits than it conserves by eliminating automatic mailings.

Reasons Not Incorporated in Final Rule: The department recognizes the importance of the handbook in making claimants aware of their rights and responsibilities. However, cuts to the department's budget have made it necessary to achieve cost savings wherever possible in order to avoid further reductions in staffing. Today, most people are used to obtaining important information online. The handbook will be available online and claimants will receive instructions for accessing it. Hard copies will be mailed to individuals without online access or who otherwise ask to receive one. Copies will also be available at local WorkSource offices.

The department will send a notice via email or regular mail to every individual who files an unemployment claim, with instructions for obtaining the handbook. The notice will also contain basic information about job search requirements, filing weekly claims, and training opportunities.

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