

## Coach Operators and Maintenance Employees

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS Concerning Possible Layoffs

1. **Will I be eligible for state unemployment insurance benefits if I receive a layoff?**

The state's Employment Development Department has specific eligibility requirements for unemployment benefits to be paid, including the following:

- Be unemployed through no fault of your own (A person who is laid off is out of work through no fault of his/her own)
- Have received enough wages during the base period to establish a claim
- Be physically able to work
- Be actively looking for work

2. **How long can I use the confidential services of the Employee Assistance Program?**

You and your family members can currently use the services of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and, should you experience a layoff, the **services will continue for six (6) months** following the date of employment termination due to a layoff. EAP confidential services are provided 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by Resources for Living. You may access the EAP for counseling, support services and identify resources to address your concerns at: (866) 370-4838 or [www.rfl.com](http://www.rfl.com).

3. **What if my Commercial Driver's License or DMV medical certification is due to expire during a layoff?**

It is your responsibility to maintain your commercial drivers license and medical certification during any period of layoff. A current commercial drivers license and medical certification is required for reinstatement due to a layoff recall. (Also, see No. 11.) Should you need VTT hours upon your return to work as a coach operator, the Training Department will assist you after employment reinstatement.

4. **Why is my current work record important?**

At the time of layoff, an employee's work record is suspended and, should the employee be recalled, the employee's work record will be reactivated upon returning to work. Thus, the employee's complete work record will be reinstated at the end of the layoff for any trackable items including but not limited to safe driving awards, customer comments and compliments, discipline and attendance occurrences, etc. These items will not fall off during the period of layoff.

5. **What happens to my Coach Operator uniform allowance? I am a Maintenance employee; what happens to my uniforms?**

Uniform allowance balances for laid-off coach operators will be closed out. In instances of a recall, a uniform allowance will be available under the terms of the collective bargaining agreement. It is important to keep uniforms in good repair during the period of layoff when you are on a recall list.

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Uniforms of laid-off Maintenance employees are required to be turned in at the time of employment termination. In instances of recalls, uniforms will be supplied.

#### 6. **What will happen to my flexible spending account/health care account?**

Under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reform Act of 1985 (COBRA), if you are participating in a flexible spending/healthcare account and your employment terminates, you may elect to continue your participation under the healthcare account until the end of the plan year provided your account is under-spent. Under-spent means your year-to-date contributions are greater than your year-to-date claims. Participants who are overspent are not eligible to continue participation in this program.

If you elect not to continue your participation under the healthcare account, no further additions will be made to your account(s). However, benefits for expenses incurred through your separation date will be paid until the earlier of:

- Three (3) months after termination date
- The account balance has been reduced to zero

It is not possible to carry over or cash out this account/benefit. Please contact Grace Farmer at (714) 560-5812 if you decide to continue your participation under the healthcare account or if you have any other questions about flexible spending/health care accounts.

#### 7. **What happens to my deferred compensation?**

If you are participating in the 457(b) deferred compensation plan, you are not required to take any action because of a change in your employment status. However, you do have the option to withdraw a portion up to 100 percent of your plan balance. If you take no action, your account will continue to be invested as you have directed and you can change how your assets are invested at any time. For additional information, please contact Nationwide Retirement Solutions at (877) 677-3678 and press "1" to speak to a customer service representative.

#### 8. **Should I contact the Orange County Employees Retirement System? If so, how?**

You should contact the Orange County Employees Retirement System (OCERS) directly if you have any questions regarding your OCERS retirement benefits. Cynthia Martinez is an OCERS retirement specialist who is available to answer your questions. She can be reached at (714) 569-4833. You may be eligible to defer your retirement and receive future benefits if you have sufficient years of service.

#### 9. **How long will I have my health insurance benefit coverage?**

Your health insurance benefits, and those of applicable dependents, continue through the last day of the month in which your employment termination date occurs. Your

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healthcare benefits plan administrator, Labor Alliance Managed Trust Fund, will be notifying you of options to continue your health insurance, including your rights under the Consolidated Omnibus Reconciliation Act (COBRA). (See question and answer No. 10.)

**10. What is COBRA and what help is provided through the federal economic stimulus plan?**

COBRA allows employment terminated or laid-off employees to continue their health insurance through the provisions of the federal Consolidated Omnibus Reconciliation Act (COBRA). If you have any questions about COBRA, please contact the Teamsters 952 plan administrator, Labor Alliance Managed Trust Fund, DMC Administrators, PO Box 4249, Orange, CA 92863-4249 or call (800) 924-1226.

Employees laid off between March and December 31, 2009 are eligible for a COBRA premium subsidy under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). The cost to the laid-off employee is 35 percent of the COBRA premium, the remaining 65 percent of the COBRA premium is paid by the federal government. A laid-off employee can receive the COBRA subsidy under ARRA for up to nine months. If you have any questions about COBRA and eligibility for COBRA premium reductions under the ARRA, please contact Labor Alliance Managed Trust Fund, DMC Administrators, PO Box 4249, Orange, CA 92863-4249 or you may call (800) 924-1226.

**11. How long will my name be on a Recall List and how will I be notified of a recall?**

A coach operator or maintenance employee who has been laid off from work will have recall and seniority rights for a period of thirty (30) months. Should there be a recall, notifications will be mailed in seniority order from the recall list (meaning last laid off is the first to be recalled). To be eligible for a recall notification, an employee on layoff status must keep the Authority informed of a current address. In addition, the responses to questions No. 3, 4, and 5 also provide important information about being prepared in the event of a recall. To update an address/contact information, please contact the Human Resources Department, OCTA, PO Box 14184, Orange, CA 92863-1584 or call (714) 560-5836 or (714) 560-5835.

**12. If I am recalled to a Coach Operator position, will I need to be recertified?**

Yes, if you are on layoff status for greater than 30 days, you will be required to successfully complete a recertification training subsequent to your recall date and before returning to service. You will be required to be in possession of a valid Commercial Drivers License and medical certification to be eligible for the recertification training.

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13. **If I receive a layoff notice, can I return to base locations to visit with my supervisors and coworkers or stop by to pick up personal items?**

After an employee's employment termination date and while on layoff status, visitations to any base locations are not allowed unless an appointment is made with the base manager.

14. **I am a Mechanic who will need to get my tool box after my layoff date. What should I do?**

You and your base supervisor will conduct an inventory of the contents of your tool box, then your tool box will be secured. You will need to contact your base manager to make an appointment to pick up your tool box.

15. **Where do I find information about layoffs and recalls in the collective bargaining agreement?**

- Collective Bargaining Agreement for Coach Operators – Article 7.
- Collective Bargaining Agreement for Maintenance Employees – Article 6.

16. **What does my 'final paycheck' consist of?**

Your hours worked and any unused vacation and personal paid holiday hours will be paid at your current rate of pay on your final paycheck, less applicable state and federal taxes and your other authorized payroll deductions.

17. **How long can my dependent(s) use dependent Transportation Pass(es)?**

Your dependents may use transportation passes through your date of employment termination. ID/Transportation Passes must be returned by mail to Human Resources, OCTA, P.O. Box 14184, Orange, CA 92863-1584. A postage paid envelope will be provided to you in a packet of information prior to your layoff.

18. **May I have access to the fitness rooms if I am laid off?**

Your access to the fitness room will not be available to you during a layoff. If you were assigned a key or access key card for a fitness room, you must return the key/key card to base management or mail the key/key card to Human Resources, OCTA, PO Box 14184, Orange, CA 92863-1584. As mentioned in question and answer No. 13, visitation to a base location for any reason after an employment termination is only by appointment with the base manager.