

Sick Leave for COVID Employees

What Employees of Small Businesses Need to Know

Updated: April 5, 2020



As an employee of a small business, it's possible you don't have much paid leave. In order to help businesses keep running and allow time for people to recover from COVID-19, the government has passed a new law to give you paid time off.

This law provides paid sick leave and paid Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leave to employees impacted by COVID-19, and employer tax credits to cover the costs of the paid leave.

STEP 1: DETERMINE WHAT KIND OF LEAVE YOU NEED

The maximum benefit for employees is 12 weeks, 2 weeks of paid sick leave and an additional 10 weeks of paid child care leave under the FMLA.

- >> **You have been told to quarantine for two weeks, and don't have paid leave.** If you are sick with symptoms of COVID-19 trying to get medical attention, or if you have been advised by a doctor or the government to self-quarantine for two weeks, you are eligible for 2 weeks/80 hours of full pay. This benefit maxes out at \$511/day or \$5110 total.
- >> **You are caring for people and need paid time off to care for them, but you don't have paid leave available.** You may need to take care of others who have been told to quarantine themselves for two weeks, or may have children at home because they don't have school or child care because of COVID-19. If this is your situation, you are eligible for 2 weeks/80 hours of 66.7% pay. This benefit maxes out at \$200/day or \$2000 total.
- >> **If you have worked for your employer for 30 days, you can access an additional 10 weeks of paid leave under the FMLA (12 weeks total) to provide child care if the school or child care provider is unavailable due to COVID-19.** Through this new law, you can access 12 weeks of leave. The first two weeks are unpaid (this is where your own sick leave comes in), and then the next ten weeks of paid leave is paid at 66.7% of your salary, to a maximum of \$200/day or \$10,000 total.

An example of pairing up the benefits:

Alex has COVID-19, and has been told to self-quarantine. She has worked for her employer, a small manufacturing company, for 2 months, makes \$50,000, and does not have paid sick leave yet.

She can access two weeks of paid sick leave at 100% of her salary. She gets her typical pay, \$962 a week before tax, for two weeks.

She recovers, but has children home from school, and is unable to go to her job, which doesn't have a telework option. She can access FMLA to help cover her time out of work caring for her children. After taking two weeks of unpaid leave, she gets 66.7% of her regular salary, \$641 before tax, for an additional 10 weeks.

STEP 2: SPEAK TO YOUR EMPLOYER ABOUT LEAVE

If you work for a small business, they care about you and also have limited resources. This is an evolving situation, and employers understand that. We encourage you to communicate regularly with your employer and try to provide as much notice as possible for unexpected leave so they can support both you and the business.