

**Enrolled**  
**Senate Bill 195**

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CHAPTER .....

AN ACT

Relating to employment that ends individual’s disqualification from receipt of unemployment benefits; amending ORS 657.176.

**Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:**

**SECTION 1.** ORS 657.176 is amended to read:

657.176. (1) An authorized representative designated by the Director of the Employment Department shall promptly examine each claim to determine whether an individual is subject to disqualification as a result of a separation, termination, leaving, resignation, or disciplinary suspension from work or as a result of failure to apply for or accept work and shall promptly enter a director’s decision if required by ORS 657.267. The authorized representative may address issues raised by information before the authorized representative, including but not limited to the nature of the separation, notwithstanding the way the parties characterize those issues.

(2) An individual shall be disqualified from the receipt of benefits until the individual has performed service in employment, **as defined in ORS 657.030 (2), in this state or in employment, as defined by a law equivalent to ORS 657.030 (2), in** *[subject to this chapter, or for an employing unit in this or]* any other state or Canada or as an employee of the federal government, for which remuneration is received that equals or exceeds four times the individual’s weekly benefit amount subsequent to the week in which the act causing the disqualification occurred, if the authorized representative designated by the director finds that the individual:

- (a) Has been discharged for misconduct connected with work;
- (b) Has been suspended from work for misconduct connected with work;
- (c) Voluntarily left work without good cause;
- (d) Failed without good cause to apply for available suitable work when referred by the employment office or the director;
- (e) Failed without good cause to accept suitable work when offered;
- (f) Has been discharged or suspended for being absent or tardy in reporting to work and the absence or tardiness occurred as a result of the unlawful use of any drug unless the person was participating in a recognized drug rehabilitation program at the time of the absence or tardiness, or is so participating within 10 days *[of]* **after** the date of the discharge or suspension, and the person provides to the Employment Department documentation of program participation. As used in this paragraph, “unlawful use” does not include the use of a drug taken under the supervision of a licensed health care professional and in accordance with the prescribed directions for consumption, or other uses authorized by the laws of this state;

(g) Has been discharged or suspended for being absent or tardy in reporting to work and the absence or tardiness occurred as the result of the use of alcohol on a second or any subsequent occasion within a period of 12 months unless the person was participating in a recognized alcohol rehabilitation program at the time of the absence or tardiness, or is so participating within 10 days [of] **after** the date of the discharge or suspension, and the person provides to the department documentation of program participation; or

(h) Has committed a disqualifying act described in subsection (9) or (10) of this section.

(3) If the authorized representative designated by the director finds **that** an individual was discharged for misconduct because of the individual's commission of a felony or theft in connection with the individual's work, all benefit rights based on wages earned prior to the date of the discharge shall be canceled if the individual's employer notifies the director of the discharge within 10 days following issuance of the notice provided for in ORS 657.265 or 30 days following issuance of the notice provided for in ORS 657.266, and:

(a) The individual has admitted commission of the felony or theft to an authorized representative of the director;

(b) The individual has signed a written admission of [such act and such] **the felony or theft and the** written admission has been presented to an authorized representative of the director; or

(c) [Such act] **The felony or theft** has resulted in a conviction by a court of competent jurisdiction.

(4) An individual disqualified under subsection (2) of this section shall have the individual's maximum benefit amount reduced by eight times the individual's weekly benefit amount. However, in no event shall the individual's maximum benefit amount be reduced to less than the individual's weekly benefit amount unless the individual has previously received benefits during the individual's benefit year.

(5) An individual [shall] **may** not be disqualified from receiving benefits under subsection (2)(c) or (e) of this section or under ORS 657.200 if the individual ceases work or fails to accept work when a collective bargaining agreement between the individual's bargaining unit and the individual's employer is in effect and the employer unilaterally modifies the amount of wages payable under the agreement, in breach of the agreement.

(6) For purposes of applying subsection (2) of this section, when an individual has notified an employer that the individual will leave work on a specific date and it is determined **that**:

(a) [That such] **The** separation would be for reasons that constitute good cause;

(b) The individual voluntarily left work without good cause prior to the date of the impending good cause voluntary leaving date; and

(c) The actual voluntary leaving of work [occurs] **occurred** no more than 15 days prior to the planned date of voluntary leaving,

then [such] **the** separation from work shall be adjudicated as if the actual voluntary leaving had not occurred and the planned voluntary leaving had occurred. However, the individual shall be ineligible for benefits for the period including the week in which the actual voluntary leaving occurred through the week prior to the week of the planned good cause voluntary leaving date.

(7) For purposes of applying subsection (2) of this section, when an employer has notified an individual that the individual will be discharged on a specific date and it is determined **that**:

(a) [That such] **The** discharge would not be for reasons that constitute misconduct connected with the work;

(b) The individual voluntarily left work without good cause prior to the date of the impending discharge; and

(c) The voluntary leaving of work [occurs] **occurred** no more than 15 days prior to the date of the impending discharge,

then [such] **the** separation from work shall be adjudicated as if the voluntary leaving had not occurred and the discharge had occurred. However, the individual shall be ineligible for benefits for

the period including the week in which the voluntary leaving occurred through the week prior to the week in which the individual would have been discharged.

