

MICHIGAN EMPLOYMENT SECURITY ACT (EXCERPT)
Act 1 of 1936 (Ex. Sess.)

421.29 Disqualification from benefits; exception during COVID-19 pandemic.

Sec. 29.

(1) Except as provided in subsection (5), an individual is disqualified from receiving benefits if the individual:

(a) Left work voluntarily without good cause attributable to the employer or employing unit. An individual who left work is presumed to have left work voluntarily without good cause attributable to the employer or employing unit. An individual who reduces the individual's working status to less than full-time employment is rebuttably presumed to have voluntarily left work without good cause attributable to the employer. An individual who is absent from work for a period of 3 consecutive work days or more without contacting the employer is rebuttably presumed to have voluntarily left work without good cause attributable to the employer. An individual who becomes unemployed as a result of negligently losing a requirement for the job of which the individual was informed at the time of hire is considered to have voluntarily left work without good cause attributable to the employer. An individual claiming benefits under this act has the burden of proof to establish that the individual left work involuntarily or for good cause that was attributable to the employer or employing unit. An individual claiming to have left work involuntarily for medical reasons must have done all of the following before the leaving: secured a statement from a medical professional that continuing in the individual's current job would be harmful to the individual's physical or mental health, unsuccessfully attempted to secure alternative work with the employer, and unsuccessfully attempted to be placed on a leave of absence with the employer to last until the individual's mental or physical health would no longer be harmed by the current job. Notwithstanding any other provision of this act, with respect to claims for weeks beginning before April 1, 2021, an individual is considered to have left work involuntarily for medical reasons if the individual leaves work to self-isolate or self-quarantine in response to elevated risk from COVID-19 because the individual is immunocompromised, displayed a commonly recognized principal symptom of COVID-19 that was not otherwise associated with a known medical or physical condition of the individual, had contact in the last 14 days with an individual with a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19, needed to care for an individual with a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19, or had a family care responsibility that was the result of a government directive regarding COVID-19. Notwithstanding any other provision of this act, with respect to claims for weeks beginning before April 1, 2021, the unemployment agency may consider an individual laid off if the individual became unemployed to self-isolate or self-quarantine in response to elevated risk from COVID-19 because the individual is immunocompromised, displayed a commonly recognized principal symptom of COVID-19 that was not otherwise associated with a known medical or physical condition of the individual, had contact in the last 14 days with an individual with a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19, needed to care for an individual with a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19, or had a family care responsibility that was the result of a government directive regarding COVID-19. However, if any of the following conditions are met, the leaving does not disqualify the individual:

(i) The individual has an established benefit year in effect and during that benefit year leaves unsuitable work within 60 days after the beginning of that work. Benefits paid after a leaving under this subparagraph must not be charged to the experience account of the employer the individual left, but must be charged instead to the nonchargeable benefits account.

(ii) The individual is the spouse of a full-time member of the United States Armed Forces, and the leaving is due to the military duty reassignment of that member of the United States Armed Forces to a different geographic location. Benefits paid after a leaving under this subparagraph must not be charged to the experience account of the employer the individual left, but must be charged instead to the nonchargeable benefits account.

(iii) The individual is concurrently working part-time for an employer or employing unit and for another employer or employing unit and voluntarily leaves the part-time work while continuing work with the other employer. The portion of the benefits paid in accordance with this subparagraph that would otherwise be charged to the experience account of the part-time employer that the individual left must not be charged to the account of that employer but must be charged instead to the nonchargeable benefits account.

(iv) The individual is a victim of domestic violence who meets the requirements in section 29a. Benefits paid after a leaving under this subparagraph must not be charged to the experience account of the employer the individual left, but must be charged instead to the nonchargeable benefits account. This subparagraph applies beginning on the effective date of the amendatory act that added this sentence.

(b) Was suspended or discharged for misconduct connected with the individual's work or for intoxication while at work.

(c) Failed without good cause to apply diligently for available suitable work after receiving notice from the unemployment agency of the availability of that work or failed to apply for work with employers that could reasonably be expected to have suitable work available.

(d) Failed without good cause while unemployed to report to the individual's former employer or employing unit within a reasonable time after that employer or employing unit provided notice of the availability of an interview concerning available suitable work with the former employer or employing unit.

