**CONCISE EXPLANATORY STATEMENT**

**Streamlining Unemployment Insurance Program**

**(Implementation of new computer system)**

**REASONS FOR ADOPTING RULES**

The rules amend and adopt rules related to the payment of unemployment benefits. The rules (a) permit implementation of the department’s new benefit payment system, (b) adopt policy changes that have been on hold due to the limitations of the department’s old system, and (c) adopt changes identified as good public policy during the rule-making process.

**DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PROPOSED RULES AND ADOPTED RULES**

None.

**SUMMARY AND RESPONSE TO COMMENTS RECEIVED**

**Comment:** Charging a $25.00 fee for non-sufficient funds checks or other dishonored payments is too high, and/or should not be charged because claimants are already facing financial difficulties. It runs counter to the principle of equity and good conscience. If the department keeps the fee, provide claimants an opportunity to explain why their payment was dishonored.

**Reasons Not Incorporated in Final Rule:**  The department recognizes individuals who owe overpayments are often in difficult financial circumstances. However, the addition of a $25.00 fee for dishonored payments is (a) consistent with normal business practices, (b) is a cost savings to the department, albeit small, and (c) is a disincentive for claimants to submit payments to the department for which there are insufficient funds to cover the payment.

The $25.00 fee is assessed under the Uniform Commercial Code, not under unemployment insurance law. It is not appealable under unemployment insurance law or rule.

**Comment:** Permit in-person claim filing at the department’s central office on Maple Park Avenue in Olympia.

**Reasons Not Incorporated in Final Rule:** Central office is not staffed by claims agents who can assist claimants with filing claims. Filing an initial claim online or by telephone provides the claimant with prompts and technical assistance on how to file the claim. While it is not encouraged, staff may drop off other documents at central office.

Juanita Myers

Employment Security Department Rules Coordinator

(360) 902-9665

jmyers@esd.wa.gov