

SNAP Work Rules – Verbal Informing Script

What is the purpose of this verbal informing script?

This script is meant to serve as a resource for eligibility staff to explain the work requirements a household must follow in simple and user-friendly language. It includes plain language terms used in the TF001, Notice of Case Action, to explain Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) work requirements to households that include mandatory Employment and Training (E&T) participants and able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs).

Instructions for Eligibility Staff

- Eligibility staff use this script after screening for exemptions and determining which requirements apply to which household members at certification, recertification and after any previously exempt household member becomes newly subject to a work requirement during the certification period. (For example, if the household reports a change that causes a household member to lose exemption status).
- Confirm with the client that your initial work requirement determination is accurate and update records when additional information is provided regarding exemptions.
- If household members who need to follow SNAP work requirements are not present when eligibility staff deliver the script, explain the work requirements for each household member to the person being interviewed and emphasize that other applicable members must follow the information in the TF001, Notice of Case Action, once received by mail.
- Familiarize yourself with the SNAP E&T Program. You should have the necessary information to discuss the program during this conversation.
- Remind the client to follow the work rule information once they receive the TF0001, Notice of Case Action, with the information.
- Use the script as a guide, adapting it according to the specific needs of each household.
- Keep your tone conversational.
- Allow time for questions from the client. Use the questions and answers (Q&A) at the end of the script as a reference, if needed.

Verbal Informing Introduction for Person Interviewed

SNAP has different rules that certain people need to follow to keep SNAP benefits. Today, I will review the specific **work rules** that apply to **[name of each person in the household to whom work rules apply]**.

- These rules have to do with work hours and job-related activities.
- **You will receive a notice in the mail with the information I will explain today.** It's very important that you and others in your household review the notice carefully to understand the steps your household will need to follow for everyone to keep SNAP benefits.
- You have the right to ask us to do a formal review of any decision we make concerning the work rules in a fair hearing. To request a fair hearing, you can call toll-free 2-1-1 or 877-541-7905 (after you pick a

language, press 2); visit your local office and submit your request; fax to 877-447-2839; or send a letter requesting a hearing to Texas HHSC, P.O. Box 149027, Austin, TX, 78714-9027.

If You Need to Contact Us About SNAP Work Rules

If someone thinks they have a good reason for not following any of these rules or they fit into any of the examples of those who do not have to follow these rules, they can let Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) Employment and Training (E&T) Program staff or HHSC know.

Please go twc.texas.gov and click on Find your Local Workforce Solutions Office to reach E&T Program staff or call toll-free 800-628-5115. To reach HHSC, call toll-free 2-1-1 or 1-877-541-7905 (after you pick a language, press 2).

SNAP Basic Work Rules and Employment and Training (E&T) Program Rules

1. Basic Work Rules

[Name of each person in the household that must follow the Basic Work Rules] must follow the Basic Work Rules to keep SNAP benefits. The rules are:

- Accept any job offer received, unless you have a good reason.
- If you have a job, don't quit your job or choose to work less than 30 hours each week without having a good reason, such as getting sick, being discriminated against or not getting paid.
- If we ask, tell us about your job and how much you're working.
- If we ask you to do a work program, complete your hours each month.

People may lose SNAP benefits if they don't follow these work rules without having a good reason.

People in your household may not have to follow the Basic Work Rules if they are:

- Younger than 16 years old or older than 59.
- Taking care of a child five years old or younger or someone who needs help caring for themselves.
- Already working at least 30 hours a week or earning at least \$217.50 per week.
- Receiving unemployment benefits or have applied for unemployment benefits.
- Not working because of a physical or mental health reason.
- Going to school, college or training program at least half time.
- Meeting the work rules for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).
- Participating in a drug or alcohol addiction treatment program.

2. SNAP E&T Program Rules

The E&T Program can make it easier to find or keep a job. The program can offer things like help looking for a job; basic education classes to improve reading and writing or to get a GED; or training for specific types of jobs, like health care or construction.

[Name of each person in the household who must follow the SNAP E&T Rules] must follow these SNAP E&T Program Rules and participate in the program to keep SNAP benefits:

- Go to a SNAP E&T Program orientation when you receive notice from the TWC Workforce Solutions Office. If you cannot make it to the orientation at the time scheduled, you must contact E&T Program staff listed on your notice to reschedule.
- Work with an E&T case manager to determine the right activity for you.
- Complete the activities of the program each month. (E&T Program staff will tell you what to do.)

You'll receive a notice in the mail with information about how to participate in the E&T Program. It's very important that those who must participate follow all the steps explained in the notice, like going to the program orientation. If you don't receive an orientation notice, contact your local TWC Workforce Solutions Office.

People in your household may not have to follow rules if they meet any of the reasons we already talked about, or if they:

- Are temporarily laid off from work.
- Live more than 35 miles from a TWC Workforce Solutions Office.
- Are a domestic violence survivor.

If there are people in your household who must participate in the E&T Program who have costs from doing the program, the E&T Program can provide support services, such as:

- Transportation
- Child care
- Personal safety items or equipment
- Other reasonable required costs, such as tools, books or uniforms

If support services cannot be provided by the local TWC Workforce Solutions Office, they will not need to follow the SNAP E&T Program Rules. But the person must wait to hear from E&T Program staff before leaving whatever program they are in. If someone who must participate in the E&T Program thinks they have support service needs that we should pay, they should tell E&T Program staff right away.

