

**ETA 204 - EXPERIENCE RATING**

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## A. Facsimile of Form

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1. Sections A and B

STATE:	REGION:	REPORT FOR PERIOD ENDING:			
RATE YEAR ENDING		COMPUTATION DATE		RATING SYSTEM	
SECTION A. All SUBJECT ACCOUNTS: NUMBER & AMOUNTS OF TOTAL & TAXABLE PAYROLL					
Number As Of:		Payroll 12 Months Ending:			
		Line No.	Accounts	Total	Taxable
			(1)	(2)	(3)
1.	Taxable Accounts, Total	101			
	a. Eligible	102			
	b. Ineligible	103			
2.	Reimbursable Account	104			
RESERVE RATIO STATES ONLY:					
3.	Subject Accounts (Positive Or Zero Balance)	201			
	a. Eligible	202			
	b. Ineligible	203			
4.	Subject Accounts (Negative Balance)	204			
	a. Eligible	205			
	b. Ineligible	206			
SECTION B. SUMMARY OF BENEFITS PAID, CHARGED, AND NONCHARGED					
		Line No.	Amount		
5.	Total Benefits (Or Benefit Wages) Paid During 12 Months Ending:	301			
6.	Taxable Employer Accounts	302			

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	<b>a. Charged</b>	<b>303</b>	
	<b>1. Active</b>	<b>304</b>	
	<b>2. Inactive</b>	<b>305</b>	
	<b>b. Noncharged</b>	<b>306</b>	
<b>7.</b>	<b>Reimbursable Employer Accounts</b>	<b>307</b>	
	<b>a. Charged</b>	<b>308</b>	
	<b>b. Noncharged</b>	<b>309</b>	
<b>ESTIMATED CALENDAR YEAR (CY) AVERAGE TAX RATES</b>			
<b>8.</b>	<b>Average Tax Rate on Taxable Wages</b>	<b>401</b>	
<b>9.</b>	<b>Average Tax Rate on Total Wages</b>	<b>402</b>	

Comments:

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2. Section C. Reserve Ratio

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STATE:		REGION:		REPORT FOR RATE YEAR ENDING:			
SECTION C. RESERVE RATIO METHOD OF TAXATION							
Experience Factor		Average Tax Rate (1)	Number of Accounts (2)	Total Payroll (000) (3)	Taxable Payroll (000) (4)	Benefits Charged (000) (5)	Estimated Contributions (000) (6)
Greater than	Less Than Or Equal To						
ELIGIBLE - REGULARLY RATED BY FACTOR							
	-80.0						
-80.0	-60.0						
-60.0	-40.0						
-40.0	-20.0						
-20	-19						
-19	-18						
-18	-17						
:	:						
-6.0	-5.0						
-5.0	-4.5						
-4.5	-4.0						
:	:						
-0.5	0.0						
0.0	0.5						
:	:						
14.5	15.0						
15	16						
16	17						
:	:						
19	20						
20	25						
25	30						
:	:						
45							
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>							
<b>ELIGIBLE-SPECIALLY TAXED</b>							
<b>TOTAL ELIGIBLE</b>							
<b>TOTAL INELIGIBLE</b>							
<b>TOTAL ALL SUBJECT ACCOUNTS</b>							

Comments:

OMB No.: 1205-0164

[OMB Expiration Date XXXX](#) Est Response Time: ETA 204, A, B and C: 30 minutes

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OMB Burden Statement: These reporting instructions have been approved under the Paperwork reduction Act of 1995. Persons are not required to respond to this collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. Public reporting burden for this collection of information includes the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Submission is required to retain or obtain benefits under SSA 303(a) (6) (42 USC 503(a). Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Unemployment Insurance, Room S-4524, 200 Constitution Ave., NW, Washington, DC, 20210.

3. Section C. Benefit Ratio  
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STATE:		REGION:		REPORT FOR RATE YEAR ENDING:			
<b>SECTION C. BENEFIT RATIO METHOD OF TAXATION</b>							
Experience Factor		Average Tax Rate (1)	Number of Accounts (2)	Total Payroll (000) (3)	Taxable Payroll (000) (4)	Benefits Charged (000) (5)	Estimated Contributions (000) (6)
Greater than	Less Than Or Equal To						
ELIGIBLE - REGULARLY RATED							
0.0	0.1						
0.1	0.2						
0.2	0.3						
:	:						
7.9	8.0						
8.0	8.5						
8.5	9.0						
:	:						
15.0							
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>							
<b>ELIGIBLE-SPECIALLY TAXED</b>							
<b>TOTAL ELIGIBLE</b>							
<b>TOTAL INELIGIBLE</b>							
<b>TOTAL ALL SUBJECT ACCOUNTS</b>							