(e) Failed without good cause to accept suitable work offered to the individual or to return to the individual's customary self-employment, if any, when directed by the employment office or the unemployment agency. An employer that receives a monetary determination under section 32 may notify the unemployment agency regarding the availability of suitable work with the employer on the monetary determination or other form provided by the unemployment agency. On receipt of the notice of the availability of suitable work, the unemployment agency shall notify the claimant of the availability of suitable work.

(f) Lost the individual's job due to absence from work resulting from a violation of law for which the individual was convicted and sentenced to jail or prison. This subdivision does not apply if conviction of an individual results in a sentence to county jail under conditions of day parole as provided in 1962 PA 60, MCL 801.251 to 801.258, or if the conviction was for a traffic violation that resulted in an absence of less than 10 consecutive work days from the individual's place of employment.

(g) Is discharged, whether or not the discharge is subsequently reduced to a disciplinary layoff or suspension, for participation in either of the following:

(i) A strike or other concerted action in violation of an applicable collective bargaining agreement that results in curtailment of work or restriction of or interference with production.

(ii) A wildcat strike or other concerted action not authorized by the individual's recognized bargaining representative.

(h) Was discharged for an act of assault and battery connected with the individual's work.

(i) Was discharged for theft connected with the individual's work.

(j) Was discharged for willful destruction of property connected with the individual's work.

(k) Committed a theft after receiving notice of a layoff or discharge, but before the effective date of the layoff or discharge, resulting in loss or damage to the employer who would otherwise be chargeable for the benefits, regardless of whether the individual qualified for the benefits before the theft.

(l) Was employed by a temporary help firm, which as used in this section means an employer whose primary business is to provide a client with the temporary services of 1 or more individuals under contract with the employer, to perform services for a client of that firm if each of the following conditions is met:

(i) The temporary help firm provided the employee with a written notice before the employee began performing services for the client stating in substance both of the following:

(A) That not more than 7 days after completing services for a client of the temporary help firm, the employee is under a duty to notify the temporary help firm of the completion of those services.

(B) That a failure to provide the temporary help firm with notice of the employee's completion of services pursuant to sub-subparagraph (A) constitutes a voluntary quit that will affect the employee's eligibility for unemployment compensation if the employee seeks unemployment compensation following completion of those services.

(ii) The employee did not provide the temporary help firm with notice that the employee had completed the employee's services for the client not later than 7 days after completion of the employee's services for the client.

(m) Was discharged for illegally ingesting, injecting, inhaling, or possessing a controlled substance on the premises of the employer; refusing to submit to a drug test that was required to be administered in a nondiscriminatory manner; or testing positive on a drug test, if the test was administered in a nondiscriminatory manner. If the worker disputes the result of the testing, and if a generally accepted confirmatory test has not been administered on the same sample previously tested, then a generally accepted confirmatory test must be administered on that sample. If the confirmatory test also indicates a positive result for the presence of a controlled substance, the worker who is discharged as a result of the test result will be disqualified under this subdivision. A report by a drug testing facility showing a positive result for the presence of a controlled substance is conclusive unless there is substantial evidence to the contrary. As used in this subdivision:

(i) "Controlled substance" means that term as defined in section 7104 of the public health code, 1978 PA 368, MCL 333.7104.

(ii) "Drug test" means a test designed to detect the illegal use of a controlled substance.

(iii) "Nondiscriminatory manner" means administered impartially and objectively in accordance with a collective bargaining agreement, rule, policy, a verbal or written notice, or a labor-management contract.

(n) Theft from the employer that resulted in the employee's conviction, within 2 years of the date of the discharge, of theft or a lesser included offense.

(2) A disqualification under subsection (1) begins the week in which the act or discharge that caused the disqualification occurs and continues until the disqualified individual requalifies under subsection (3).

(3) After the week in which the disqualifying act or discharge described in subsection (1) occurs, an individual who seeks to requalify for benefits is subject to all of the following:

(a) For benefit years established before October 1, 2000, the individual must complete 6 requalifying weeks if the individual was disqualified under subsection (1)(c), (d), (e), (f), (g), or (l), or 13 requalifying weeks if the individual

was disqualified under subsection (1)(h), (i), (j), (k), or (m). A requalifying week required under this subdivision is each week in which the individual does any of the following:

(i) Earns or receives remuneration in an amount at least equal to an amount needed to earn a credit week, as that term is defined in section 50.

