

Tough Decision: Do I Allow Seasonal Unemployment?



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Lawn care and landscape professionals speak out

jbell36: Work is going to come to an end soon and I have two employees that are asking me what the options are. Should I make them get another job for the two and a half months until next season or should I allow unemployment? They also wouldn't be available for snow removal (if it ever snows again) if they did get another job. I've just never been through this and am not very educated on unemployment.

shovelracer: You do not get to allow their unemployment. It is something they pay into and if they meet the conditions then it is their right to use it. It is a state issue and only they get to decide the eligibility. What you can do is fight it if you feel they are obtaining it fraudulently, like working another job or padding dates, etc.

seabee24: As stated above, you don't get to allow unemployment, simply put, they either work for you or they don't. If they don't, they have a right to try and collect unemployment and/or go get another job if they choose to. You have zero control over that, unless you keep them employed, but at reduced hours per week they might be able to collect a partial unemployment.

tonygreek: Your employees will need to check with the state to see whether they even qualify for seasonal unemployment. Last I knew, there are 10-plus states that have closed the ability to collect for anticipated seasonal unemployment, usually based on time-frame or industry. For some states, landscaping is exempt from the seasonal classification. Essentially, for recurring, seasonal unemployment scenarios, the employees knew what they were getting into when they took the job, so that gap in employment is now on them.

jbell36: I guess what I'm asking is, is it normal practice for unemployment

for the three months or so for good employees, or do most push for their employees to get a job to get them by for the time being. What do you guys do?

wbw: Pay careful attention to this answer/question. Have YOU been paying into unemployment?

jrs.landscaping: Unless you want them to be good employees for someone else, allow them to collect. You also mentioned snow plowing, is that something you could expand into to supplement their unemployment?

PaperCutter: Me personally, if an employer laid me off and then tried to dictate what I did or didn't do for those three months, I'd probably be going back to work for someone else in the spring.

32vld: My state allows a person to pick up temp work while collecting unemployment. For every day you work, you lose 25 percent of your weekly benefit. So when you file your weekly report all they ask is did you work any days during this period. If you worked three days, you lost 75 percent of your weekly benefit. You are never asked how much you made or who you worked for.

When you file next week and asked did you work any days and you answer no, you then get your full benefit.

So when it snows you could call them back for that one or two days per storm. You pay them on the books for those two days of work and they still stay on unemployment.

I guess the state's logic is you get your foot in the door temp work and you may get off unemployment quicker.

Edit to add temp work is you are not scheduled to go to work. You are hired to work a day or two during a benefit week, though you could be called in to work five days in a week. Though I'm sure that if you start telling the unemployment department that you are working at least four days every week, week after week, it will send up red flags.

jbell36: My accountant takes care of most everything; we most certainly have been paying into unemployment.

I understand that if they want to file they can, but I find that kind of a cheap way out, lazy. At the same time it's not the easiest to find a job right now for three months and only three months, but it is doable. My question is what do you guys do, encourage them to get a temporary job or just let them file?