

96.11 Duties, powers, rules privilege.

1. *Duties and powers of director.* It shall be the duty of the director to administer this chapter; and the director shall have power and authority to adopt, amend, or rescind pursuant to chapter 17A such rules, to employ such persons, make such expenditures, require such reports, make such investigations, and take such other action as the director deems necessary or suitable to that end. Not later than the fifteenth day of December of each year, the director shall submit to the governor a report covering the administration and operation of this chapter during the preceding fiscal year and shall make such recommendations for amendments to this chapter as the director deems proper. Such report shall include a balance sheet of the moneys in the fund. Whenever the director believes that a change in contribution or benefits rates will become necessary to protect the solvency of the fund, the director shall promptly so inform the governor and the legislature, and make recommendations with respect thereto.

2. *General and special rules.* Each employer shall post and maintain printed statements of all rules of the department in places readily accessible to individuals in the employer's service, and shall make available to each such individual at the time the individual becomes unemployed a printed statement of such rules relating to the filing of claims for benefits. Such printed statements shall be supplied by the department to each employer without cost to the employer.

3. *Publications.*

a. The director shall cause to be printed for distribution to the public the text of this chapter, the department's general rules, its annual reports to the governor, and any other material the director deems relevant and suitable and shall furnish the same to any person upon application therefor.

b. The department shall prepare and distribute to the public as labor force data, only that data adjusted according to the current population survey and other nonlabor force statistics which the department determines are of interest to the public.

4. *Bonds.* The director may bond any employee handling moneys or signing checks.

5. *Employment stabilization.* The director, with the advice and aid of the appropriate bureaus of the department, shall take all appropriate steps to reduce and prevent unemployment; to encourage and assist in the adoption of practical methods of vocational training, retraining and vocational guidance; to investigate, recommend, advise, and assist in the establishment and operation, by municipalities, counties, school districts, and the state, of reserves for public works to be used in times of business depression and unemployment; to promote the reemployment of unemployed workers throughout the state in every other way that may be feasible; and to these ends to carry on and publish the results of investigations and research studies.

6. *Records, reports, and confidentiality.*

a. An employing unit shall keep true and accurate work records, containing information required by the department. The records shall be open to inspection and copying by an authorized representative of the department at any reasonable time and as often as necessary. An authorized representative of the department may require from an employing unit a sworn or unsworn report, with respect to individuals employed by the employing unit, which the department deems necessary for the effective administration of this chapter.

b. (1) The department shall hold confidential the information obtained from an employing unit or individual in the course of administering this chapter and the initial determination made by a representative of the department under section 96.6, subsection 2, as to the benefit rights of an individual. The department shall not disclose or open this information for public inspection in a manner that reveals the identity of the employing unit or the individual, except as provided in subparagraph (3) or paragraph "c".

(2) A report or statement, whether written or verbal, made by a person to a representative of the department or to another person administering this law is a privileged communication. A person is not liable for slander or libel on account of the report or statement unless the report or statement is made with malice.

(3) Information obtained from an employing unit or individual in the course of administering this chapter and an initial determination made by a representative of the department under section 96.6, subsection 2, as to benefit rights of an individual shall not be used in any action or proceeding, except in a contested case proceeding or judicial review under chapter 17A. However, the department shall make information, which is obtained from an employing unit or individual in the course of administering this chapter and which relates to the employment and wage history of the individual, available to a county attorney for the county attorney's use in the performance of duties under section 331.756, subsection 5, or section 602.8107. The department shall make such information electronically accessible to the county attorney at the county attorney's office, if requested, provided the county attorney's office pays the cost of the installation of the equipment to provide such access. Information in the department's possession which may affect a claim for benefits or a change in an employer's rating account shall be made available to the interested parties. The information may be used by the interested parties in a proceeding under this chapter to the extent necessary for the proper presentation or defense of a claim.

(4) The department shall hold confidential unemployment insurance information received by the department from an unemployment insurance agency of another state.

c. Subject to conditions as the department by rule prescribes, information obtained from an employing unit or individual in the course of administering this chapter and an initial determination made by a representative of the department under section 96.6, subsection 2, as to benefit rights of an individual may be made available for purposes consistent with the purposes of this chapter to any of the following:

(1) An agency of this or any other state or a federal agency responsible for the administration of an unemployment compensation law or the maintenance of a system of public employment offices.