(ii) Otherwise meets all of the requirements of this act to receive a benefit payment if the individual were not disqualified under subsection (1).

(iii) Receives a benefit payment based on credit weeks subsequent to the disqualifying act or discharge.

(b) For benefit years established before October 1, 2000, if the individual is disqualified under subsection (1)(a) or (b), the individual must requalify, after the week in which the disqualifying discharge occurred by earning in employment for an employer liable under this act or the unemployment compensation act of another state an amount equal to, or in excess of, 7 times the individual's potential weekly benefit rate, calculated on the basis of employment with the employer involved in the disqualification, or by earning in employment for an employer liable under this act or the unemployment compensation act of another state an amount equal to, or in excess of, 40 times the state minimum hourly wage times 7, whichever is the lesser amount.

(c) For benefit years established before October 1, 2000, a benefit payable to an individual disqualified under subsection (1)(a) or (b) must be charged to the nonchargeable benefits account, and not to the account of the employer with whom the individual was involved in the disqualification.

(d) For benefit years beginning on or after October 1, 2000, after the week in which the disqualifying act or discharge occurred, an individual must complete 13 requalifying weeks if the individual was disqualified under subsection (1)(c), (d), (e), (f), (g), or (l), or 26 requalifying weeks if the individual was disqualified under subsection (1)(h), (i), (j), (k), (m), or (n). A requalifying week required under this subdivision is each week in which the individual does any of the following:

(i) Earns or receives remuneration in an amount equal to at least 1/13 of the minimum amount needed in a calendar quarter of the base period for an individual to qualify for benefits, rounded down to the nearest whole dollar.

(ii) Otherwise meets all of the requirements of this act to receive a benefit payment if the individual was not disqualified under subsection (1).

(e) For benefit years beginning on or after October 1, 2000 and beginning before April 26, 2002, if the individual is disqualified under subsection (1)(a) or (b), the individual must requalify, after the week in which the disqualifying act or discharge occurred by earning in employment for an employer liable under this act or the unemployment compensation law of another state at least the lesser of the following:

(i) Seven times the individual's weekly benefit rate.

(ii) Forty times the state minimum hourly wage times 7.

(f) For benefit years beginning on or after April 26, 2002, if the individual is disqualified under subsection (1)(a), the individual must requalify, after the week in which the disqualifying act or discharge occurred by earning in employment for an employer liable under this act or the unemployment compensation law of another state at least 12 times the individual's weekly benefit rate.

(g) For benefit years beginning on or after April 26, 2002, if the individual is disqualified under subsection (1)(b), the individual must requalify, after the week in which the disqualifying act or discharge occurred by earning in employment for an employer liable under this act or the unemployment compensation law of another state at least 17 times the individual's weekly benefit rate.

(h) A benefit payable to the individual disqualified or separated under disqualifying circumstances under subsection (1)(a) or (b) must be charged to the nonchargeable benefits account, and not to the account of the employer with whom the individual was involved in the separation. Benefits payable to an individual determined by the unemployment agency to be separated under disqualifying circumstances must not be charged to the account of the employer involved in the disqualification for any period after the employer notifies the unemployment agency of the claimant's possible ineligibility or disqualification. However, an individual filing a new claim for benefits who reports the reason for separation from a base period employer as a voluntary leaving is presumed to have voluntarily left without good cause attributable to the employer and is disqualified unless the individual provides substantial evidence to rebut the presumption. If a disqualifying act or discharge occurs during the individual's benefit year, any benefits that may become payable to the individual in a later benefit year based on employment with the employer involved in the disqualification must be charged to the nonchargeable benefits account.

(4) The maximum amount of benefits otherwise available under section 27(d) to an individual disqualified under subsection (1) is subject to all of the following conditions:

(a) For benefit years established before October 1, 2000, if the individual is disqualified under subsection (1)(c), (d), (e), (f), (g), or (l) and the maximum amount of benefits is based on wages and credit weeks earned from an employer before an act or discharge involving that employer, the amount must be reduced by an amount equal to the individual's weekly benefit rate as to that employer multiplied by the lesser of either of the following:

(i) The number of requalifying weeks required of the individual under this section.