If Someone Doesn't Follow the Basic Work Rules or the E&T Program Rules

Someone may have a good reason for not following the Basic Work Rules or SNAP E&T Program Rules. Good reasons for not following these rules include issues the person can't control, such as:

- Getting sick.
- Not having child care for a child 11 years old or younger.
- Working in conditions that are unreasonable.
- Not having a way to get to the program.

Other reasons may apply, like the ones we discussed at the beginning. If we find that one of the reasons applies, the person will not need to follow the SNAP work rules. They should tell the SNAP E&T Program staff helping them as soon as possible if they think one of these reasons describes them. If program staff confirm the reason, or if the E&T Program is decided to not be a good fit for that person, they'll be notified and may not need to follow the work rules. There will be no change to their SNAP benefits because of this.

Consequences

It's important for you to know the consequences if **[members who must follow SNAP work rules]** doesn't/don't follow the Basic Work Rules or the SNAP E&T Program Rules without a good reason. They will lose SNAP benefits for the time shown below:

- The first time the person does not follow these rules, they can't get SNAP for one month.
- The second time the person does not follow these rules, they can't get SNAP for three months.
- The third time the person does not follow these rules, they can't get SNAP for six months.

The person must meet the work rules before they can get SNAP benefits again.

Time Limit Rules for ABAWDs

3. Time Limit Rules

[Name of each person in the household to whom ABAWD Time Limit Rules apply] must follow the Time Limit Rules to keep SNAP benefits for more than three months in a three-year period. These Time Limit Rules apply to your household because there are people who are between 18 and 49 years old who do not live with a child under 18 years old and are considered physically and mentally able to work. This is often called the able-bodied adult without dependents (ABAWD) work requirement.

Someone can only get SNAP benefits for three months in three years unless they meet these Time Limit Rules. The person:

- Spends at least 80 hours each month doing one or more of the following activities:
 - Working
 - Participating in the E&T Program or similar activities we approved
 - Volunteering
- OR**
- Participates in state workfare through the E&T Program for the number of hours we assign each month

If the person has been working more than 80 hours a month and work hours drop below 80 hours a month, you must call and let us know within 10 days.

People in your household may not have to follow any of the Time Limit Rules if they meet any of the reasons we talked about earlier for the Basic Work Rules, or if:

- They are 17 years old or younger or 50 or older.
- Someone in your household is 17 years old or younger.
- They aren't working because of a physical or mental health reason.
- They're pregnant.

Call as soon as possible if someone in the household meets the work requirement or if you think one of these reasons describes you or the people in your household. If we find one of the reasons does apply, the person will not need to follow the Time Limit Rules.

If the Person Doesn't Meet the Time Limit Rules

There are important consequences if **[name of each person in the household to whom ABAWD Time Limit Rules apply]** doesn't/don't follow the Time Limit Rules:

- We'll count each full month that the person receives SNAP benefits but doesn't meet the Time Limit Rules without a good reason.
- Once we have counted three full months, starting with the first full month on SNAP benefits, the person will lose SNAP for three years unless they regain eligibility, which we will talk about next. **[Provide month and year of 3-year expiration date to person, if known.]**
- Remember, someone can only get SNAP benefits for three months in a three-year period unless they meet the Time Limit Rules or have a good reason for not meeting them.

The person should tell the E&T Program staff helping them as soon as possible if they think they have a good reason. Good reasons for not following these rules include issues someone can't control, such as getting sick or not having transportation. Other reasons may apply, like the ones we discussed earlier.

If we find that the person has a good reason, they will not need to follow the Time Limit Rules, and there will be no change to their SNAP benefits.

If a Person Loses SNAP Benefits, They Can Get Them Back.

If people in your household lose SNAP benefits and then start meeting the Time Limit Rules, they can get SNAP benefits again. They can also get SNAP benefits again if something changes in their life, and there are reasons they no longer need to follow these rules.

For example, someone may get SNAP benefits back if they have a new physical or mental health reason for not working; they become pregnant; they begin working or have worked since they last got SNAP; or because of other reasons we have already discussed.

If You Need to Contact Us About SNAP Work Rules

If a person thinks they have a good reason for not following any of these rules, or if they fit into any of the examples of those who do not have to follow these rules, they can let E&T Program staff or HHSC know.

To reach E&T Program staff, go to twc.texas.gov and click on the Find your Local Workforce Solutions Office or call toll-free 800-628-5115. To reach HHSC, call toll-free 2-1-1 or 1-877-541-7905 (after you pick a language, press 2).

Your Right to Appeal

You have the right to ask us to do a formal review of any decision we make concerning the work rules in a fair hearing. To request a fair hearing, you can call toll-free 2-1-1 or 877-541-7905 (after you pick a language, press 2); visit your local office and submit your request; fax to 877-447-2839; or send a letter requesting a hearing to Texas HHSC, P.O. Box 149027, Austin, TX, 78714-9027.