

December 2011

Unemployment Bulletin



Ohio to Truncate Social Security Numbers

Situation

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) recently mailed letters notifying employers of impending changes in the way they will conduct business. The changes, in turn, impact how the ODJFS Office of Unemployment Compensation (UC) will administer UC matters going forward.

What is Changing and Why

Beginning in December 2011, ODJFS will no longer display full Social Security numbers (SSN) on hard-copy correspondence; only the last four digits will be displayed. The changes are prompted by the need to secure personal information and the desire to utilize technology.

What this means is that various printed forms and notices issued by the ODJFS Office of UC will soon contain a truncated SSN only. However, the agency continues to enhance UC Program administration through tools like the OJI System (Ohio Job Insurance) and SIDES (State Information Data Exchange System). These systems provide access to full information, because they incorporate security measures like password-protection and encryption.

What You Should Know

TALX has experience dealing with truncated SSN's and has built them into our processes, since the practice has become more common among state UC agencies. You will see no effect in our service as a result of the truncation. In fact, TALX already uses this security measure when corresponding with our clients about unemployment claim matters. In addition, TALX is now using SIDES to exchange data with the ODJFS Office of UC, which is even more secure. SIDES is a web-based system that allows transmission of information requests and replies back and forth between state UC agencies and Third Party Administrators.



What You Should Do

In addition to the SSN truncation notification, the ODJFS letter contains information reminding employers about new hire reporting requirements, their wage and tax reporting obligations, options for reporting fraud, and information on the OJI benefits system. A sample of the letter is provided below.

We recommend you read the letter and keep the information on file; however, we caution TALX clients against logging into OJI and making any changes in how forms are currently handled, so as not to disrupt our current processes for UC matters. Since our processes now include the secure data file transmission via SIDES, be assured we will continue to effectively manage your claims.

We will keep you informed, if there are any additional developments.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact your TALX Client Relationship Manager.



John R. Kasich
Governor

Michael B. Colbert
Director

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES

<http://jfs.ohio.gov/>



Dear Employer,

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) offers a variety of online services for employers. In addition, the ODJFS Office of Unemployment Compensation (UC) strives to provide employers with information and tools to support their needs. This letter and its attachments include important instructions to help you navigate Ohio's UC benefit program and system more easily.

The Ohio Job Insurance (OJI) system, the state's web-based unemployment benefit system, has many features that can reduce paper, simplify UC reporting requirements, and be accessed during extended hours. Through OJI, you can view correspondence (forms, notices and determinations) and know it is electronically stored for your future reference; respond more promptly to agency requests for information; access weekly and monthly reports on claims activities; access monthly charge statements; and dispute (appeal) claim determinations.

For greater convenience, and at your request, OJI can send email notifications to inform you when forms, notices and determinations are ready for review. However, unless you specify otherwise, all correspondence will be sent to you through the U.S. Postal Service. **For security reason, effective December 2011, OJI will no longer mail printed correspondence with the claimant's full Social Security number (SSN). Instead, these documents will display only the last four digits of the claimant's SSN. If you choose to receive notices electronically, however, the full SSN will display, as OJI is password-protected. To register for OJI, go to <https://unemployment.ohio.gov>. Instructions for completing OJI registration are attached to this letter.**

The final attachment includes information about how you can help reduce unemployment taxes, shared costs and fraud. Be sure to read it carefully. It explains your legal requirement to report all new hires and re-hires to the Ohio New Hire Reporting Center at <https://oh-newhire.com/> and the possibility of monetary penalties if you fail to do so. It also explains the importance of responding promptly to requests for information and correctly reporting payroll information on quarterly Wage Detail Reports.

Please retain this document for future reference. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Michael B. Colbert, Director,
Ohio Department of Job and Family Services

Si usted no puede leer esto, llame por favor a 1-877-644-6562 para una traducción.



How to Register to Use the Ohio Job Insurance (OJI) System
(<https://unemployment.ohio.gov>)
Instructions for Employers

- 1) Select an account administrator to complete the registration process. The administrator will be provided a user name and password and may add or remove additional users as needed. The initial password will be lowercase alphanumeric characters. **Only the account administrator can reset users' passwords or add/remove users from your account.**

NOTE: If you previously selected an administrator who already completed the OJI registration, but you need to change the administrator or have the administrator's password reset, call (614) 466-4047, option 1.

- 2) The account administrator should have the following information on hand when registering:

Unemployment Insurance Account Number:	<input type="text"/>
Plant Number:	000
Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN):	FEIN registered with the IRS
Registration Code:	<input type="text"/>

You must have a FEIN to register. If your FEIN appears as 00-0000000, choose one of the following options:

- * If you have recently been assigned a FEIN, call the Bureau of UC Tax Operations at (614) 466-2319, ext. 22487, and explain that you are providing the number in order to register in OJI. You can also call the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system at 1-866-44-UCTAX (448-2829). Your account will be updated within one to three business days.
- * If you do not know your FEIN or do not have a FEIN, please contact the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). You may apply for a FEIN at <http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small/article/0,,id=98350,00.html>.

