



DEPARTMENT OF UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE  
UI POLICY & PERFORMANCE  
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 27, 2019

REFERENCE NO.: UIPP 2019.04

**TO:** All Senior Staff Directors, DUA Managers, Career Center Field Operations Directors, and Call Center Staff

**FROM:** John Saulnier, Director, Benefit Performance

**SUBJECT:** Maximum Allowable Benefit Weeks for New/Initial Unemployment Claims

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Massachusetts General Laws 151A, Section 30, provides guidance on how to calculate the potential duration of unemployment insurance (UI) claim. In 2016, the Commonwealth amended this law to reduce the potential duration of a claim from 30 weeks to 26, when the twelve-month average unemployment rate in the metropolitan areas is equal to or less than 5.1%. As you may be aware, the criteria in this section of the law has occurred.

UI initial claims filed on or after March 31, 2019, will have a potential duration of 26 weeks. When the twelve-month average unemployment rate goes back above 5.1% we will revert back to a potential duration of 30 weeks. Since we rely on an automated monetary review process, this change will seem part of the normal business process without effecting the claimant's due process rights.

As a reminder, a claimant who requests a predate because they would like have the previous duration calculation used on their claim **will not** have a valid "good cause" reason for backdating the claim.

You also may find this link, [FAQ's - Change in Maximum Allowable UI Benefit Weeks](#) useful in learning more about this change.

Please contact the UI Policy and Performance Department at 617-626-6422, with any questions you may have regarding this subject.