

CHAPTER 84C

WORKER ADJUSTMENT AND RETRAINING NOTIFICATION ACT

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84C.1 Title.

This chapter shall be known as the “Iowa Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act”.

2010 Acts, ch 1085, §1

[T] NEW section

84C.2 Definitions.

For the purposes of this chapter:

1. “*Aggrieved employee*” means an employee who has worked for the employer ordering the business closing or mass layoff and who, as a result of the failure by the employer to comply with section 84C.3, did not receive timely notice either directly or through the employee’s representative.

2. “*Business closing*” means the permanent or temporary shutdown of a single site of employment of one or more facilities or operating units that will result in an employment loss for twenty-five or more employees, other than part-time employees.

3. “*Department*” means the department of workforce development.

4. “*Employee*” means a worker who may reasonably expect to experience an employment loss as a consequence of a proposed business closing or mass layoff by an employer.

5. “*Employer*” means a person who employs twenty-five or more employees, excluding part-time employees.

6. “*Employment loss*” means an employment termination, other than a discharge for cause, voluntary separation, or retirement; a layoff exceeding six months; or a reduction in hours of more than fifty percent of work of individual employees during each month of a six-month period. “*Employment loss*” does not include instances when a business closing or mass layoff is the result of the relocation or consolidation of part or all of the employer’s business and, before the business closing or mass layoff, the employer offers to transfer the employee to a different site of employment within a reasonable commuting distance with no more than a six-month break in employment.

7. “*Mass layoff*” means a reduction in employment force that is not the result of a business closing and results in an employment loss at a single site of employment during any thirty-day period of twenty-five or more employees, other than part-time employees.

8. “*Part-time employee*” means an employee who is employed for an average of fewer than twenty hours per week or an employee, including a full-time employee, who has been employed for fewer than six of the twelve months preceding the date on which notice is required. However, if an applicable collective bargaining agreement defines a part-time employee, such definition shall supersede the definition in this subsection.

9. “*Representative*” means an exclusive representative of employees within the meaning of section 9(a) of the federal National Labor Relations Act, 29 U.S.C. § 151 et seq., and the federal Railway Labor Act, 45 U.S.C. § 151 et seq.

10. “*Single site of employment*” refers to a single location or a group of contiguous locations, such as a group of structures that form a campus or business park or separate facilities across the street from each other.

2010 Acts, ch 1085, §2; 2010 Acts, ch 1188, §24

[T] NEW section

84C.3 Notice — requirements.

1. a. An employer who plans a business closing or a mass layoff shall not order such action until the end of a thirty-day period which begins after the employer serves

written notice of such action to the affected employees or their representatives and to the department. However, if an applicable collective bargaining agreement designates a different notice period, the notice period in the collective bargaining agreement shall govern. The employer shall provide notice to the department if the worker is covered by a collective bargaining agreement.

b. An employer who has previously announced and carried out a short-term mass layoff of six months or less which is extended beyond six months due to business circumstances not reasonably foreseeable at the time of the initial mass layoff is required to give notice when it becomes reasonably foreseeable that the extension is required. A mass layoff extending beyond six months from the date the mass layoff commenced for any other reason shall be treated as an employment loss from the date of commencement of the mass layoff.

c. In the case of the sale of part or all of a business, the seller is responsible for providing notice of any business closing or mass layoff which will take place up to and on the effective date of the sale. The buyer is responsible for providing notice of any business closing or mass layoff that will take place thereafter.

2. a. Notice from the employer to the affected employees or their representatives and to the department shall be in written form and shall contain the following:

(1) The name and address of the employment site where the business closing or mass layoff will occur, and the name and telephone number of a company official to contact for further information.

(2) A statement as to whether the planned action is expected to be permanent or temporary and, if the entire business is to be closed, a statement to that effect.

(3) The expected date of the first employment loss and the anticipated schedule for employment losses.

(4) The job titles of positions to be affected and the names of the employees currently holding the affected jobs. The notice to the department shall also include the addresses of the affected employees. The department shall maintain the confidentiality of the names and addresses of employees received by the department.

b. The notice may include additional information useful to the employees, such as information about available dislocated worker assistance, and, if the planned action is expected to be temporary, the estimated duration, if known.

3. Any reasonable method of delivery to the affected employees or their representatives, and the department which is designed to ensure receipt of notice of at least thirty days before the planned action is acceptable. In the case of notification directly to affected employees, insertion of notice into pay envelopes is a viable option.

2010 Acts, ch 1085, §3

[T] NEW section

84C.4 Notice — exemptions, special circumstances, wages in lieu of notice.

1. *Strike or lockout.* If a business closing or mass layoff constitutes a strike or constitutes a lockout not intended to evade the requirements of this chapter, notice is not required to be given by the employer. This chapter does not require an employer to serve written notice when permanently replacing an employee who is deemed to be an economic striker under the federal National Labor Relations Act. This chapter shall not be deemed to validate or invalidate any judicial or administrative ruling relating to the hiring of permanent replacements for economic strikers under the federal National Labor Relations Act. If an employer hires temporary workers to replace employees during the course of a strike or lockout and later terminates these temporary workers at the conclusion of the strike or lockout, this chapter does not require an employer to serve written notice on the terminated temporary workers.

