

FMLA Regulatory Updates Compliance Guide

FMLA

An in-depth analysis of the U.S. Department of Labor's regulations and enforcement policies under the Family and Medical Leave Act. This plain language guidebook takes a close look at the DOL's revised regulations and how they impact employee leave notices and policies.



FMLA Regulatory Updates Compliance Guide

To Reorder Call (800) 333-3795 Item #FMLA-KIT
© 2008-2012 Personnel Concepts

Contents

Chapter 1 – Introduction	
About This Guidebook/Disclaimer	1
Implementation Procedures.....	2
Introduction to the FMLA	3
Frequently Asked Questions	8
Chapter 2 – Leave Rights for Military Families	
Overview.....	12
Incorporation of New Military Family Leave Entitlements.....	13
Chapter 3 – Summary of Revised Regulations	
Coverage Issues.....	15
Employee Leave Rights.....	17
Employer Notice Requirements.....	19
Employee Notice Requirements.....	22
Definitions.....	27
Chapter 4 – Revised Regulatory Text	
Subpart A- Coverage under the Family and Medical Leave Act.....	30
Subpart B – Employee Leave Entitlements	42
Subpart C – Employee and Employer Rights and Obligations	52
Subpart D – Enforcement Mechanisms.....	62
Subpart E – Record-Keeping Requirements	63
Subpart F – Special Rules Applicable to Employees of Schools.....	64
Subpart G – Effects of Other Laws.....	65
Subpart H – Definitions.....	67
Chapter 5 – Interaction between State Laws and the FMLA	
State Laws.....	71
California	72
Connecticut.....	73
Hawaii.....	75
Maine.....	77
Minnesota	79
New Jersey.....	81
Oregon.....	82
Rhode Island	85
Vermont.....	86
Washington.....	88
Wisconsin	90
District of Columbia	92
Chapter 6– Employer Notice Requirements	
Employer Notice Requirements.....	95
Quick Reference Guide	96
Appendix C to Part 825 Notice of Employee Rights	99

Notice of Eligibility and Rights and Responsibilities 100
Designation Notice 102

Chapter 7 – Sample Policies

Sample 1 103
Sample 2 105
Sample 3 109

Introduction

About this Guidebook / Disclaimer

In November 2008, the U.S. Department of Labor published its heavily-anticipated final revised FMLA rules, which regulate rights and obligations under the law for employers and employees. The revised regulations represent the first major attempt at FMLA reform since the law was originally enacted in 1993. Among other much-needed changes, the final rules clarify and expand notice obligations, describe appropriate calculation methods relating to leave allotments, and implement new military family leave allotments mandated by an amendment enacted earlier this year. Employers are obligated to comply with the new regulations beginning January 16th, 2009. The purpose of this guidebook is to provide employers and HR managers with plain language information on the new FMLA regulations and consolidated all necessary reference materials into a single compliance resource.

This guidebook has been designed for the exclusive use of the Purchaser. Copying or reproduction of any kind without permission from the author, Personnel Concepts, is strictly prohibited. Every effort has been made by the author to assure accuracy and completeness of the information contained herein. This guidebook follows the guidelines recommended by the DOL and is provided with the understanding that Personnel Concepts or any of its affiliates cannot be held responsible for errors or omissions, changes in law, regulations or interpretations thereof. This guidebook is not intended to be legal interpretation of any law or regulation.

An employee leave policy as outlined herein can only be effective if taken seriously and followed through. Each company is unique. The needs of your company should be examined and implemented into the program in order to make it successful. It is essential that the employer demonstrate at all times their personal concern for their employees and the priority placed on them in your workplace. The policy must be clear. The employer shows its importance through their own actions.

This publication is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information in regard to the subject matter covered. It is sold with the understanding that the publisher is not engaged in rendering legal, accounting or other professional services. If legal advice or other expert assistance is required, the service of a competent professional must be sought. – From a Declaration of Principles jointly adopted by a Committee of the American Bar Association and a Committee of Publishers.

This guidebook and its related products are provided with the understanding that Personnel Concepts or any person or entity involved in creating, producing or distributing this manual and its related products are not liable for any direct, indirect, incidental, special or consequential damages arising out of the use of or inability to use this manual and its related products or out of the breach of any warranty. Personnel Concepts or any authorized distributor's liability to users, if any, shall in no event exceed the total amount paid to Personnel Concepts or any of its authorized distributors for this manual and its related products.

Implementation Procedures

The following implementation procedures are intended to provide specific instructions for correctly utilizing the various components of our FMLA Regulatory Updates Compliance Kit. If you have additional questions about this guidebook or other kit components, please contact Personnel Concepts at 800-333-3795.

