

# Program Letter

## United States Railroad Retirement Board Office of Programs



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Letter No. 2009-03

Date: May 14, 2009

TO: Certification Registration, Retirement and Unemployment Contact Officials

SUBJECT: Forms ID-4K and ID-4E Notifications for Special Extended Unemployment Benefits provided under The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA)

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**Please distribute this notice to all individuals within your organization who may need the information in connection with their work.**

This program letter is to advise employers that the Railroad Retirement Board (RRB) prepayment verification notices (ID-4K) that we send to employers will list claims under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). However, the post-payment notices (ID-4E) will **not** list the ARRA benefit payments.

Program Letter 2009-02 explained that ARRA provides an appropriation from the Department of the Treasury totaling \$20 million to be used for the payment of additional extended unemployment benefits (UI) under the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act (RUIA).

- The Act provides extended benefits only to employees who received normal UI benefits for days in the period July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009.
- Railroad workers who previously were not eligible for extended unemployment benefits because they did not have 10 years (120 cumulative months of service) may be eligible for up to 65 days within an extended period consisting of 7 consecutive 2-week registration periods.
- Railroad workers who previously were eligible for extended unemployment benefits of up to 65 days may now be eligible for extended benefits of up to 130 days within an extended period consisting of 13 consecutive 2-week registration periods.
- The latest date that an extended benefit period under these special provisions may begin is December 31, 2009.
- Payment of these special extended benefits will cease when the \$20 million has been expended.

We are diligently working to make and test programming changes needed to implement the temporary extended unemployment benefit provisions. We expect to start paying the special extended benefits no later than June 30. As previously stated, any special extended unemployment benefits paid based on ARRA will be charged to the \$20 million appropriation. These benefits will not be charged to the claimant's base year employer's benefit account balance and consequently will not be included when calculating the base year employer's experience rated RUIA contribution rate for any future years. Although employers will not be charged for these payments, certain processes will remain the same while others will change.

Form ID-4K, Prepayment Notice of Employee's Applications and Claims for Benefits under the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act (RUIA) and Form ID-4E, Notice of RUIA Claim Determinations **will be issued as usual** for all sickness benefit claims/payments and all normal and regular extended unemployment benefit applications/claims and payments. These benefits will continue to be charged to the claimant's base year employer's benefit account balance and consequently will be used when calculating the base year employer's experience rated RUIA contribution rate for future years.

To ensure program integrity and safeguard the \$20 million Treasury appropriation, Form ID-4K, Prepayment Notice of Employee's Applications and Claims for Benefits under the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act (RUIA) will include unemployment claims payable under the ARRA. Please note that there will be no code on the Form ID-4K to distinguish these ARRA claims.

In addition, since the ARRA benefit payments **will not** be charged to the claimant's base year employer's benefit account balance, these payments **will not** appear on the Form ID-4E, Notice of RUIA Claim Determinations. However, since both payment types (non-ARRA and ARRA benefits) are generally payable on any given day, most employers will continue to receive Form ID-4E.

Finally, employers will continue to receive their Form ID-4K, Prepayment Notice of Employee's Applications and Claims for Benefits under the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act (RUIA) and ID-4E, Notice of RUIA Claim Determinations in the same format as they previously chose, either paper, Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) via RAILINC or the Employer Reporting System (ERS).

If you have any questions regarding the special extended unemployment benefits paid based on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, please contact the Railroad Retirement Board.