

## *Legal Services Offices*

**Statewide Legal Services:** (Entry point for the legal services network in Connecticut). **860-344-0380** Central CT area or **1-800-453-3320**.

### *Other Legal Services Programs:*

#### **Hartford, Hartford County:**

##### **Greater Hartford Legal Aid**

999 Asylum Avenue  
Hartford, CT 06105  
(860) 541-5000  
FAX: (860) 541-5050

#### **Greater New Haven Area:**

##### **New Haven Legal Assistance Association, Inc.**

426 State Street  
New Haven, CT 06510  
(203) 946-4811  
TDD: (203) 946-4811  
FAX: (203) 498-9271

#### **Throughout Connecticut:**

##### **Connecticut Legal Services: Offices:**

211 State Street  
Bridgeport, CT 06604  
(203) 336-3851

16 Main Street  
New Britain, CT 06051  
(860) 225-8678

153 Williams Street  
New London, CT 06320  
(860) 447-0323

20 Summer Street  
Stamford, CT 06901  
(203) 348-9216

85 Central Avenue  
Waterbury, CT 06702  
(203) 756-8074

872 Main Street  
Willimantic, CT 06226  
(860) 456-1761

##### **AIDS Legal Network for CT**

999 Asylum Avenue  
Hartford, CT 06105  
(860) 541-5027 or 1-888-380-3646

##### **Visit us on the internet:**

[www.slsct.org](http://www.slsct.org)  
[www.ghla.org](http://www.ghla.org)  
[www.nhlegal.org](http://www.nhlegal.org)  
[www.connlegalservices.org](http://www.connlegalservices.org)  
[www.larcc.org](http://www.larcc.org)



This pamphlet was produced by the Legal Assistance Resource Center of CT in cooperation with Connecticut Legal Services, Greater Hartford Legal Aid, New Haven Legal Assistance Association, and Statewide Legal Services.

The information in this pamphlet is based on laws in CT as of February 2009. We hope that the information is helpful. It is not intended as legal advice for an individual situation. If you need further help and have not done so already, please call Statewide Legal Services (see above) or contact an attorney.

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# **Your Rights to Unemployment Compensation When You Voluntarily Leave Your Job**

**DO NOT QUIT  
your job without  
reading this  
booklet first!**



February 2010

*If you quit your job you may not be eligible for unemployment compensation. Your eligibility depends on **why** you quit.*

 **You may quit for good cause attributable to your employer.**

"Attributable to your employer" means you quit because of problems related to your job. These reasons may include:

- Unsafe working conditions;
- A job which is damaging to your health (with medical proof). The job must either cause your illness or make your medical condition worse;
- A change in working conditions that is harmful to you. For example, you may be asked to work longer hours, take a reduction in pay, or have to do very different job duties.
- Your employer broke your original contract. For example, your employer did not give you a pay increase that was promised in your contract.

You may **NOT** get unemployment compensation if you quit your job because of a health condition not caused by the job. *For example*, if you had a heart attack off the job that prevents you from doing your job, you may be unable to get unemployment benefits.

**Good cause does NOT include:**

- quitting because you did not like being criticized by your employer (except where there is an excessive pattern of verbal abuse that a responsible person would find offensive),
- quitting because you did not get a raise you asked for but had not been promised, or
- quitting because you lost child care for your children. ***If you quit without good cause, you may not be able to get other benefits from the state such as food stamps (now called "SNAP" benefits) or cash assistance. (See later in this pamphlet).***

**In addition, before quitting you must:**

- Talk with your employer about why you want to quit.** You must give the employer a chance to work out the problems, unless you can show it would have been useless to have done so. For example, you may have told the employer about the problem many times and the employer did nothing about it.
- Explore all other alternatives to quitting**, such as taking a leave of absence. You must show that quitting was the only reasonable thing to do.




