

CCSU Policy Form GCBDB-E(11): FMLA/VPFL Notice to New Employees

VERMONT'S LAWS ON PARENTAL LEAVE, FAMILY LEAVE, AND SHORT-TERM FAMILY LEAVE

Vermont's Parental Leave Law covers employers with 10 or more employees who work an average of 30 hours per week over the course of a year.

Vermont's Family Leave Law, which includes Short-Term Family Leave, covers employers with 15 or more employees who work an average of 30 hours per week over the course of a year.

An employee who has worked for a covered employer for an average of 30 hours a week for a year is entitled to leave under these laws. During any 12 month period, the employee is entitled to up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave:

Parental Leave: during the pregnancy and/or after childbirth; or, within a year following the initial placement of a child 16 years of age or younger with the employee for the purpose of adoption;

Family Leave: for the serious illness of the employee, employee's child, stepchild, ward, foster child, parent, spouse or parent of the employee's spouse;

and, in addition to the leave provided in 21 V.S.A. Sec. 472, an employee is entitled to short-term family leave of up to 4 hours in any 30 day period (but not more than 24 hours in any 12 month period) of unpaid leave:

Short-Term Family Leave: to **participate in preschool or school activities** directly related to the academic advancement of the employee's child, stepchild, foster child or ward who lives with the employee; to attend or to accompany the employee's child, stepchild, foster child or ward who lives with the employee or the employee's parent, spouse or parent-in-law to **routine medical or dental appointments**; to accompany the employee's parent, spouse, or parent-in-law to **other appointments for professional services** related to their care and well-being; to respond to a **medical emergency** involving the employee's child, stepchild, foster child or ward who lives with the employee or the employee's parent, spouse or parent-in-law.

The employee must give reasonable written notice of intent to take **family** or **parental** leave, including the anticipated dates the leave will start and end. The employer may not require notice more than 6 weeks prior to birth or adoption. If serious illness is claimed, the employer may require certification from a physician. For **short-term family leave**, an employee must give notice as early as possible, at least seven days before the leave is to be taken unless waiting seven days could have a significant adverse impact on the employee's family member.

An employee may choose to use sick leave, or vacation leave, or any other accrued paid leave time during the leave, up to six weeks. The

employer may not require the employee to do so. Use of paid leave does not extend the overall leave time to which the employee is entitled.

The employer must continue to provide all employee benefits unchanged during the leave period, but may require the employee to contribute to the cost at the existing rate of employee contribution.

Upon return from leave, an employee must be offered the job held previously or a comparable one at equal pay, benefits, seniority, and other terms and conditions.

Exceptions: An employee is not entitled to leave under the Parental and Family Leave Act if the employer can prove by clear and convincing evidence that:

Layoff: during the period of leave the employee's job would have been terminated or the employee would have been laid off for reasons unrelated to the leave; or

Unique Services: the employee performed unique services and hiring a permanent replacement during the leave, after giving the employee notice of intent to do so, was the employer's only available alternative to prevent substantial and grievous economic injury.

This law sets a minimum standard for parental and family leave rights. It does not prevent an employer from offering a more generous leave policy and does not reduce an employer's obligation under a collective bargaining agreement or existing program that provides greater leave rights than the law requires.

EMPLOYEES ARE PROTECTED FROM RETALIATION OF ANY KIND IN CONNECTION WITH THE ENFORCEMENT OF THIS LAW.

An employee aggrieved by a violation of this law may:

- bring a private lawsuit for injunctive relief, economic damages including prospective lost wages for a period not to exceed one year, attorney fees and court costs;
- **(if you are not a state employee)** lodge a complaint with the Office of the Attorney General at **828-3657**, or **(if you are a state employee)** lodge a complaint with the Vermont Human Rights Commission at **828-2480**. These agencies may investigate your complaint and bring action in court to enforce this law.

To obtain copies of this poster, call the Vermont Department of Labor and Industry at 828-2157.

LI-FL1/98

EMPLOYEE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

UNDER THE FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT

Basic Leave Entitlement

FMLA requires covered employers to provide up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave to eligible employees for the following reasons:

- For incapacity due to pregnancy, prenatal medical care or child birth;
- To care for the employee's child after birth, or placement for adoption or foster care;
- To care for the employee's spouse, son or daughter, or parent, who has a serious health condition; or
- For a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the employee's job.