(ii) The number of weeks of benefit entitlement remaining with that employer.

(b) If the individual has insufficient or no potential benefit entitlement remaining with the employer involved in

the disqualification in the benefit year in existence on the date of the disqualifying determination, a reduction of benefits described in this subsection applies in a succeeding benefit year with respect to any benefit entitlement based on credit weeks earned with the employer before the disqualifying act or discharge.

(c) For benefit years established before October 1, 2000, an individual disqualified under subsection (1)(h), (i), (j), (k), or (m) is not entitled to benefits based on wages and credit weeks earned before the disqualifying act or discharge with the employer involved in the disqualification.

(d) The benefit entitlement of an individual disqualified under subsection (1)(a) or (b) is not subject to reduction as a result of that disqualification.

(e) A denial or reduction of benefits under this subsection does not apply to benefits based on multiemployer credit weeks.

(f) For benefit years established on or after October 1, 2000, if the individual is disqualified under subsection (1)(c), (d), (e), (f), (g), or (l), the maximum number of weeks otherwise applicable in calculating benefits for the individual under section 27(d) must be reduced by the lesser of the following:

(i) The number of requalifying weeks required of the individual under this section.

(ii) The number of weeks of benefit entitlement remaining on the claim.

(g) For benefit years beginning on or after October 1, 2000, the benefits of an individual disqualified under subsection (1)(h), (i), (j), (k), (m), or (n) must be reduced by 13 weeks and any weekly benefit payments made to the claimant thereafter must be reduced by the portion of the payment attributable to base period wages paid by the base period employer involved in a disqualification under subsection (1)(h), (i), (j), (k), (m), or (n).

(5) Subject to subsection (11), if an individual leaves work to accept permanent full-time work with another employer or to accept a referral to another employer from the individual's union hiring hall and performs services for that employer, or if an individual leaves work to accept a recall from a former employer, all of the following apply:

(a) Subsection (1) does not apply.

(b) Wages earned with the employer whom the individual last left, including wages previously transferred under this subsection to the last employer, for the purpose of computing and charging benefits, are wages earned from the employer with whom the individual accepted work or recall, and benefits paid based upon those wages must be charged to that employer.

(c) When issuing a determination covering the period of employment with a new or former employer described in this subsection, the unemployment agency shall advise the chargeable employer of the name and address of the other employer, the period covered by the employment, and the extent of the benefits that may be charged to the account of the chargeable employer.

(6) In determining whether work is suitable for an individual, the unemployment agency shall consider the degree of risk involved to the individual's health, safety, and morals, the individual's physical fitness and prior training, the individual's length of unemployment and prospects for securing local work in the individual's customary occupation, and the distance of the available work from the individual's residence. Additionally, the unemployment agency shall consider the individual's experience and prior earnings, but an unemployed individual who refuses an offer of work determined to be suitable under this section must be denied benefits if the pay rate for that work is at least 70% of the gross pay rate the unemployed individual received immediately before becoming unemployed. Beginning January 15, 2012, after an individual has received benefits for 50% of the benefit weeks in the individual's benefit year, work is not considered unsuitable because it is outside of the individual's training or experience or unsuitable as to pay rate if the pay rate for that work meets or exceeds the minimum wage; is at least the prevailing mean wage for similar work in the locality for the most recent full calendar year for which data are available as published by the department of technology, management, and budget as "wages by job title", by standard metropolitan statistical area; and is 120% or more of the individual's weekly benefit amount.

(7) Work is not suitable and benefits must not be denied under this act to an otherwise eligible individual for refusing to accept new work under any of the following conditions:

(a) If the position offered is vacant due directly to a strike, lockout, or other labor dispute.

(b) If the remuneration, hours, or other conditions of the work offered are substantially less favorable to the individual than those prevailing for similar work in the locality.

(c) If as a condition of being employed, the individual would be required to join a company union or to resign from or refrain from joining a bona fide labor organization.