Once you receive your FEIN, contact the Bureau of UC Tax Operations at (614) 466-2319, ext 22487; 1-866-44-UCTAX (448-2829); or via the online ERIC system at <https://unemployment.ohio.gov>, so that we may update your account. Your account will be updated within one to three business days. After that, you will be able to register in OJI.

- 3) To register for OJI, go to <https://unemployment.ohio.gov> and click on "Employers" in the left toolbar. Further instructions for registering can be found by selecting "OJI (Benefits) User Guide" from the "Employers and their Authorized Representatives" menu in the left toolbar. This will take you to the Employer Self-Service User Guide. Note that each OJI screen has a "Help" option. If you need further assistance, please call 614-466-4047, option 1.



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Important Information for Employers about Ohio's Unemployment Compensation Program

Your action can help:

- * Reduce unemployment taxes by preventing benefits from being incorrectly charged against your experience rating account.
- * Reduce unemployment shared costs, which affect all tax-rated employers.
- * Reduce overpayment of unemployment benefits and their adverse effect on the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund.
- * Reduce unemployment benefits paid to workers who refuse jobs.

Did you know?

- * The primary cause of unemployment overpayments is unreported earnings by claimants while they receive benefits. ODJFS uses a variety of methods to detect unreported earnings. The most effective strategy is to cross-match with the State Directory of New Hires and the National Directory of New Hires. **All Ohio employers are required to report their new hires and re-hires to the Ohio New Hire Reporting Center at <https://oh-newhire.com/>.**

NOTE: New hire reporting is required by law in all 50 states, and has been mandatory since October 1998. Pursuant to federal law, states have the option of imposing civil monetary penalties on employers who fail to report new hires. The fine can be up to \$25 per newly hired employee. If a conspiracy is found to exist between an employer and employee not to report, the penalty can be up to \$500 per newly hired employee.

- * Another leading cause of unemployment overpayments is employers' failure to respond (or respond completely) to ODJFS requests for information. For example, employers (or their third-party administrators) often share little or no information about a worker's reason for being unemployed. When this occurs, ODJFS must determine eligibility based on the available information. This can result in unemployment benefits being paid to individuals who should not be eligible. In addition, an employer may receive a Request for Wage Information from Ohio's Benefit Payment Control Section in order to determine if a possible overpayment exists. **When you receive requests for employee/claimant information, please respond promptly and completely so that payments may be processed correctly. It will save you time and reduce your costs by avoiding a lengthy appeal process.**

NOTE: Federal legislation signed on October 21, 2011 (Public Law 112-40) includes a provision prohibiting states from relieving charges to employers if it is found that improper payments were made because of an employer's failure to respond to an agency request.

- * On a quarterly basis, each liable employer is required to file a Wage Detail Report with ODJFS. The information included in the report - including the weeks worked and wages earned for all of the employer's employees - is used to determine claimants' eligibility for benefits and weekly benefit amount. The weekly benefit amount is charged to the employer's account, which directly impacts the employer's tax rate. **Correctly reporting payroll information on the quarterly Wage Detail Report will help reduce improper payments and ensure proper calculation of your tax rate.**

NOTE: Employers with more than 200 employees should report wage information by magnetic media using CD, DVD or diskette. Employers with fewer than 200 employees and who have access to personal computers should report online using the Employer

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Resource Information Center (ERIC) at <https://unemployment.ohio.gov> or the Ohio Business Gateway at <http://www.business.ohio.gov>. Employers who had no employees and paid no wages during a quarter can file their reports for that quarter via an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) telephone system by calling 866-44UC TAX (448-2829). If you have questions about online reporting or need assistance, call the ERIC System Support Section at (614) 466-2319, extension 22484.

- * ODJFS makes it easy to report suspected unemployment fraud by allowing anyone to report fraud online, instantly and anonymously. As an employer, you may know of unemployed individuals who are working while claiming unemployment benefits or who have refused an offer of suitable work that was made by your business. **Employers who suspect fraud are urged to go to <https://unemployment.ohio.gov/fraud> and click on "REPORT FRAUD". You may also report possible fraud via mail (Benefit Payment Control, P. O. Box 1618, Columbus, OH 43219-1618), email (ucbenprotest@jfs.ohio.gov), fax (1-614-752-4808), or by calling the toll-free fraud hotline at 1-800-686-1555.**

NOTE: ODJFS pursues criminal prosecution against anyone who flagrantly commits fraud. Those found guilty of fraud face probation or jail time, must repay the improperly obtained funds with interest, and may have future unemployment benefits withheld. In 2010, more than 150 individuals in Ohio were found guilty of unemployment theft or similar charges.

ODJFS is committed to the integrity of the unemployment compensation program in Ohio. Please help us to help you in establishing and maintaining an accurate unemployment tax rate.



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