

Department of Revenue Guidance

Employer COVID-19 Refund Scheme

On 15 March 2020, the Government announced the implementation of exceptional measures, administered through the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP), to enable workers who are temporarily laid off due to the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic to claim a special support payment of €203 per week.

Revenue has worked closely with DEASP to provide an option for employers to make this payment to their employees through the normal payroll process. The amounts paid to employees under the scheme are not subject to tax, USC or PRSI.

Employers are encouraged to facilitate employees by operating the scheme. The amounts paid to employees and notified to Revenue will then be transferred into the employer's bank account by Revenue. This reimbursement will, in general, be made on a 'next day' basis. It will ensure a speedy payment process for employees and minimise the hardship for employees who are temporarily laid off. Refunds of income tax or USC that an employee may be entitled to because of being laid off will also be administered by the employer and will be repaid (to the employer) through the scheme.

The scheme can be operated for all employees for whom a payroll submission was made by the employer in the period from 1 February 2020 to 15 March 2020. Where employees have already been laid off and their employer has ceased their employment, they can apply directly to DEASP for the payment.

Who does the scheme apply to:

- Employers who have temporarily laid off staff as a result of the impact on their business of the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic
- Employers that keep their staff on payroll and have not ceased the employee(s) with Revenue
- Employees for whom a payroll submission was made by the employer in the period from 1 February 2020 to 15 March 2020
- Employers that are unable to make top-up payments over and above the emergency payment of €203 per week.

Making an application for the Refund Scheme:

Employers, or their agents, apply to Revenue to operate the scheme by carrying out the following steps:

1. Log on to ROS myEnquiries and select the category 'Employer COVID -19 Refund Scheme'.
2. Read the declaration and press the 'Submit' button.
3. Log on to ROS and in 'Manage bank accounts', 'Manage EFT', ensure that the bank account details provided are correct.

Payment schedule

Revenue will credit the employer bank account for payroll submissions received before 2:00 PM each day. Depending on the individual bank, the refund should be with the employer on the next banking day.

Key features of the scheme:

- The employer will make the payroll submission to Revenue on or before each pay date.
- Employers should contact their payroll software providers for assistance in respect of payroll to be processed under this scheme.
- The employer runs the payroll as normal, entering the following details for each relevant employee:
 - PRSI Class set to J9
 - A pay amount of €0.01 (there must be some pay entered for the payroll to run)
 - A non-taxable amount of €203. No other payment amounts are made by the employer to the employee and all temporarily laid off employees are granted the €203
 - The payroll submission must include pay frequency and period number.
- No other payments are made by the employer to the employee for the applicable week/s and all *temporarily laid off employees* receive the €203 per week.
- Income tax, USC and PRSI are not deducted from the €203 payment.
- Any Income Tax and USC refunds that arise as a result of the application of tax credits and rate bands can be repaid by the employer and this amount will also be refunded to the employer.

- The employee must confirm to employer that they have not, and will not, claim a payment from DEASP whilst the employer makes this payment through the payroll.
- Employers will be asked to advise employees with dependents to make a Jobseeker's Benefit claim via the MyWelfare.ie online portal (so that the employee/s can access qualified dependant payments if appropriate).
- Based on the information provided in the payroll submissions, Revenue will credit €203 per employee per week to the employer's bank account recorded in ROS. The credit will include the reference COVID Employer Refund. *(The main identifiers include Employer Number Gross Pay of €0.01, J9 PRSI class, Pay Frequency and Employee PPSN, Employment ID).*
- If the employee(s) resume employment with the employer, or obtains other supports from DEASP, or secures employment elsewhere, the employer will not include the employee(s) concerned in future submissions.

Guidance, Information and Queries

For general issues relating to the Scheme, employers should contact Revenue's National Employer Helpdesk via the myEnquiries system, providing details of the query and a direct dial contact number.

Employers should make sure to select 'Employer's PAYE' and then 'Employer's PAYE General Enquiry' when submitting the query through MyEnquiries.