(8) All of the following apply to an individual who seeks benefits under this act:

(a) An individual is disqualified from receiving benefits for a week in which the individual's total or partial unemployment is due to either of the following:

(i) A labor dispute in active progress at the place at which the individual is or was last employed, or a shutdown or start-up operation caused by that labor dispute.

(ii) A labor dispute, other than a lockout, in active progress or a shutdown or start-up operation caused by that labor dispute in any other establishment within the United States that is both functionally integrated with the establishment described in subparagraph (i) and operated by the same employing unit.

(b) An individual's disqualification imposed or imposed under this subsection is terminated if the individual

performs services in employment with an employer in at least 2 consecutive weeks falling wholly within the period of the individual's total or partial unemployment due to the labor dispute, and in addition earns wages in each of those weeks in an amount equal to or greater than the individual's actual or potential weekly benefit rate.

(c) An individual is not disqualified under this subsection if the individual is not directly involved in the labor dispute. An individual is not directly involved in a labor dispute unless any of the following are established:

(i) At the time or in the course of a labor dispute in the establishment in which the individual was then employed, the individual in concert with 1 or more other employees voluntarily stopped working other than at the direction of the individual's employing unit.

(ii) The individual is participating in, financing, or directly interested in the labor dispute that causes the individual's total or partial unemployment. The payment of regular union dues, in amounts and for purposes established before the inception of the labor dispute, is not financing a labor dispute within the meaning of this subparagraph.

(iii) At any time a labor dispute in the establishment or department in which the individual was employed does not exist, and the individual voluntarily stops working, other than at the direction of the individual's employing unit, in sympathy with employees in some other establishment or department in which a labor dispute is in progress.

(iv) The individual's total or partial unemployment is due to a labor dispute that was or is in progress in a department, unit, or group of workers in the same establishment.

(d) As used in this subsection, "directly interested" must be construed and applied so as not to disqualify individuals unemployed as a result of a labor dispute the resolution of which may not reasonably be expected to affect their wages, hours, or other conditions of employment, and to disqualify individuals whose wages, hours, or conditions of employment may reasonably be expected to be affected by the resolution of the labor dispute. A "reasonable expectation" of an effect on an individual's wages, hours, or other conditions of employment exists, in the absence of a substantial preponderance of evidence to the contrary, in any of the following situations:

(i) If it is established that there is in the particular establishment or employing unit a practice, custom, or contractual obligation to extend within a reasonable period to members of the individual's grade or class of workers in the establishment in which the individual is or was last employed changes in terms and conditions of employment that are substantially similar or related to some or all of the changes in terms and conditions of employment that are made for the workers among whom there exists the labor dispute that has caused the individual's total or partial unemployment.

(ii) If it is established that 1 of the issues in or purposes of the labor dispute is to obtain a change in the terms and conditions of employment for members of the individual's grade or class of workers in the establishment in which the individual is or was last employed.

(iii) If a collective bargaining agreement covers both the individual's grade or class of workers in the establishment in which the individual is or was last employed and the workers in another establishment of the same employing unit who are actively participating in the labor dispute, and that collective bargaining agreement is subject by its terms to modification, supplementation, or replacement, or has expired or been opened by mutual consent at the time of the labor dispute.

(e) In determining the scope of the grade or class of workers, evidence of the following is relevant:

(i) Representation of the workers by the same national or international organization or by local affiliates of that national or international organization.

(ii) Whether the workers are included in a single, legally designated, or negotiated bargaining unit.

(iii) Whether the workers are or within the past 6 months have been covered by a common master collective bargaining agreement that sets forth all or any part of the terms and conditions of the workers' employment, or by separate agreements that are or have been bargained as a part of the same negotiations.

(iv) Any functional integration of the work performed by those workers.

(v) Whether the resolution of those issues involved in the labor dispute as to some of the workers could directly or indirectly affect the advancement, negotiation, or settlement of the same or similar issues in respect to the remaining workers.

(vi) Whether the workers are currently or have been covered by the same or similar demands by their recognized or certified bargaining agent or agents for changes in their wages, hours, or other conditions of employment.

(vii) Whether issues on the same subject matter as those involved in the labor dispute have been the subject of proposals or demands made upon the employing unit that would by their terms have applied to those workers.