1. Post the All-In-One FMLA Information Poster (included as part of your compliance kit) in an area frequented by employees during the normal course of the workday. This poster is intended to fulfill mandatory posting and notification requirements under the FMLA and provide employees with a one-stop resource for information on their rights and obligations.
2. Review the "Introduction to the FMLA" included in this chapter for an overview of the major provisions of the law. This overview will help you fully understand the context of the major regulatory changes discussed later in this guidebook.
3. Read Chapter 2, "Leave Rights for Military Families," for information on new provisional leave entitlements created by an FMLA amendment enacted in February 2008.
4. When an employee requests military family leave, make photocopies of the forms that appear at the end of Chapter 2, and provide them to the requesting employee as soon as practicable.
5. Review Chapter 3, "Summary of Revised Regulations," for a detailed plain language overview of the major changes in the DOL's final FMLA rules.
6. Determine if your business must also comply with a state-specific FMLA law by reviewing Chapter 5, "Interaction Between State Laws and the FMLA." This chapter covers 11 state laws and highlights the major similarities and differences with the federal FMLA.
7. Implement revised FMLA notice procedures using the quick-reference chart located in Chapter 6 in this guidebook. This chapter explains all mandatory and non-mandatory FMLA notices and documentation requirements described by the revised final regulations.
8. Review your organization's leave of absence policies and compare them to the sample policies included in Chapter 7. Where applicable, make revisions to your policy to reflect the new regulations as demonstrated by the enclosed sample policy statements.
9. Refer to the complete text of the new DOL regulations (Chapter 4) as needed when confronted with an FMLA request or issue. Consult legal counsel where appropriate.
10. When an employee requests FMLA leave, fill out one of the enclosed FMLA Eligibility and Rights & Responsibilities Notice Forms (included with your kit) and provide it to the requesting employee within 5 business days.
11. Once you designate an eligible employee's request for FMLA leave as part of their 12-week entitlement, fill out an FMLA Designation Notice Form (included with your kit) and provide it to the employee within at least five business days.
12. If the employee's leave request is due to a serious health condition, the birth of a child, or to care for a seriously ill immediate family member, provide a copy of the applicable FMLA Medical Certification Form to the employee at the same time you provide the eligibility and designation notices.

Introduction to FMLA

The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA or the Act) is intended to allow employees to balance their work and family life by taking reasonable unpaid leave for medical reasons, for the birth or adoption of a child, and for the care of a child, spouse, or parent who has a serious health condition. According to the Act, it is intended to balance the demands of the workplace with the needs of families, to promote the stability and economic security of families, and to promote national interests in preserving family integrity.

The FMLA was established to address two fundamental concerns — the needs of the American workforce, and the development of high-performance organizations. Increasingly, America's children and elderly are dependent upon family members who must spend long hours at work. When a family emergency arises, requiring workers to attend to seriously-ill children or parents, or to newly-born or adopted infants, or even to their own serious illness, workers need reassurance that they will not be asked to choose between continuing their employment, and meeting their personal and family obligations or tending to vital needs at home.

The Act is both intended and expected to benefit employers as well as their employees. A direct correlation exists between stability in the family and productivity in the workplace. FMLA will encourage the development of high-performance organizations. When workers can count on durable links to their workplace they are able to make their own full commitments to their jobs. The record of hearings on family and medical leave indicate the powerful productive advantages of stable workplace relationships, and the comparatively small costs of guaranteeing that those relationships will not be dissolved while workers attend to pressing family health obligations or their own serious illness.

The FMLA allows “eligible” employees of a covered employer to take job-protected, unpaid leave, or to substitute appropriate paid leave if the employee has earned or accrued it, for up to a total of 12 workweeks in any 12 months because of the birth of a child and to care for the newborn child, because of the placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care, because the employee is needed to care for a family member (child, spouse, or parent) with a serious health condition, or because the employee's own serious health condition makes the employee unable to perform the functions of his or her job. In certain cases, this leave may be taken on an intermittent basis rather than all at once, or the employee may work a part-time schedule.

An “eligible employee” is an employee of a *covered* employer who:

- (1) Has been employed by the employer for at least 12 months, and
- (2) Has been employed for at least 1,250 hours of service during the 12-month period immediately preceding the commencement of the leave, and
- (3) Is employed at a worksite where 50 or more employees are employed by the employer within 75 miles of that worksite.

