

Employer's Guide to COBRA Notices

COBRA requires that employers with 20 or more employees who offer employer-sponsored group health, dental, and vision plans to continue to offer coverage to eligible employees and their dependents after termination. While many group health plan providers or brokers offer COBRA administration (or can recommend a third-party administrator who can help facilitate), it is ultimately the employer's responsibility to ensure compliance with these complex regulations including timely notification to employees. Here are the required notices and when they must be sent:

● General Notice

This notice is provided to all covered employees and employee spouses within 90 days of employee coverage under the group health plan. The notice must include:

- Plan name and contact information where employees can ask questions
- General description of continued coverage
- Employee requirements for notifications and the importance of informing COBRA administrators
- A disclaimer that the notice doesn't detail the entire COBRA plan

● Election Notice

This notice describes the rights of continuation coverage and how to make an election. This notice goes to any covered employees, their spouses, and covered dependents 14 days after a qualifying event happens. It should include:

- Recognition of the qualifying event and all qualified individuals
- Date coverage will end without continued coverage
- How to elect continued coverage and what continued coverage is available
- In what cases continued coverage could be extended and how it could end early
- Payment requirements, grace periods, and due dates
- Statement of importance of keeping COBRA administrators informed
- A disclaimer that the notice doesn't detail the entire COBRA plan

● Unavailability of Continuation of Coverage Notice

This notice is for when there is a second qualifying event that negates employees' requests for continued coverage. Employees must receive this notice up to 14 days after their request for continued coverage is denied.

● Termination of Coverage Notice

This notice is for if an employee's continued coverage is terminated early. The notice should include:

- Date of coverage termination
- Reason for termination
- Rights the employee might have to elect a different form of coverage

