

Sample employee handbook materials

Paid Family and Medical Leave overview

Paid Family and Medical Leave is a mandatory statewide insurance program that will provide almost every Washington employee with paid time off to give or receive care.

If you qualify, this program will allow you to take up to 12 weeks, as needed, if you:

- Welcome a child into your family (through birth, adoption or foster placement)
- Experience a serious illness or injury
- Need to care for a seriously ill or injured relative
- Need time to prepare for a family member's pre- and post-deployment activities, as well as time for childcare issues related to a family member's military deployment. For specifics on military-connected paid leave, visit: www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs28mc.pdf

If you face multiple events in a year, you might be eligible to receive up to 16 weeks, and up to 18 weeks if you experience a serious health condition during pregnancy that results in incapacity.

Payment of premiums

The program is funded by premiums paid by both employees and employers. It will be administered by the Employment Security Department (ESD).

Premium collection starts on Jan. 1, 2019. In 2019, the premium is 0.4% of wages, or \$3.85 per week for someone making \$50,000 a year. Employers can either pay the full premium or opt to withhold a portion of the premium from their employees. Employers who choose to withhold premiums from their employees may withhold up to 63 percent of the total premium, or \$2.44 per week for an employee making \$50,000 annually. The employer is responsible for paying the other 37 percent. Businesses with fewer than 50 employees are exempt from the employer portion of the premium but must still collect or opt to pay the employee portion of the premium.

Premium collection will begin Jan. 1, 2019. Your employer will calculate and withhold premiums from your paycheck and send both your share and theirs to ESD on a quarterly basis.

Taking leave

Starting Jan. 1, 2020, employees who have worked 820 hours in the qualifying period (equal to 16 hours a week for a year) will be able to apply to take paid medical leave or paid family leave. The 820 hours are cumulative, regardless of the number of employers or jobs someone has during a year. All paid work over the course of the year counts toward the 820 hours, including part-time, seasonal and temporary work.

While on leave, you are entitled to partial wage replacement. That means you will receive a portion of your average weekly pay. The benefit is generally up to 90 percent of your weekly wage, with a minimum of \$100 per week and a maximum of \$1,000 per week. You will be paid by the State of Washington rather than your employer.

Unlike the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), employees of small businesses may take Paid Family and Medical Leave if they meet the standard eligibility requirements.

More information on applying for benefits will come in 2019. Please go to www.paidleave.wa.gov for more information.

What protections are there for me?

Employees who return from leave under this law will be restored to a same or equivalent job if they work for an employer with 50 or more employees, have worked for this

employer for at least 12 months, and have worked 1,250 hours in the 12 months before taking leave (about 24 hours per week, on average).

You can keep your health insurance while on leave. If you contribute to the cost of your health insurance, you must continue to pay your portion of the premium cost while on leave.

Your employer is prohibited from discriminating or retaliating against you for requesting or taking paid leave.