 **You may also quit for certain other reasons and still get benefits.**

*These reasons include:*

- You quit to care for a spouse, child or parent with a diagnosed illness or disability. However, you may be eligible only **AS LONG AS** you are available for some employment. (*For example, you are available to work during different hours or you are again able to work because you now have care for the family member during working hours*). You cannot collect benefits if you are not available to work.
- You quit because you lost your transportation (other than your own car) to get to and from work, **AND** there is no other reasonable way to get to work.
- You quit to protect yourself, your child, your spouse, or you parent from domestic violence. You may be asked to show that you tried to keep your job. The Department of Labor (DOL) calls this making "reasonable efforts" to hold onto your job. Reasonable efforts could include asking for a transfer or leave of absence before you quit. The DOL will look at each case individually.
- You had to move because of your spouse's job and you had to quit your job because you are too far away to commute.
- You quit a job within 30 days of starting the job because it turned out to be "unsuitable." Reasons a job may be unsuitable include a commute that was too long, or where the job "put at risk your health, safety or morals" -- which usually means you had to travel between 1 a.m. and 6 a.m. **If you wait until after 30 days to quit**, you will be found to have *agreed* to the unsuitable condition and be

unable to get unemployment compensation. Exceptions are sometimes found even if more than 30 days have passed, depending on the circumstances. For example you may have good cause for quitting if you made repeated complaints about the situation or if the employer promised to fix the situation but still failed to do so. **In addition,**

- YOU MUST be able to explain why the job is unsuitable.
  - YOU MUST be able to explain how the conditions of the job caused you problems.
  - YOU MUST tell your employer about the problem and try to work out the problem before quitting unless it would have been useless to have done so.
- You **MAY** quit and still get unemployment compensation if you leave part-time work to accept full-time work.

 **If you quit without good cause, you could be penalized.**

**1** If you quit without good cause you will be unable to collect unemployment compensation until you have found another job and earned **ten times** your benefit rate (about 5 weeks pay if you are paid what you made at your old job).

*The rules about quitting are very strict.*

*Before you quit, check with an attorney or the unemployment compensation office to make sure you have "good cause" to quit.*

**If you quit without good cause, you could be penalized** (continued):

2 If you quit without good cause, that quitting has an impact on your eligibility for present and future Food Stamp (now called "SNAP" benefits) and Temporary Family Assistance (TFA) benefits.

For more about TFA, see our pamphlet: "TFA - Time Limits and Other Programs Available..."

■ **Applicants for Food Stamps (SNAP) and Temporary Family Assistance** may be denied these benefits or receive fewer benefits if they quit a job without good cause within 60 days of the application date (or within 120 days if applying for a TFA extension).

■ **Recipients of Food Stamps (SNAP) and TFA** may lose their benefits or receive fewer benefits if they quit a job without good cause while getting assistance.

■ **Applicants and Recipients of a TFA Extension:** TFA benefits are limited to 21 months with the possibility of 6-month extensions. If you voluntarily quit a job without good cause, **it may affect your ability to get a 6-month extension.**

- If you are **not** on TFA, and quit a job without good cause, you will **not be eligible for a TFA extension for 120 days** (about 4 months) from the date you quit. This rule applies to those who have used up the 21 months of TFA benefits, quit a job, and then apply for a 6-month extension.
- If you receive **TFA, are on a 6-month extension** and voluntarily quit a job without good cause, your cash benefits will end and you will not be allowed any more extensions. You might be penalized for life if you quit a job while on a TFA extension, so **get advice before you quit.**

Remember...  
You have a right to a **DSS fair hearing** if you don't agree with the decision. Call Statewide Legal Services.

**NOTE:** The rules listed above (on pages 4 & 5) do not apply to anyone who would be eligible for a TFA **exemption**. A person who is granted a TFA exemption is not required to work and therefore can't be penalized for quitting a job without good cause.

## TFA Recipients

If you receive TFA and the DOL has found you had good cause for quitting, the Department of Social Services (DSS) will find you had good cause too. If the DOL finds you did not have good cause for quitting, the DSS is supposed to make its own independent decision about whether you had good cause.

### **DSS may find a TFA recipient had good cause for leaving a job if:**

You quit....

- ✓ to take a job with higher wages or one that will lead to self-sufficiency;
- ✓ because the effects of domestic violence keep you from working;
- ✓ because of your own illness;
- ✓ because of illness of a family member that requires care to be provided by the individual;
- ✓ because of a family emergency;
- ✓ because you can't find affordable and licensed child care.



### **Questions?**

Call Statewide Legal Services for free information.  
1-800-453-3320 or 860-344-0380