

May 11, 2020

**To:** All Staff

**From:** Melia Olsen, Human Resources Director

**Subject:** Fraudulent Unemployment Claims

The agency has recently become aware that on a nationwide level, including in Washington State, there have been many reports that scammers have been fraudulently claiming COVID-19 unemployment compensation. We know some fraudulent claims have been filed using personally identifiable information (PII) of some staff at DOC. The source of how and when the scammers acquired the information of tens-of-thousands of individuals is not yet known, though state and federal law enforcement are looking into it.

**What you need to know:**

Employment Security Department's (ESD) Office of Special Investigations is committed to preserving the integrity of the Unemployment Trust Fund. Their office conducts many types of audits throughout the year on unemployment claims to ensure the accuracy of benefit payments made.

If you become aware of or suspect you have been a victim of unemployment fraud, you will need to report it to the ESD through one of the following methods:

- Toll-free number: 800-246-9763
- Faxing a letter to: 360-902-9771
- Email [esdfraud@esd.wa.gov](mailto:esdfraud@esd.wa.gov) (preferred method of notice)
- Completing an online benefits-fraud reporting form on ESD's website: <https://www.esd.wa.gov/unemployment/unemployment-benefits-fraud>

Once you notify ESD of the fraudulent claim using one of the methods listed, ESD will then send you a questionnaire to complete and return with a copy of your driver's license. Once the call or email is recorded, the claim is immediately closed and no payouts will happen. ESD will also conduct an investigation and once that is completed, transfer the fraudulent claim out of that person's SSN.

In the event DOC Human Resources offices receive unemployment claim notices, they are also reviewing each claim closely and if the employee has not been separated from work, they are notifying the employee of the potential fraudulent claim. At which time, the employee will need to notify ESD through the methods listed above.

If you become aware of or suspect you have been a victim of identity theft, it is recommended that you file a report with your local law enforcement.

You can further report suspected employment-related fraud to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), information is available at their website: <https://www.irs.gov/identity-theft-fraud-scams/employment-related-identity-theft>

It is unfortunate that there are individuals choosing to cause additional strain during this crisis. State and federal investigators recommend additional diligence in reviewing credit reports, or requesting a free one-year fraud alert on your credit report by contacting one of the three nationwide credit reporting companies:

- Equifax: 800-525-6285
- Experian: 888-397-3742
- Trans Union: 800-680-7289