(8) For purposes of applying subsection (2) of this section, when an individual has notified an employer that the individual will leave work on a specific date and it is determined **that**:

(a) [*That such*] **The** voluntary leaving would be for reasons that do not constitute good cause;

(b) The employer discharged the individual, but not for misconduct connected with work, prior to the date of the planned voluntary leaving; and

(c) The actual discharge [*occurs*] **occurred** no more than 15 days prior to the planned voluntary leaving,

then [*such*] **the** separation from work shall be adjudicated as if the discharge had not occurred and the planned voluntary leaving had occurred. However, the individual shall be eligible for benefits for the period including the week in which the actual discharge occurred through the week prior to the week of the planned voluntary leaving date.

(9)(a) For the purposes of subsection (2) of this section, an individual is considered to have committed a disqualifying act when the individual:

(A) Fails to comply with the terms and conditions of a reasonable written policy established by the employer or through collective bargaining, which may include blanket, random, periodic and probable cause testing, that governs the use, sale, possession or effects of drugs or alcohol in the workplace;

(B) Fails or refuses to take a drug or alcohol test as required by the employer's reasonable written policy;

(C) Refuses to cooperate with or subverts or attempts to subvert a drug or alcohol testing process in any employment-related test required by the employer's reasonable written policy, including but not limited to:

(i) Refusal or failure to complete proper documentation that authorizes the test;

(ii) Refusal or failure to sign a chain of custody form;

(iii) Presentation of false identification;

(iv) Placement of an adulterant in the individual's specimen for testing, when the adulterant is identified by a testing facility; or

(v) Interference with the accuracy of the test results by conduct that includes dilution or adulteration of a test specimen;

(D) Is under the influence of intoxicants while performing services for the employer;

(E) Possesses a drug unlawfully or in violation of the employer's reasonable written policy during work;

(F) Tests positive for alcohol or an unlawful drug in connection with employment; or

(G) Refuses to enter into or violates the terms of a last chance agreement with the employer.

(b)(A) Except as provided in subparagraph (B) of this paragraph, an individual is not considered to have committed a disqualifying act under this subsection if the individual, on the date of separation or within 10 days after the date of separation, is participating in a recognized drug or alcohol rehabilitation program and provides documentation of participation in the program to the department.

(B) This paragraph does not apply to an individual who has refused to enter into or has violated the terms of a last chance agreement with the employer.

(c) It is no defense or excuse under this section that the individual's separation resulted from alcohol use, marijuana use, unlawful drug use, alcoholism or drug addiction.

(d) The department shall adopt rules to carry out the provisions of this subsection.

(10) For the purposes of subsection (2) of this section, an individual is considered to have committed a disqualifying act when the individual voluntarily leaves work, fails to apply for available suitable work when referred by the employment office or the director or fails to accept suitable work when offered:

(a) Because the employer has or introduces a reasonable written drug-free workplace policy that is consistent with subsection (9)(a)(A) of this section;

(b) Because the employer requires the employee to consent to present or future drug or alcohol tests under a reasonable written policy that is consistent with subsection (9)(a)(A) of this section;

(c) To avoid taking a drug or alcohol test under a reasonable written policy that is consistent with subsection (9)(a)(A) of this section; or

(d) To avoid meeting the requirements of a last chance agreement.

(11) An individual may not be disqualified from receiving benefits under subsection (2)(c) of this section and shall be deemed laid off if the individual:

(a) Works under a collective bargaining agreement;

(b) Elects to be laid off when the employer has decided to lay off employees; and

(c) Is placed on the referral list under the collective bargaining agreement.

(12) An individual may not be disqualified from receiving benefits under subsection (2)(c), (d) or (e) of this section or be considered unavailable for purposes of ORS 657.155 if:

(a) The individual is a victim, or is the parent or guardian of a minor child who is a victim, of domestic violence, stalking or sexual assault;

(b) The individual leaves work, fails to apply for available suitable work or fails to accept suitable work when offered to protect the individual or the minor child from further domestic violence, stalking or sexual assault that the individual reasonably believes will occur at the workplace or elsewhere; and

(c) The individual pursues reasonable available alternatives to leaving work, failing to apply for available suitable work or failing to accept suitable work when offered.

(13) For purposes of this section:

(a) "Adulterant" means a substance that does not occur naturally in urine, or that occurs naturally in urine but not at the concentrations detected. "Adulterant" includes but is not limited to glutaraldehyde, nitrite concentrations above physiological levels, hypochlorite or soap.

(b) "Drug" means a controlled substance as defined in ORS 475.005.

(c) "Last chance agreement" means a reasonable agreement:

(A) Between an employer and an employee who has violated the employer's reasonable written policy, has engaged in drug or alcohol use connected with work or has admitted to alcohol abuse, marijuana use or unlawful drug use; and

(B) That permits the employee to return to work under conditions that may require the employee to:

(i) Abstain from alcohol use, marijuana use and unlawful drug use; and

(ii) Attend and comply with the requirements of a rehabilitation or education program acceptable to the employer.

(d) An individual is "under the influence of intoxicants" when the level of alcohol, marijuana or unlawful drugs present in the individual's body exceeds the amount prescribed in a collective bargaining agreement, or the amount prescribed in the employer's reasonable written policy if there is no applicable collective bargaining agreement provision.

**Passed by Senate March 19, 2007**

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Secretary of Senate

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President of Senate

**Passed by House May 21, 2007**

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Speaker of House

**Received by Governor:**

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**Approved:**

.....M,....., 2007

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Governor

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