

# **Employees Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO), a Department under Union Ministry of Labour & Employment, launches multi location claim settlement to expedite member claims**

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Taking a big leap towards ensuring uniform standards of service delivery across the country and optimum utilisation of its workforce during COVID-19 Pandemic, EPFO has recently launched a multi-location claim settlement facility. This facility will bring a paradigm shift by allowing EPFO offices to settle online claims from any of its regional offices, across the country. All types of online claims i.e. provident fund, pension, partial withdrawal and claims and transfer claims can be processed under this novel initiative.

COVID-19 crisis has affected 135 regional offices of EPFO with different levels of severity depending on their location. It was observed that though many offices in Mumbai, Thane, Haryana and Chennai zones operate with even less than skeletal staff on account of COVID-19 Pandemic, but there has been a disproportionate increase in claim receipt due to recently introduced COVID-19 advance. Consequently, claim pendency in these offices rose to higher levels leading to delay in claim settlement cycle while other offices, working with 50% workforce and with the help of recently introduced auto settlement mode could bring the claim settlement period down to 3 days for COVID-19 advances.

To reduce the delays by uniformly distributing the claim settlement related workload nationwide, EPFO has moved away from the existing system of geographical jurisdiction for claim processing by rolling out multi-location claim settlement facility. This will allow offices with lesser workload to share the burden of offices that have accumulated a higher level of pendency, due to COVID-19 restrictions. It enables fast-tracking of settlement process through most appropriate engagement of EPFO's workforce in all its regional offices across the country.

The initiative aimed at enhancing ease of living experience for its members, has been achieved in record time. The first batch of multi-location claims under this path-breaking project was settled for Gurugram Region on 10th June 2020. The claims of employees pertaining to the regional office of Gurugram Region were settled by EPFO staff deployed in Chandigarh, Ludhiana and Jalandhar offices. After settlement the payment was made from the Gurugram office to the bank account of the individual member.

Since its launch, claims pertaining to offices that fall in containment zones are being distributed to offices in other locations for expeditious processing.

Further, the launch of multi-location claim settlement facility is a momentous step towards the larger objectives of ushering faceless claims processing thereby bringing greater levels of transparency, efficiency, reduction of member grievances and expeditious settlement of online claims in line with Prime Minister's vision of Digital India.

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Despite its functioning being adversely impacted due to COVID-19 restrictions, EPFO's officers and staff through their dedication and constant innovations have been settling more than 80,000 claims amounting to Rs.270 crore per working day since 1st April 2020. With multi-location claim facility EPFO is set to achieve higher benchmarks in service delivery ensuring social security for its more than 6 crore subscribers during the time of crisis.