Comments:

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Average Estimated Response Time: 15 minutes

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## **B. Purpose**

The data submitted annually on the ETA 204 will enable the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) to project revenues for the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program on a state by state basis and to measure the variations in assigned contribution rates which result from different experience rating systems. When used in conjunction with data from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), the ETA 204 data will assist in determining the effects of various factors (e.g., seasonality, stabilization, expansion, or contraction in employment and payroll, etc.) on the employment experience of various groups of employers.

The data will also provide to states and the National Office an early signal for potential solvency problems, be useful in analyzing factors which give rise to the potential problems, and permit an evaluation of the effectiveness of the various approaches available to correct the problems detected. Moreover, the data are required as a basis for estimating state average tax rates for the rate year. Finally, the data are key components to the Significant Tax Measures Report. The Significant Tax Measures Report provides the information necessary to evaluate and compare state U.I. tax systems.

Thus, the foregoing information is of value to ETA in analyzing statutory provisions regarding experience rating, in preparing recommendations or advising states on proposed legislation involving experience rating, and in responding to inquiries from state agencies, employer groups, unions and others. Further, the data are a vital part of a state's management information system and a tool for the administrator and legislators to enhance the state experience rating system.

The average employer tax rate data reflects annual information about the taxing efforts in states relative to both taxable and total wages and allows comparison between states. It is of use to the National Office, state agencies and the public. For those states which have an employee tax, the amount of those taxes collected should be shown in the comments section of the report.

## **C. Due Date and Transmittal**

All states permitting rate variations based on experience rating (i.e., have an experience rating system in place) should submit ETA 204 reports. If experience rating is suspended for a given year, only sections A and B need be submitted. Notification of the suspension should be indicated in the comments section.

This report is due in the National Office on the 30th day of the 4th month (April 30 for most states) of the rate year to which the report relates. All states are required to submit lines 401 & 402 by April 30 of the calendar year to which those lines relate. For example, a state with a rate year starting July 1 must report average tax rates for the current calendar year by April 30 even though the full report is not due until October 31. All sections of the ETA 204 report, including Section C, must be reported electronically. Sections A & B must be

transmitted before Section C can be transmitted.

## D. General Reporting Instructions

Sections A, B, and C of the report should follow the format prescribed in these instructions. States that use a combination of experience rating methods should decide which system is the predominant system, and report as if the state used the predominant system. In the absence of significant changes in state UI laws from year to year, it is important that states in this situation should be consistent in choosing which experience rating system predominates.

Alaska, with a Payroll Decline system of experience rating, and Delaware and Oklahoma, with Benefit Wage Ratio systems of experience rating, are exempt from filing section C of this report.

For Section C only, columns 3 through 6 must be expressed in thousands. Subtotals and totals are required for all columns, and they are calculated by summing the appropriate column. The sum of Section C, Column 5 (Benefits Charged) should equal or be very close to the total benefits charged reported in Section B.6.a.1.

Entries should be made for all items. If no activity corresponding to the items occurred during the report period, a zero should be entered. A report containing missing data cannot be sent to the National Office. Edit checks can be found in Handbook 402, Unemployment Insurance Required Reports User's Manual, Appendix C.

## E. Definitions

1. All Subject Accounts. Subject Accounts, for purposes of the ETA 204 report, should consist only of the accounts of those active employers who were declared accountable or subject prior to either the beginning of the new rate year or the date designated by law as the computation date. Accounts of state or local governments, or their instrumentalities, or other units which make payments in lieu of contributions on a reimbursable basis should be included only in sections A.2., B.5., and B.7 of the report. These reimbursable accounts should be excluded from all other entries. Thus, all accounts for employers who were declared accountable or subject to the state law prior to the date chosen, and who were active in all or part of the 12-month period covered by the report and were charged or chargeable for benefits (or benefit wages) during that period, are included. All subject accounts for active employers declared accountable or subject on or subsequent to the date chosen are excluded.
2. Total Payroll. Total payroll is the total amount of wages paid or payable (depending on the wording of the state law) to covered workers by employers subject to the provisions of the state unemployment insurance law for services performed during the 12 months ending with the computation date. Total wages include both taxable wages, defined below, and the amount of wages which are in excess of the wages subject to the contribution provisions of the state law.



