

**RCW 50B.04.055 Exemptions—Voluntary exemptions—Criteria, rules, and procedures—Discontinuing—Notification.** (1) Beginning January 1, 2023, the employment security department shall accept and approve applications for voluntary exemptions from the premium assessment under RCW 50B.04.080 for any employee who meets criteria established by the employment security department for an exemption based on the employee's status as:

(a) A veteran of the United States military who has been rated by the United States department of veterans affairs as having a service-connected disability of 70 percent or greater;

(b) A spouse or registered domestic partner of an active duty service member in the United States armed forces whether or not deployed or stationed within or outside of Washington;

(c) An employee who holds a nonimmigrant visa for temporary workers, as recognized by federal law, and is employed by an employer in Washington; or

(d) An employee who is employed by an employer in Washington, but maintains a permanent address outside of Washington as the employee's primary location of residence.

(2) The employment security department shall adopt criteria, procedures, and rules for verifying the information submitted by the applicant for an exemption under subsection (1) of this section.

(3) An employee who receives an exemption under subsection (1) of this section may not become a qualified individual or eligible beneficiary and is permanently ineligible for coverage under this title, unless the exemption has been discontinued as provided in subsection (4), (5), or (6) of this section.

(4) (a) An exemption granted in accordance with the conditions under subsection (1) (b) of this section must be discontinued within 90 days of:

(i) The discharge or separation from military service of the employee's spouse or registered domestic partner; or

(ii) The dissolution of the employee's marriage or registered domestic partnership with the active duty service member.

(b) Within 90 days of the occurrence of either of the events in (a) of this subsection, an employee who has received an exemption under subsection (1) of this section shall:

(i) Notify the employment security department that the exemption must be discontinued because of the occurrence of either of the events in (a) of this subsection; and

(ii) Notify the employee's employer that the employee is no longer exempt and that the employer must begin collecting premiums from the employee in accordance with RCW 50B.04.080.

(c) Upon notification to the employment security department and the employer, premium assessments established under RCW 50B.04.080 must begin and the employee may become a qualified individual or eligible beneficiary upon meeting the requirements established in this chapter.

(d) Failure to begin paying the premium established under RCW 50B.04.080 within 90 days of the occurrence of either of the events in (a) of this subsection shall result in the payment of any unpaid premiums from the employee, with interest at the rate of one percent per month or fraction thereof, by the employee to the employment security department from the date on which the payment should have begun.

(5) (a) An exemption granted in accordance with the conditions under subsection (1) (c) of this section must be discontinued within 90 days of an employee changing the employee's nonimmigrant visa for temporary workers status to become a permanent resident or citizen employed in Washington.

(b) Within 90 days of the employee changing the employee's nonimmigrant visa for temporary workers status to become a permanent resident or citizen employed in Washington, the employee who has received an exemption under subsection (1) (c) of this section shall:

(i) Notify the employment security department that the employee no longer holds a nonimmigrant visa for temporary workers and is a permanent resident or citizen employed in Washington and the exemption must be discontinued; and

(ii) Notify the employee's employer that the employee no longer holds a nonimmigrant visa for temporary workers and is a permanent resident or citizen employed in Washington, and that the employer must begin collecting premiums from the employee in accordance with RCW 50B.04.080.

(c) Upon notification to the employment security department and the employer, premium assessments established under RCW 50B.04.080 must begin and the employee may become a qualified individual or eligible beneficiary upon meeting the requirements established in this chapter.

(d) Failure to begin paying the premium established under RCW 50B.04.080 within 90 days of an employee no longer holding a nonimmigrant visa for temporary workers and becoming a permanent resident or citizen employed in Washington shall result in the payment of any unpaid premiums from the employee, with interest at the rate of one percent per month or fraction thereof, by the employee to the employment security department from the date on which the payment should have begun.

(6) (a) An exemption granted in accordance with the conditions under subsection (1) (d) of this section must be discontinued within 90 days of an employee establishing a permanent address within Washington as the employee's primary location of residence.

(b) Within 90 days of the employee establishing a permanent address within Washington as the employee's primary location of residence, the employee who has received an exemption under subsection (1) (d) of this section shall:

(i) Notify the employment security department that the employee is residing in Washington and the exemption must be discontinued; and

(ii) Notify the employee's employer that the employee is no longer exempt and that the employer must begin collecting premiums from the employee in accordance with RCW 50B.04.080.

(c) Upon notification to the employment security department and the employer, premium assessments established under RCW 50B.04.080 must begin and the employee may become a qualified individual or eligible beneficiary upon meeting the requirements established in this chapter.

(d) Failure to begin paying the premium established under RCW 50B.04.080 within 90 days of an employee establishing a permanent address within Washington as the employee's primary location of residence shall result in the payment of any unpaid premiums from the employee, with interest at the rate of one percent per month or fraction thereof, by the employee to the employment security department from the date on which the payment should have begun.

(7) Exempt employees are not entitled to a refund of any premium deductions made before the effective date of an approved exemption, except for premiums collected prior to the effective date of the premium assessment under RCW 50B.04.080.

(8) An employee who has received an exemption pursuant to this section shall provide written notification to all current and future employers of an approved exemption.

(9) If an exempt employee fails to notify an employer of an exemption, the exempt employee is not entitled to a refund of any premium deductions made before notification is provided, except for premiums collected prior to the effective date of the premium assessment under RCW 50B.04.080.

(10) Employers may not deduct premiums after being notified by an employee of an approved exemption issued under this section.

(a) Employers shall retain written notifications of exemptions received from employees.

(b) An employer who deducts premiums after being notified by the employee of an exemption is solely responsible for refunding to the employee any premiums deducted after the notification.

(c) The employer is not entitled to a refund from the employment security department for any premiums remitted to the employment security department that were deducted from exempt employees.

(11) The provisions of RCW 50B.04.085 do not apply to the exemptions issued pursuant to this section.

(12) The employment security department shall adopt rules necessary to implement and administer the activities specified in this section related to the program, including rules on the submission and processing of applications under this section. [2022 c 2 § 2.]