(9) Notwithstanding subsections (1) to (8), if the employing unit submits notice to the unemployment agency of possible ineligibility or disqualification beyond the time limits prescribed by unemployment agency rule and the unemployment agency concludes that benefits should not have been paid, the claimant shall repay the benefits paid during the entire period of ineligibility or disqualification. The unemployment agency shall not charge interest on repayments required under this subsection.

(10) An individual is disqualified from receiving benefits for any week or part of a week in which the individual has received, is receiving, or is seeking unemployment benefits under an unemployment compensation law of another state or of the United States. If the appropriate agency of the other state or of the United States finally determines that the individual is not entitled to unemployment benefits, the disqualification described in this

subsection does not apply.

(11) Beginning on May 1, 2020, and until October 20, 2020, if an individual leaves work to accept permanent full-time work with another employer, the individual is considered to have met the requirements of subsection (5) regardless of whether the individual actually performed services for the other employer or whether the work was permanent full-time work. Benefits payable to the individual must be charged to the nonchargeable benefits account.

History: 1936, Ex. Sess., Act 1, Imd. Eff. Dec. 24, 1936 ;-- Am. 1937, Act 347, Imd. Eff. Aug. 5, 1937 ;-- Am. 1939, Act 324, Imd. Eff. June 22, 1939 ;-- Am. 1941, Act 364, Imd. Eff. July 1, 1941 ;-- Am. 1942, 2nd Ex. Sess., Act 18, Imd. Eff. Feb. 27, 1942 ;-- Am. 1943, Act 246, Imd. Eff. June 1, 1943 ;-- Am. 1947, Act 360, Imd. Eff. July 8, 1947 ;-- CL 1948, 421.29 ;-- Am. 1951, Act 251, Imd. Eff. June 17, 1951 ;-- Am. 1954, Act 197, Imd. Eff. May 7, 1954 ;-- Am. 1955, Act 281, Eff. July 15, 1955 ;-- Am. 1963, Act 226, Eff. Sept. 6, 1963 ;-- Am. 1965, Act 281, Eff. Sept. 5, 1965 ;-- Am. 1967, Act 254, Imd. Eff. July 19, 1967 ;-- Am. 1970, Act 14, Imd. Eff. Apr. 14, 1970 ;-- Am. 1974, Act 11, Imd. Eff. Feb. 15, 1974 ;-- Am. 1974, Act 104, Eff. June 9, 1974 ;-- Am. 1975, Act 110, Eff. June 8, 1975 ;-- Am. 1980, Act 358, Eff. Mar. 1, 1981 ;-- Am. 1982, Act 535, Eff. Jan. 2, 1983 ;-- Am. 1983, Act 164, Imd. Eff. July 24, 1983 ;-- Am. 1994, Act 162, Imd. Eff. June 17, 1994 ;-- Am. 1995, Act 25, Eff. Mar. 28, 1996 ;-- Am. 2002, Act 192, Imd. Eff. Apr. 26, 2002 ;-- Am. 2008, Act 480, Imd. Eff. Jan. 12, 2009 ;-- Am. 2011, Act 269, Imd. Eff. Dec. 19, 2011 ;-- Am. 2013, Act 146, Imd. Eff. Oct. 29, 2013 ;-- Am. 2020, Act 229, Imd. Eff. Oct. 20, 2020 ;-- Am. 2020, Act 258, Imd. Eff. Dec. 29, 2020 ;-- Am. 2024, Act 239, Eff. Apr. 2, 2025

Constitutionality: Subsection (8), which disqualifies employees who are locked out by their employer for a labor dispute in which they are directly involved but which does not disqualify locked-out employees where the labor dispute occurs in a functionally integrated establishment operated by the same employer does not violate the equal protection clause. *Smith v Employment Security Commission*, 410 Mich 231; 301 NW2d 285 (1981). Claimant's failure to pay agency shop fees after receiving notice from her employer showed a wilful disregard of the employer's interest. The claimant did not have a constitutional right not to pay the required fees, and any effect on her First Amendment interests was outweighed by the state's interest in not using its moneys to pay unemployment benefits to persons who are disqualified under the act. *Parks v Employment Security Commission*, 427 Mich 224; 398 NW2d 275 (1986).