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## Unemployment claims reviewed



PORTLAND (AP) — As many as 15,000 Oregonians may be told they must repay some of the unemployment benefits they received over the past year, even though they followed state instructions when filing their claims.

But an Oregon congressman who wants the federal government to drop the entire matter says probably no one will have to repay any money.

The U.S. Department of Labor has told the state Employment Division to send out notices to those who filed emergency extended benefit claims since July 1992 but, under a revised interpretation by the federal agency, were not eligible to do so.

Instead, the Labor Department says they should have filed new claims, which would result in reduced benefits.

Many of those involved are timber workers who had lost their jobs but had worked briefly since in lower-paying positions.

"This could fall very heavily in places like Lane County, Douglas County and the rural portions of Clackamas County," said Dick Van Pelt, managing supervisor for unemployment programs in Oregon.

Two Oregon congressmen said at a news conference Wednesday that they are attempting to persuade Labor Department officials to drop the notification order.

If they fail, Rep. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., said he and Rep. Mike Kopetski, D-Ore., would introduce legislation forcing the agency to abandon the matter.

Similar conditions apply to other states, including Alaska, Washington and Idaho, Van Pelt said. Kopetski said he knew of cases in Texas, Louisiana and Massachusetts.

But Ed Leslie, regional director for unemployment insurance of the U.S. Employment and Training Administration in Seattle, said Ohio is the only

other state where notification has been ordered. Wyden said as many as 12 states could be involved but he would not name them and had no estimate of the number of people involved nationwide. Other states interpreted the rules differently, he said.

The Labor Department, under terms of the law that granted the extended benefits, probably would grant a waiver to those who received the extra payments once the notification process was completed, Kopetski said.

"Why spend all that bureaucratic work time, the cost of postage to up to 15,000 people, scare these individuals and make them mad?" he asked.

Kopetski said he was optimistic the matter can be resolved. But Armando Quiroz, regional administrator for the U.S. Employment and Training Administration in Seattle, said the agency has no authority to circumvent the notification process.

"It's a complex issue and I think that we've tried to examine it. The national office has tried to examine it. However, there is no room here because it's a question of law," he said.

Van Pelt said the overpayment in Oregon totaled \$4 million, but that amount will be reduced considerably when officials figure in the amount of regular payments each person should receive in place of the extended benefits and make other book-keeping changes.

State officials and the two congressmen said it is impossible to determine an average repayment amount for all those affected.

Van Pelt emphasized that those who would be sent repayment notices did nothing wrong. He said the state was following initial instructions. Van Pelt said the federal agency changed its interpretation.

But Leslie said there was no change in interpretation, only a clarification based on questions from other states.

## Eugene woman stops forest roadside spraying

(AP) — A Eugene woman who blocked herbicide spraying in the Willamette National Forest says the chemicals used contain secret ingredients with unknown effects.

Jan Wroncy filed an administrative appeal against plans to spray along 150 miles of highway and 23 miles of forest roads.

The appeals process probably will run through October and effectively halts the program for the year, said forest botanist Jenny Dimling.

Forest managers had planned to spray the chemical herbicide picloram on spotted knapweed and toadflax, which are non-native weeds.

Wroncy contended that the spray Tordon 22K, which contains the picloram, contains secret inert ingredients that the public has no way of evaluating.

The roadside spraying will expose travelers to the chemicals and will leach into the soil and water, possibly causing health problems for people and animals downstream, her appeal said.

Wildlife also could transfer the herbicide to threatened or endangered plants through their manure or urine because the chemical remains active for a full season after treatment, she said.

Dimling agreed with Wroncy that neither the Forest Service nor the public knows exactly what Tordon 22K contains. However, the manufacturer has divulged the contents to the Environmental Protection Agency, which has judged them as having a low priority for health testing, she said.

Picloram was chosen because it kills only broadleaf plants and won't damage grasses, Dimling said. Since picloram leaches easily into water, "we won't use Tordon anywhere where there's water," she said.

In wet areas, forest managers had planned to apply the herbicide glyphosate, under the brand name Rodeo, by hand, Dimling said.

Wroncy's appeal also was filed on behalf of Canaries Who Sing, a group of chemically sensitive people, and the environmental group Gaia Vision.

## Man severs arm, nose with knife

TACOMA, Wash. (AP) — Surgeons Wednesday reattached the nose and arm of a man who cut them off with a bread knife.

Kathleen Flaherty, a spokeswoman at Harborview Medical Center in Seattle, said the man was in serious condition after surgery. She would release no other details.

The man, described as having a history of mental problems, apparently cut off his nose first, then went to his kitchen and sawed off his arm with a serrated bread knife, Tacoma police said in a recorded message.

Officers were called to the man's neighborhood about 2 a.m. Wednesday after they received a report of a bloodied, one-armed man walking around and bumping into things.

When officers arrived, the man was on the ground, in shock and unable to respond to questions.

Officers went to the man's nearby home, where he lived alone, and found the nose in the bathroom sink and the arm on a kitchen counter.

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