(2) The internal revenue service of the United States department of the treasury.

(3) The Iowa department of revenue.

(4) The social security administration of the United States department of health and human services.

(5) An agency of this or any other state or a federal agency responsible for the administration of public works or the administration of public assistance to unemployed individuals.

(6) Colleges, universities, and public agencies of this state for use in connection with research of a public nature, provided the department does not reveal the identity of an employing unit or individual.

(7) An employee of the department, a member of the general assembly, or a member of the United States Congress in connection with the employee's or member's official duties.

(8) The United States department of housing and urban development and representatives of a public housing agency.

d. Upon request of an agency of this or another state or of the federal government which administers or operates a program of public assistance or child support enforcement under either the law of this or another state or federal law, or which is charged with a duty or responsibility under the program, and if the agency is required by law to impose safeguards for the confidentiality of information at least as effective as required under this subsection, then the department shall provide to the requesting agency, with respect to any named individual without regard to paragraph "g", any of the following information:

- (1) Whether the individual is receiving or has received benefits, or has made an application for benefits under this chapter.
- (2) The period, if any, for which benefits were payable and the weekly benefit amount.
- (3) The individual's most recent address.
- (4) Whether the individual has refused an offer of employment, and, if so, the date of the refusal and a description of the employment refused, including duties, conditions of employment, and the rate of pay.
- (5) The individual's wage information.

e. The department may require an agency which is provided information under this subsection to reimburse the department for the costs of furnishing the information.

f. A public official or an agent or contractor of a public official who receives information pursuant to this subsection or a third party other than an agent who acts on behalf of a claimant or employer and who violates this subsection is guilty, upon conviction, of a serious misdemeanor. For the purposes of this subsection, "*public official*" means an official or employee within the executive branch of federal, state, or local government, or an elected official of the federal or a state or local government.

g. Information subject to the confidentiality of this subsection shall not be directly released to any authorized agency unless an attempt is made to provide written notification to the individual involved. Information released in accordance with criminal investigations by a law enforcement agency of this state, another state, or the federal government is exempt from this requirement.

h. The department and its employees shall not be liable for any acts or omissions resulting from the release of information to any person pursuant to this subsection.

7. Oaths and witnesses. In the discharge of the duties imposed by this chapter, the chairperson of the appeal board and any duly authorized representative of the department shall have power to administer oaths and affirmations, take depositions, certify to official acts, and issue subpoenas to compel the attendance of witnesses and the production of books, papers, correspondence, memoranda, and other records deemed necessary as evidence in connection with a disputed claim or the administration of this chapter.

8. Subpoenas. In case of contumacy by, or refusal to obey a subpoena issued to any person, any court of this state within the jurisdiction of which the inquiry is carried on or within the jurisdiction of which said person guilty of contumacy or refusal to obey is found or resides or transacts business, upon application by the department, or any member or duly authorized representative thereof, shall have jurisdiction to issue to such person an order requiring such person to appear before the department or any member or duly authorized representative thereof to produce evidence if so ordered or to give testimony touching the matter under investigation or in question; any failure to obey such order of the court may be punished by said court as a contempt thereof.

9. Protection against self-incrimination. No person shall be excused from attending and testifying or from producing books, papers, correspondence, memoranda, and other records before the department, or the appeal board, or in obedience to a subpoena in any cause or proceeding provided for in this chapter, on the ground that the testimony or evidence, documentary or otherwise, required of the person may tend to incriminate the person or subject the person to a penalty for forfeiture; but no individual shall be prosecuted or subjected to any penalty of forfeiture for or on account of any transaction, matter, or thing concerning which the

individual is compelled, after having claimed privilege against self-incrimination, to testify or produce evidence, documentary or otherwise, except that such individual so testifying shall not be exempt from prosecution and punishment for perjury committed in so testifying.