2. Rolling layoffs.

a. When affected employees will not be terminated on the same date, the date of the first individual employment loss within the thirty-day notice period triggers the notice requirement. An employee's last day of employment is considered the date of that employee's layoff. The first and subsequent groups of terminated employees are entitled to a full thirty days' notice.

b. An employer shall give notice if the number of employment losses of two or more actions in any ninety-day period triggers the notice requirements in section 84C.3 for a business closing or a mass layoff. An employer is not required to give notice if the number of employment losses from one action in a thirty-day period does not meet the requirements of section 84C.3. All employment losses in any ninety-day period shall be aggregated to trigger the notice requirement unless the employer demonstrates to the department that the employment losses during the ninety-day period are the result of separate and distinct actions and causes.

3. *Extended notice.* Additional notice is required if the date or schedule of dates of a planned business closing or mass layoff is extended beyond the date or the ending date of any period announced in the original notice.

a. If the postponement is for less than thirty days, the additional notice shall be given as soon as possible to the affected employees or their representatives and the department and shall include reference to the earlier notice, the date to which the planned action is postponed, and the reasons for the postponement. The notice shall be given in a manner which will provide the information to all affected employees.

b. If the postponement is for more than thirty days, the additional notice shall be treated as new notice subject to the provisions of section 84C.3.

4. *Faltering company.* An exception to the thirty-day notice applies to business closings but not to mass layoffs if the requirements of this subsection are met and the exception shall be narrowly construed.

a. An employer must have been actively seeking capital or business at the time that the thirty-day notice would have been required by seeking financing or refinancing through the arrangement of loans or the issuance of stocks, bonds, or other methods of internally generated financing, or by seeking additional money, credit, or business through any other commercially reasonable method. The employer must identify specific actions taken to obtain capital or business.

b. The employer must, at the time notice is actually given, provide a statement of explanation for reducing the notice period in addition to the other notice requirements in section 84C.3.

c. There must have been a realistic opportunity to obtain the financing or business sought.

d. The financing or business sought must have been sufficient, if obtained, to have enabled the employer to avoid or postpone the shutdown. The employer must be able to objectively demonstrate that the amount of capital or the volume of new business sought would have enabled the company to keep the facility, operating unit, or site open for a reasonable period of time.

e. The employer reasonably and in good faith must have believed that giving the required notice would have precluded the employer from obtaining the needed capital or business. The employer must be able to objectively demonstrate that the employer reasonably thought that a potential customer or source of financing would have been unwilling to provide the new business or capital if notice had been given. This condition may be satisfied if the employer can show that the financing or business source would not choose to do business with a troubled company or with a company whose workforce would be looking for other jobs.

5. *Unforeseeable business circumstance.* An exception to the thirty-day notice applies to business closings and to mass layoffs if the requirements of this subsection are met.

a. Business circumstances occurred that were not reasonably foreseeable at the time that the thirty-day notice would have been required.

b. The employer must, at the time notice is actually given, provide a statement of explanation for reducing the notice period in addition to the other notice requirements in section 84C.3.

c. An important indicator of a reasonably unforeseeable business circumstance is that the circumstance is caused by some sudden, dramatic, and unexpected action or condition outside the employer's control.

d. The employer must exercise commercially reasonable business judgment as would a similarly situated employer in predicting the demands of the employer's particular market.

The employer is not required to accurately predict general economic conditions that also may affect demand for products or services.

6. *Natural disaster.* An exception to the thirty-day notice applies to business closings and to mass layoffs if the requirements of this subsection are met.

a. A natural disaster occurred at the time notice would have been required.

b. The employer must, at the time notice is actually given, provide a statement of explanation for reducing the notice period in addition to the other requirements to notice in section 84C.3.

c. Floods, earthquakes, droughts, storms, tornadoes, and similar effects of nature are natural disasters under this subsection.

d. An employer must be able to demonstrate that the business closing or mass layoff is a direct result of the natural disaster.

e. If a business closing or mass layoff occurs as an indirect result of a natural disaster, this exception does not apply but the unforeseeable business circumstance exception may be applicable.

7. *Wages in lieu of notice.* The thirty-day notice requirement in section 84C.3 may be reduced by the number of days for which severance payments or wages in lieu of notice are paid by the employer to the employee for work days occurring during the notice period. A severance payment or wages in lieu of notice shall be at least an amount equivalent to the regular pay the employee would earn for the work days occurring during the notice period.

2010 Acts, ch 1085, §4; 2010 Acts, ch 1188, §25

[T] NEW section

84C.5 Enforcement and penalties.

1. The department shall adopt rules pursuant to and consistent with chapter 17A regarding investigations to determine whether an employer has violated any provisions of this chapter. A determination by the department that a violation has occurred shall be considered final agency action under chapter 17A.

2. An employer who violates the provisions of section 84C.3 with respect to the department shall be subject to a civil penalty of not more than one hundred dollars for each day of the violation. Any penalties collected by the department shall be forwarded to the treasurer of state and deposited in the general fund of the state.

3. The penalties provided for in this section shall be the exclusive remedies for any violation of this chapter. Under this chapter, a court shall not have authority to enjoin a business closing or mass layoff.

2010 Acts, ch 1085, §5

[T] NEW section