

Railroad Unemployment and Sickness Benefits Increase



The maximum daily benefit rate payable for claims under the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act increased to \$57 from \$56 in the new benefit year, which began July 1. Benefits are normally paid for the number of days of unemployment or sickness exceeding four in 14-day registration periods, so maximum benefits for biweekly claims will total \$570.

During the first 14-day claim period in a benefit year, benefits are payable for each day of unemployment or sickness in excess of seven, rather than four, which, in effect, provides a one-week waiting period. Initial sickness claims must also begin with four consecutive days of sickness. However, only one waiting period is required during any period of continuing unemployment or sickness, even if that period continues into a subsequent benefit year.

To qualify for normal railroad unemployment or sickness benefits, an employee must have had railroad earnings of at least \$2,875 in calendar year 2005, not counting more than \$1,150 for any month. Those who were first employed in the rail industry in 2005 must also have at least five months of creditable railroad service in 2005.

Under certain conditions, employees with 10 or more years of service, who do not qualify in the new benefit year on the basis of their 2005 earnings, may still be able to receive benefits after June 30, 2006.

Application forms for unemployment and sickness benefits may be obtained from railroad employers, railroad labor organizations, any Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) office, or the [RRB's Web site](#). As an alternative to applying for unemployment benefits through the mail, claimants may instead file applications online through the RRB's Web site. Subsequent biweekly claims for unemployment benefits may be filed online rather than through the mail, and employees can access information about their individual railroad unemployment insurance account statements via the Internet.