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GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY
LANSING

JEFF DONOFRIO
DIRECTOR

Memorandum

DATE: August 27, 2020

TO: Case Parties and Representatives, Attorneys and Constituents

FROM: Sidney McBride, Interim Director, Bureau of Employment Relations

SUBJECT: COVID-19 Impact on MERC Staffing and Case Processing

Effective Immediately

This communication is a follow-up to my memorandum of May 26, 2020. Statewide, efforts continue to balance the safe return to routine activities while minimizing the transmission of the coronavirus in our workplaces, homes and communities. In doing so, please note the following changes currently in effect:

1. **Office Access:** All “in person” visits to MERC offices in Lansing and Detroit continued to be suspended through October 18, 2020, and possibly longer. Contact staff for general information using (313) 456-3510 or berinfo@michigan.gov. As necessary, video conferencing functionality is available to interact with staff as an “in-person alternative”. (Also refer to items #2, #3, #4 and #5 below.)
2. **Case Initiations and Case Filings:** Submit electronically using MERC e-File or by email to one of the designated email addresses listed below in #5. *You must include an email address for the filing party’s representative. If available, include an email address for the other party’s representative.* Filings submitted by mail or fax will be accepted; however, processing will be delayed due to the limited staff assigned to office during this emergency period. Once filings are submitted using any method, regularly monitor the MERC e-File system for confirmation of the completed processing of your filed materials.
3. **General Case Information:** Case details can be viewed using the MERC e-File system accessible from the agency’s homepage at www.michigan.gov/merc. Instructions on using MERC e-File is available on the webpage. Case specific questions not available by viewing MERC e-File, use the appropriate designated email address listed in #6 below.
4. **Case Hearings and Mediation:** MERC case hearings and mediation sessions continue using videoconferencing methods such as ZOOM, Microsoft Teams and others similar programs. Several MERC Labor Mediators, Panel Members and MOAHR ALJs have successful reached case

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Cadillac Place (Detroit Office)
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P.O. Box 02988
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Mason Building (Lansing Office)
503 W. Allegan, Garden Level
P.O. Box 30015
Lansing, Michigan 48909
(517) 373-3580-phone (517) 335-9181-fax

www.michigan.gov/merc

dispositions using remote sessions due to the difficulty with managing safety protections with in-person sessions at this time. Feel free to reach out to the assigned MERC mediator, 312 Arbitrator or Fact Finder, as well as the assigned MOAHR Administrative Law Judge for more details.

5. **MERC Monthly Commission Meetings:** The regular monthly meetings of the Commission have been conducted virtually using ZOOM since March 14, 2020. Details for public access to the remote meetings will be posted at least 72 hours prior to each meeting date under the “MERC Meeting Dates” section of the agency’s webpage located at www.michigan.gov/merc. Once the meetings return to in-person sessions, the information will also be posted at that same location on the MERC website.

6. **Case Filing Email Addresses:**
 - a. ULP: merc-ulps@michigan.gov
 - b. Elections: merc-elections@michigan.gov
 - c. Mediation (contract and grievance): merc-mediation@michigan.gov
 - d. Grievance Arb Appointments: merc-grievancearb@michigan.gov
 - e. General Information: berinfo@michigan.gov

7. **Virtual Training Programs:**

Notwithstanding the continued limitations on in-person assemblies, MERC staff offers various training opportunities using remote tools such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams. Send your training requests to any of the email addresses identified under item #6 above. Tutorials in the use of the MERC e-File system are also available and would be beneficial to those users that regularly files or responds to cases with the agency.

Thank you for your understanding and patience during these unparalleled times.

NOTE: Continued updates on various topics related to COVID-19 issues can be found on the state’s dedicated coronavirus website-- www.michigan.gov/coronavirus.



Sidney McBride, Interim Director
Bureau of Employment Relations

cc: MERC Commissioners