

**RCW 50A.15.050 Timing of benefit payments—Employer contest of application.** (1) Benefits provided under this title shall be paid periodically and promptly, except when an employer contests a period of family or medical leave. The department must send the first benefit payment to the employee within fourteen calendar days after the first properly completed weekly application is received by the department. Subsequent payments must be sent at least biweekly thereafter. If the employer contests an initial application for family or medical leave benefits, the employer must notify the employee and the department in a manner prescribed by the commissioner within eighteen days of receipt of notice from the department of the employee's filing of an application for benefits, as provided under RCW 50A.05.020. Failure to timely contest an initial application shall constitute a waiver of objection to the family or medical leave application. Any inquiry which requires the employee's response in order to continue benefits uninterrupted or unmodified shall provide a reasonable time period in which to respond and include a clear and prominent statement of the deadline for responding and consequences of failing to respond.

(2) If an employee has received one or more benefit payments under this title, is in continued claim status, and his or her eligibility for benefits is questioned by the department or contested by the employer, the employee will be conditionally paid benefits without delay for any periods for which the employee files a claim for benefits, until and unless the employee has been provided adequate notice and an opportunity to be heard. The employee's right to retain such payments is conditioned upon the department's finding the employee to be eligible for such payments.

(a) At the employee's request, the department may hold conditional payments until the question of eligibility has been resolved.

(b) Payments will be issued for any benefits withheld under (a) of this subsection if the department determines the employee is eligible for benefits.

(c) If it is determined that the employee is ineligible for the weeks paid conditionally, the overpayment cannot be waived and must be repaid.

(3) The department must develop, in rule, a process by which an employer may contest an initial application for family or medical leave benefits. [2019 c 13 § 7; 2017 3rd sp.s. c 5 § 7. Formerly RCW 50A.04.040.]