Military Family Leave Entitlements

Eligible employees with a spouse, son, daughter, or parent on active duty or call to active duty status in the National Guard or Reserves in support of a contingency operation may use their 12-week leave entitlement to address certain qualifying exigencies. Qualifying exigencies may include attending certain military events, arranging for alternative childcare, addressing certain financial and legal arrangements, attending certain counseling sessions, and attending post-deployment reintegration briefings.

FMLA also includes a special leave entitlement that permits eligible employees to take up to 26 weeks of leave to care for a covered servicemember during a single 12-month period. A covered servicemember is a current member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, who has a serious injury or illness incurred in the line of duty on active duty that may render the servicemember medically unfit to perform his or her duties for which the servicemember is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy; or is in outpatient status; or is on the temporary disability retired list.

Benefits and Protections

During FMLA leave, the employer must maintain the employee's health coverage under any "group health plan" on the same terms as if the employee had continued to work. Upon return from FMLA leave, most employees must be restored to their original or equivalent positions with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms.

Use of FMLA leave cannot result in the loss of any employment benefit that accrued prior to the start of an employee's leave.

Eligibility Requirements

Employees are eligible if they have worked for a covered employer for at least one year, for 1,250 hours over the previous 12 months, and if at least 50 employees are employed by the employer within 75 miles.

Definition of Serious Health Condition

A serious health condition is an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves either an overnight stay in a medical care facility, or continuing treatment by a health care provider for a condition that either prevents the employee from performing the functions of the employee's job, or prevents the qualified family member from participating in school or other daily activities.

Subject to certain conditions, the continuing treatment requirement may be met by a period of incapacity of more than 3 consecutive calendar days combined with at least two visits to a health care provider or one visit and a regimen of continuing treatment, or incapacity due to pregnancy, or incapacity due to a chronic condition. Other conditions may meet the definition of continuing treatment.

Use of Leave

An employee does not need to use this leave entitlement in one block. Leave can be taken intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule when medically necessary. Employees must make reasonable efforts to schedule leave for

planned medical treatment so as not to unduly disrupt the employer's operations. Leave due to qualifying exigencies may also be taken on an intermittent basis.

Substitution of Paid Leave for Unpaid Leave

Employees may choose or employers may require use of accrued paid leave while taking FMLA leave. In order to use paid leave for FMLA leave, employees must comply with the employer's normal paid leave policies.

Employee Responsibilities

Employees must provide 30 days advance notice of the need to take FMLA leave when the need is foreseeable. When 30 days notice is not possible, the employee must provide notice as soon as practicable and generally must comply with an employer's normal call-in procedures.

Employees must provide sufficient information for the employer to determine if the leave may qualify for FMLA protection and the anticipated timing and duration of the leave. Sufficient information may include that the employee is unable to perform job functions, the family member is unable to perform daily activities, the need for hospitalization or continuing treatment by a health care provider, or circumstances supporting the need for military family leave. Employees also must inform the employer if the requested leave is for a reason for which FMLA leave was previously taken or certified. Employees also may be required to provide a certification and periodic recertification supporting the need for leave.

Employer Responsibilities

Covered employers must inform employees requesting leave whether they are eligible under FMLA. If they are, the notice must specify any additional information required as well as the employees' rights and responsibilities. If they are not eligible, the employer must provide a reason for the ineligibility.

Covered employers must inform employees if leave will be designated as FMLA-protected and the amount of leave counted against the employee's leave entitlement. If the employer determines that the leave is not FMLA-protected, the employer must notify the employee.

Unlawful Acts by Employers

FMLA makes it unlawful for any employer to:

- Interfere with, restrain, or deny the exercise of any right provided under FMLA;
- Discharge or discriminate against any person for opposing any practice made unlawful by FMLA or for involvement in any proceeding under or relating to FMLA.

Enforcement

An employee may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Labor or may bring a private lawsuit against an employer.

FMLA does not affect any Federal or State law prohibiting discrimination, or supersede any State or local law or collective bargaining agreement which provides greater family or medical leave rights.

FMLA section 109 (29 U.S.C. § 2619) requires FMLA covered employers to post the text of this notice. Regulations 29 C.F.R. § 825.300(a) may require additional disclosures.

For additional information:

1-866-4US-WAGE (1-866-487-9243) TTY: 1-877-889-5627

WWW.WAGEHOUR.DOL.GOV

U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division