3. Taxable Payroll. Taxable payroll is the part of total payroll which is subject to the contribution provisions of the state unemployment insurance law (i.e., wages up to and including the state's taxable wage base).
4. Eligible Accounts. An account is termed eligible if it has had a sufficient period of experience as of the computation date to qualify for an experience rating computation under state law. In addition to accounts for which rates are assigned under the regular experience rating provisions of state law, this category includes: accounts delinquent in paying contributions to which the maximum rate or another special rate has been assigned, accounts which have been suspended from coverage (but not inactivated) because of temporary cessation of operations, and seasonal employers who qualify for special rates.
5. Ineligible Accounts. An account that does not meet the definition for eligible accounts is considered ineligible. Therefore, an ineligible account is one that has had an insufficient period of experience as of the computation date to qualify for an experience rating computation.
6. Benefits (or Benefit Wages) Charged. The total amount of benefit payments (or benefit wages) charged to employer accounts (before voluntary contributions are applied).
7. Benefits (or Benefit Wages) Not Charged. The total amount of benefit payments (or benefit wages) not charged to the account of any employer.
8. Active Employers. An active employer is one that meets the definition of an active employer for the ETA 581 report.
9. Inactive Employers. An inactive employer is one who does not meet the definition of an active employer.
10. Positive/Negative Balance Accounts (Reserve Ratio States Only). The balance shown for each employer's account, i.e., total contributions minus total benefit charges, is termed a positive balance if the figure is positive or zero, or a negative balance if the figure is negative.
11. Tax Rates. The tax rates entered in section C should be the current rate year's final assigned rates upon which contributions will be paid (including solvency and other rate adjustments, where applicable, but excluding employee contributions) after all adjustments, both individual and overall, have been made, and which 1) reflect the effect of employer voluntary contributions on tax rates, and, 2) were effective at the beginning of the current rate year (year in which the report is submitted), either January for states with calendar year rates, or July for those program year states.
12. Regularly Rated Accounts. An eligible account is termed "regularly rated" in section C if the rate assigned to the account resulted from a formula computation (of an experience factor) under regular experience-rating provisions of the state law (not including any reimbursement rates).

13. Specially Taxed Accounts. An eligible account is considered specially taxed for section C if the rate assigned to the account did not result directly from a formula computation under regular experience-rating provisions of the state law. Examples are: 1) an account of a seasonal employer which has been given a special rate provided by law or regulation, 2) a state or local government entity taxed according to a special rate schedule, or 3) a delinquent employer assigned a special rate.
14. Computation Date. The date as of which employer's experience is measured for the purpose of determining tax rates.
15. Rate Year Ending. The ending date of the period for which tax rates are being assigned based on the computation date. As an example; assuming the computation date is June 30, 2013, and the rates are being calculated to be applied on January 1, 2014, the rate year end date would be 12/31/2014.
16. Experience Factor. Reserve ratio or benefit ratio, as appropriate.
17. Average Employer Tax Rate on Total Wages. Compute by dividing the sum of estimated contributions for all taxable employers by the sum of estimated total wages for all taxable employers.
18. Average Employer Tax Rate on Taxable Wages. Compute by dividing the sum of estimated contributions for all taxable employers by the sum of estimated taxable wages for all taxable employers.
19. Employee Tax Rate on Total Wages. For those states which have an employee tax in place, report, in the comments section, the employee tax rate on total wages by dividing the sum of estimated employee contributions by the sum of estimated total wages for all employees.

## F. Item by Item Instructions

Specific instructions are given only to the extent necessary to supplement the titles of the items.

1. Section A. Item 3 and Item 4. Subject Accounts with Positive Balance and Subject Accounts with Negative Balance. These items should be filled in only by states using Reserve Ratio systems.
2. Section B. Summary of Benefits Paid, Charged, and Noncharged.
  - a. Item 5. Benefits (or Benefit Wages) Paid, During 12 Months Ending: Enter the ending date (usually the computation date) of the last 12-month period used in the formula to measure benefit charges, and the total amount paid (both charged and noncharged) during the period. Include any benefits paid which impact the state trust fund accounts, (e.g., benefits under regular state UI, the state portion of Extended Benefits, and the state's liability for combined wage claim (CWC) payments).