10. *State-federal cooperation.*

a. In the administration of this chapter, the department shall cooperate with the United States department of labor to the fullest extent consistent with the provisions of this chapter, and shall take such action, through the adoption of appropriate rules, regulations, administrative methods and standards, as may be necessary to secure to this state and its citizens all advantages available under the provisions of the Social Security Act that relate to unemployment compensation, the federal Unemployment Tax Act, the Wagner-Peyser Act, and the Federal-State Extended Unemployment Compensation Act of 1970.

b. In the administration of the provisions of section 96.29 which are enacted to conform with the requirements of the Federal-State Extended Unemployment Compensation Act of 1970, the department shall take such action as may be necessary to insure that the provisions are so interpreted and applied as to meet the requirements of such federal Act as interpreted by the United States department of labor, and to secure to this state the full reimbursement of the federal share of extended benefits paid under this chapter that are reimbursable under the federal Act.

c. The department shall make such reports, in such form and containing such information as the United States department of labor may from time to time require, and shall comply with such provisions as the United States department of labor may from time to time find necessary to assure the correctness and verification of such reports; and shall comply with the regulations prescribed by the United States department of labor governing the expenditures of such sums as may be allotted and paid to this state under Title III of the Social Security Act for the purpose of assisting in administration of this chapter.

d. The department may make its records relating to the administration of this chapter available to the railroad retirement board, and may furnish the railroad retirement board such copies thereof as the railroad retirement board deems necessary for its purposes. The department may afford reasonable cooperation with every agency of the United States charged with the administration of any unemployment insurance law. The railroad retirement board or any other agency requiring such services and reports from the department shall pay the department such compensation therefor as the department determines to be fair and reasonable.

11. *Destruction of records.* The department may destroy or dispose of such original reports or records as have been properly recorded or summarized in the permanent records of the department and are deemed by the director and the state records commission to be no longer necessary to the proper administration of this chapter. Wage records of the individual worker or transcripts therefrom may be destroyed or disposed of, if approved by the state records commission, two years after the expiration of the period covered by such wage records or upon proof of the death of the worker. Such destruction or disposition shall be made only by order of the director in consultation with the state records commission. Any moneys received from the disposition of such records shall be deposited to the credit of the employment security administration fund, subject to rules promulgated by the department.

12. *Unemployment benefits contested case hearing records.* Notwithstanding the provisions of section 17A.12 to the contrary, the recording of oral proceedings of a hearing conducted before an administrative law judge pursuant to section 96.6, subsection 3, in which the decision of the administrative law judge is not appealed to the employment appeal board, shall be filed with and maintained by the department for at least two years from the date of decision.

13. *Purging uncollectible overpayments.* Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter, the department shall review all outstanding overpayments of benefit payments annually. The department may determine as uncollectible and purge from its records any remaining unpaid balances of outstanding overpayments which

are ten years or older from the date of the overpayment decision.

14. *Access to available jobs list.* The department shall make available for consultation by the public, at each of the department's offices, a list of current job openings listed with the department, provided that the list shall comply with the confidentiality requirements of subsection 6, or those mandated by the federal government.

15. *Special contractor numbers.* For purposes of contractor registration under chapter 91C, the department shall provide for the issuance of special contractor numbers to contractors for whom employer accounts are not required under this chapter. A contractor who is not in compliance with the requirements of this chapter shall not be issued a special contractor number.

16. *Reimbursement of setoff costs.* The department shall include in the amount set off in accordance with section 8A.504, for the collection of an overpayment created pursuant to section 96.3, subsection 7, or section 96.16, subsection 4, an additional amount for the reimbursement of setoff costs incurred by the department of administrative services.

[C39, § **1551.17**; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, § 96.11; 81 Acts, ch 19, § 8]

83 Acts, ch 190, § 21, 27; 84 Acts, ch 1163, § 1; 85 Acts, ch 244, §1; 86 Acts, ch 1245, § 524, 934; 87 Acts, ch 66, § 1; 87 Acts, ch 111, § 12; 88 Acts, ch 1014, § 4; 88 Acts, ch 1054, § 1; 88 Acts, ch 1109, § 12; 88 Acts, ch 1162, § 1; 88 Acts, ch 1274, § 29; 89 Acts, ch 117, §1; 91 Acts, ch 45, §9; 96 Acts, ch 1121, § 6, 7; 96 Acts, ch 1186, § 23; 97 Acts, ch 38, § 2; 2001 Acts, ch 61, §14; 2002 Acts, ch 1090, §1; 2003 Acts, ch 145, §164, 286; 2007 Acts, ch 77, §1, 2; 2008 Acts, ch 1032, §179; 2008 Acts, ch 1172, §16