

CALI STRIPPERS: YOUR RIGHTS DURING THE COVID19 PANDEMIC

If you work as a stripper at a strip club in California, you are an employee entitled to employment rights and benefits. Here is some basic information on the rights of California strippers relevant to the ongoing Coronavirus health crisis as well as information on how to access those rights.



If your club shuts down

Unemployment Insurance

If your club shuts down or your hours are reduced, you can file for Unemployment Insurance. You can also apply if you can't work because your kids are out of school and you don't have childcare. You have a right to unemployment benefits even if your club has been misclassifying you as an "independent contractor" or a "customer" or anything other than an employee. Unemployment Insurance only covers up to \$450 per week (and as low as \$40 per week.) During the Coronavirus pandemic, the normal 1-week waiting period has been waived.

The amount of money you receive through Unemployment Insurance is calculated based on your past hours and wages. Your stage and floor tips may or may not count as part of your wages. If you were paying a stage fee, you can try to count your stage fees and other fees as part of your tips because it was tip money that was illegally stolen from you by your club. Tips that were distributed to you by your employer should count towards your wages. For example, if your club counts your lap dances and distributes a percentage of your earnings back to you, those earnings should count towards your wages.

There are some minimum qualifications for unemployment insurance, including the requirement that you were fired or your hours were reduced through no fault of your own, and certain minimum requirements related to your past wages. However, California may relax some of these qualifications in light of the ongoing Coronavirus crisis, so you may qualify for unemployment during this time even if you think you would not qualify normally. There is no cost to apply, and no penalty if your application is denied, as long as your application answers are honest. You can also apply for Unemployment Insurance if your child's school is closed, you have to miss work to be with them, and you have no other care options.

Dancers who are not legally authorized to work in the United States do not qualify for Unemployment Insurance. If you are one of those such dancers and you are worried that you cannot afford basic necessities during this shutdown, please reach out to Soldiers of Pole directly and we will do what we can to support you.

You can file a claim with California's Employment Development Department at this link:

<https://www.edd.ca.gov/claims.htm>

After you file your claim, you will be mailed information about your claim and the UI program. Be sure to read and respond to all requests to avoid payment delays. You will also receive a separate mailing with your first Continued Claim Form that you will use to certify for benefits.

Questions? Contact Soldiers of Pole at <https://soldiersofpole.com/contact/>

Website: www.soldiersofpole.com

Instagram: @soldiers_of_pole_

Twitter: @soldieresofpole

If your club stays open

Paid Sick Leave

You have a right to paid sick leave. Paid sick leave can be used for absences due to illness, the diagnosis, care or treatment of an existing health condition or preventative care for you or your family member. Preventative care may include self-quarantine as a result of potential exposure to COVID-19 if quarantine is recommended by government authorities. There may be other situations where you may exercise your right to take paid sick leave, or your employer may allow paid sick leave for preventative care. For example, where there has been exposure to COVID-19 or where you've traveled to a high-risk area.

Paid sick days start to accrue as soon as you started working at your club and you can use your sick days after you've been there for 90 days. California employees are entitled to at least three sick days each year, but sometimes more depending on where in California you are located. You use your sick days by notifying your employer in advance. If the need is unforeseeable, you need only give notice as soon as practical, as may occur in the case of unanticipated illness or a medical emergency. It's also illegal for your club to fire you or reduce your hours because you ask to take your paid sick days.

If you are unable to do your usual job because you were exposed to and contracted COVID-19 during the regular course of your work, **you may be eligible for workers' compensation benefits**. For more info about workers' comp and to apply, use this link: <https://www.dir.ca.gov/dwc/FileAClaim.htm>

Disability Insurance

If you do contract Coronavirus outside of work and are unable to work, you can apply for Disability Insurance. To qualify, you must be unable to do your regular or customary work for at least eight days and be under the care and treatment of a licensed physician/practitioner. You must complete and submit your claim form no earlier than nine days after your first day of disability begins, and you must have your physician/practitioner complete the medical certification portion of your disability claim. Citizenship and immigration status do not affect eligibility. California requires that you have paid into State Disability Insurance (noted as "CASDI" on paystubs) in the past 5 to 18 months to qualify for Disability Insurance, which is automatic for employees. If you are classified as an independent contractor and your application is denied because you didn't pay into CASDI, you can try appealing the decision and argue that you should qualify because you would have paid into CASDI had you not been illegally misclassified. The application and more info are available here: <https://www.edd.ca.gov/disability/SDI Online.htm>

Paid Family Leave

If you cannot be at work because you must provide care to a seriously ill family member, you can apply for paid family leave. To be eligible for Paid Family Leave benefits, you must complete and submit your claim form no earlier than the first day your family leave begins, but no later than 41 days after your family leave begins or you may lose benefits. You also must provide a medical certificate on your care claim for the seriously ill family member. Citizenship and immigration status do not affect eligibility for Paid Family Leave. As with Disability Insurance, California requires that you have paid into State Disability Insurance in the past 5 to 18 months to qualify for Paid Family Leave. If you are being paid as an independent contractor and your application is denied because you didn't pay into CASDI, you can appeal the decision and argue that you should qualify because you would have been entitled had you not been illegally misclassified. <https://www.edd.ca.gov/disability/SDI Online.htm>