

# 13 Steps for Conducting a Virtual Layoff or Furlough

[Read the full guide.](#)

## 1 Schedule individual termination meetings whenever possible.

Layoff news should be delivered to each affected employee personally, if at all possible. This helps demonstrate the employee is still valued and respected. To avoid an extended layoff period while still allowing for individual meetings, train managers and additional HR personnel, so multiple meetings can be held simultaneously.

## 2 Take precautions to keep the virtual meetings private.

Send separate invites to the involved parties, configure the meetings as private calendar items, and set separate meetings for each layoff conversation instead of using a continuous Zoom or WebEx meeting room.

## 3 Include the hiring manager and an HR professional in the meeting.

An HR representative, the employee's hiring manager, and, if appropriate, the department head are the best people to include in the layoff conversation.

## 4 Be mindful that online meetings can be recorded.

Because participants can easily record Zoom and other web communications, pay attention to the words and tone you use as you deliver the news of the layoff. Use a [layoff notification script](#) to avoid unclear or ambiguous phrasing and to make sure all necessary points are covered.

## 5 Give full attention, as well as time and space, to the employee.

Turn your video on so you can see each other's faces, and turn off any notifications or alerts on your device that may take your attention away from the conversation on hand. Ask guiding questions to check for comprehension of key details. Pay especially close attention to the affected employee's words and emotional cues, and allow them to ask questions.

## 6 Be consistent with your severance policy.

Not only will a standard policy help reduce the potential for lawsuits, it will also keep you, the HR professional, from having to renegotiate the terms of severance with each individual employee. For more details on how to create a severance policy and put together severance packages, download [The Complete Guide to Severance Packages](#).

## 7 Provide current, specific information on unemployment benefits.

In your layoff meetings, communicate information that is up-to-date and specific to the state where your workers reside. This way they'll know what to expect and how to get the maximum benefit they are entitled to.

## 8 Pay for continued health coverage, if possible.

Since most employee health benefits plans end at the last day of the month, consider making the official last day of employment for affected employees the first of the month, or try to cover one additional month or more of healthcare for the employee.

## 9 Offer virtual, longer-term outplacement services.

Companies who care about their employees and their employer brand provide [outplacement](#), a benefit given by a company to exiting employees to assist them with finding new work faster. Modern outplacement providers offer 1:1 coaching services via a convenient virtual platform. Unlimited, on-demand career coaching available by video, audio, or text when and where the employee needs it can make a dramatic difference in the success of the outplacement program.

## 10 Remind affected employees about EAP.

Employee Assistance Programs (EAP), which come as a package deal with many employer health care programs, offer a wide variety of complimentary services, ranging from mental health support to legal help. A layoff is exactly the type of situation when employees might find EAP valuable.

## 11 Have all important information and materials ready at the time of the meeting.

Come to your layoff meeting prepared with everything you will need for the event, as well as everything the affected employee will need in order to make a smooth departure. This includes the employee separation agreement, COBRA notice, final and severance checks (via direct deposit), and information about outplacement services, among other items. Send these materials to the employee electronically during or directly after the meeting. Reference the [Employee Termination Checklist](#) for a complete list of items you should prepare.

## 12 Be flexible about work equipment.

Try not to impose strict deadlines for when laid-off employees must ship back their equipment at a time when the employee may feel overwhelmed with their new unemployment status. You might even allow terminated employees to keep their work computers post-layoff.

## 13 Stay in touch with furloughed employees.

Keep clear and open communication channels with employees who have been furloughed to keep them engaged. Consider also checking in with employees who have been laid off too, so long as they are open to it, to lend help and support.

For more information on how INTOO can help departing employees land new jobs faster, visit [intoo.com](https://intoo.com), [schedule a demo](#), or call 888.879.9357.