Exclude benefits paid under any program other than the state unemployment insurance program (e.g., benefits paid to Puerto Rican sugar workers). Exclude CWC payments for which other states are liable. In states using the benefit wage ratio system of experience rating, total benefit wages are entered instead of total benefits. This entry should be equal to the sums of items 6 and 7. It also should be approximately equal to total state benefits during the corresponding period as shown on the ETA-2112 report (sum these items: Net U.I Benefits, Net State Share EB, Reimbursable Local Government, Reimbursable State Government, Reimbursable Non-profit, and Interstate Benefits).

- b. Item 6(a). Charged. Enter the amount of benefits (or benefit wages) included in item 6 which were shown as a charge to any taxable employer's account. Exclude amounts which were charged during the 12-month period but removed before computing the experience rate. Benefit Charges should not reflect any reduction for voluntary contributions.
- c. Item 6(b). Noncharged. Enter the amount of benefits (or benefit wages) included in item 6 which is attributable to taxable employer accounts but is not charged to such accounts. Exclude CWC payments for which other states are liable.
- d. Item 8. Average Tax Rate on Taxable Wages. Enter the estimated average tax rate for the calendar year referenced by the report on line 401 as a percentage (i.e. 2.3) with one decimal place, as opposed to a rate (0.023). This rate should be consistent with data reported in Section C.
- e. Item 9. Average Tax Rate on Total Wages. Enter the estimated average tax rate for the calendar year referenced by the report on line 402 as a percentage (i.e. 2.3) with one decimal place, as opposed to a rate (0.023). This rate should be consistent with data reported in Section C.

3. Section C. All Taxable Subject Accounts: Selected Data.

- a. Column 1. Average Tax Rate. Enter the final assigned employer tax rate that corresponds with the Experience Factor column and the experience factor interval in state law. In entering the rates, if the 204 experience rating intervals, which correspond to a specific tax rate, are contained within the state's experience rating intervals then the assigned tax rate would be placed in that interval. If the 204 intervals are larger than the state's intervals (encompassing more than one interval) then the state tax rates should be averaged. For example, if a reserve ratio interval in state law of -5.0% to -5.5% corresponds to a tax rate of 2.0% and a -5.5 to -6.0% corresponds to a rate of 2.5% then the rate of 2.25% should be placed in the section C under the interval -5.0% to -6.0%.
- b. Column 2. Number of Accounts. In reserve ratio states and benefit ratio states enter the sum of eligible accounts that have been placed into each experience factor category during the 12 month period ending with the computation date. Also, for

ineligible accounts and specially taxed accounts enter the sum of all the accounts placed into these categories.

- c. Column 3. Total Payroll. In reserve ratio states and benefit ratio states, for each experience factor category, and for ineligible accounts and specially taxed accounts, enter the sum of all employer's actual total payroll paid or payable during the 12 month period ending with the computation date.
  - d. Column 4. Taxable Payroll. In reserve ratio states and benefit ratio states, for each experience factor category and for ineligible accounts and specially taxed accounts, enter the sum of all employer's actual taxable payroll paid or payable during the 12 month period ending with the computation date.
  - e. Column 5. Benefits Charged (Adjusted Benefit Wages Charged). In reserve ratio and benefit ratio states, for each experience factor category and for ineligible accounts and specially taxed accounts, enter actual benefits charged (before voluntary contributions are applied) during the 12-month period ending with the computation date. The sum of this column should equal or be very close to the total benefits charged reported in Section B.6.a.1.
  - f. Column 6. Estimated Contributions. Contributions for the rate year of this report are not yet known and must be estimated. Estimated contributions are entered for each experience rating interval by taking the taxable wages for the 12 months ending on the computation date from column 4 and multiplying by the interval's assigned tax rate in column 1.
4. Comments. Comments should be provided to explain any significant administrative, legal, or economic factors that may affect the data reported. In particular, states should explain significant changes from the prior year in noncharges (Sections B.6.b and B.7.b) and charges to inactive accounts (Section B.6.a.2). Electronic reporting allows for four screen lines of comments.
- a. Administrative Factors Affecting Data Reported on the Tabulation. Describe any administrative factors such as rules and regulations which may affect the data reported in such a way that they will lack comparability with data submitted on prior reports.
  - b. Legal Factors Affecting Data Reported on Tabulations. Describe any legal factors such as new laws or amendments to the state unemployment insurance law which may affect the data reported in such a way that they lack comparability with the data submitted on prior reports. For example, changes in tax schedules, either legislated or automatic, should be explained.
  - c. Economic Factors Affecting Data Reported on Tabulations. Describe any economic factors, such as recession in key industries or major plant closings, which may affect the data reported.

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