

***If I'm Unemployed and Collecting Benefits But Earning
Some Money, Do I Have to Report It?***
New Hampshire Employment Security Video Script

Hi, my name is Michelle and I work for the New Hampshire Department of Employment Security.

This is a question we're often asked because many people, when out of work, look for opportunities to help support themselves and their families.

The simple answer is "Yes". You must report all work and earnings while filing for benefits. Depending on the amount of work you have done, you may be eligible to receive partial benefits. Work and wages always need to be reported, but you can earn up to 30% of your weekly benefit amount before benefits start to be reduced.

Many people want to take advantage of opportunities, such as babysitting or odd jobs, to earn some extra money. And this is fine, as long as you remember you do have to report all work and all earnings while filing for benefits. It doesn't matter if it is money earned in another state, in temporary or part-time employment, or if you work for cash or tips. All work and all wages must be reported, regardless of the amount.

Under New Hampshire state law, even if you work and receive payment other than a check or cash, such as meals, lodging, or rent, in exchange for services the value of this payment, which is called "payment in kind", is considered income and must also be reported.

The failure to report work or income on your weekly claim is considered unemployment fraud. The department discovers fraud in a variety of ways, such as tips, State and national new hire reports, and cross matches of wages and benefits.

Failing to report income when filing can carry serious consequences.

First, you have to repay all the benefits you received for any fraudulent weeks, with interest, plus a 20% penalty. If you fail to repay the benefits, the Department may place a lien on your property, get a court order to recover the debt from your bank account, or intercept your federal tax return.

Second, you will be disqualified from collecting any future benefits for up to 52 weeks. And if you receive fraudulent benefits of \$1,000 or more, you may be criminally prosecuted for a Class A felony, which could result in court-ordered restitution, additional fines, imprisonment, community service, and a permanent criminal record.

Remember, it's all right to take advantage of an opportunity to earn some extra money. But, while collecting unemployment benefits, you still need to fill out your claims accurately, comply with requirements to actively seek work, and report all sources of income, including self-employment.

Avoiding unemployment fraud is as simple as reading the questions and answering them correctly when filing for benefits each week. It's your responsibility to obey the law and tell the truth.

We understand that being unemployed is very stressful. But, we caution you not to make a short-term decision that could have long-term consequences for you and your family.

If you have any questions regarding filing your claim, or reporting income, contact your local Employment Security office for assistance. And for more information about New Hampshire unemployment benefits and job seeking, please visit www.nhes.nh.gov.