The Family and Medical Leave Act was amended on January 28, 2008 and now permits a “spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin” to take up to 26 workweeks of leave to care for a “member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy, is otherwise in outpatient status, or is otherwise on the temporary disability retired list, for a serious injury or illness.”

An employee on FMLA leave is also entitled to have health benefits maintained while on leave as if the employee had continued to work instead of taking the leave. If an employee was paying all or part of the premium payments prior to leave, the employee would continue to pay his or her share during the leave period. The employer may recover its share only if the employee does not return to work for a reason other than the serious health condition of the employee or the employee's immediate family member, or another reason beyond the employee's control.

An employee generally has a right to return to the same position or an equivalent position with equivalent pay, benefits and working conditions at the conclusion of the leave. The taking of FMLA leave cannot result in the loss of any benefit that accrued prior to the start of the leave.

The employer has a right to 30 days advance notice from the employee where practicable. In addition, the employer may require an employee to submit certification from a health care provider to substantiate that the leave is due to the serious health condition of the employee or the employee's immediate family member. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in a delay in the start of FMLA leave. Pursuant to a uniformly applied policy, the employer may also require that an employee present a certification of fitness to return to work when the absence was caused by the employee's serious health condition. The employer may delay restoring the employee to employment without such certificate relating to the health condition which caused the employee's absence.

Record Keeping Requirements

In keeping with the recordkeeping requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), employers are required to make, keep, and preserve records pertaining to their obligations under FMLA. The FMLA does not require that employers keep their records in any particular order or form, or revise their computerized payroll or personnel records systems to comply.

Employers must keep the records for no less than three years and make them available for inspection, copying, and transcription by DOL representatives upon request. Records kept in computer form must be made available for transcription and copying.

Covered employers who have eligible employees must maintain records that must disclose the following:

- Basic payroll and identifying information (including name, address and occupation)
- Rate or basis of pay
- Terms of compensation
- Daily and weekly hours worked per pay period
- Additions to or deductions from wages
- Total compensation paid

In addition, covered employers who have eligible employees must also maintain records detailing:

- Dates of FMLA leave taken by FMLA eligible employees. Leave must be designated in records as FMLA leave, and may not include leave required under State law or an employer plan which is not also covered by FMLA.
- Hours of FMLA leave taken by FMLA eligible employees, if leave is taken in increments of less than one full day
- Copies of employee notices of leave furnished to the employer
- Copies of general and specific written notices given to employees
- Documents describing employee benefits or employer paid and unpaid leave policies and practices

- Premium payments of employee benefits
- Records of disputes between the employer and the employee regarding FMLA

Records and documents relating to medical certifications, recertifications or medical histories of employees or employees' family members, created for purposes of FMLA, are required to be maintained as confidential medical records in separate files/records from the usual personnel files. If the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) applies, then these records must comply with the ADA confidentiality requirements. However, there are exceptions that take into account the need for supervisors, managers, first aid & safety personnel; and government officials to have access to this information.

Posting / Notification Requirements

All covered employers are required to display and keep on display a poster prepared by the Department of Labor summarizing the major provisions of the FMLA and telling employees how to file a complaint. The poster must be displayed in a conspicuous place where employees and applicants for employment can see it and at all locations even if there are no eligible employees. Although there is no particular size requirement, the poster and all the text must be large enough to be easily read.

If the employer's workforce is comprised of a significant portion of workers who are not literate in English, the employer is responsible for providing the notice in a language in which the employees are literate.

If the employer does not have written policies, manuals or handbooks, the employer is required to provide employees with written guidance concerning all of the employee's rights and obligations under FMLA. Employers may duplicate and provide copies of FMLA Fact Sheet No. 28 to provide the guidance to all new employees.

The final rule adopts a consolidated format and makes additional changes to clarify employer obligations to provide notice to employees (See page 96 in this guidebook for a quick reference guide). The revised regulations expand employer notice obligations into five basic notices:

- Standard FMLA "General Notice" poster notifying employees of FMLA rights.
- General Notice to all employees, either in an employee handbook or by distributing a copy.
- "Eligibility Notice" to inform employee requesting leave whether he or she is eligible for FMLA leave and has leave available and, if not, why not.
- "Rights and Responsibilities Notice" must provide the employee with information regarding health benefit payments, whether medical certification is required, and the employee's right to use paid leave,
- "Designation Notice," advising the employee whether the leave will be designated as FMLA leave and whether a "fitness to return to work" certification will be required (employer must list the employee's "essential job functions." if certification will be required)

If the employer fails to provide notice, the employer may not take action against an employee for failure to comply with any provision required to be set forth in the notice.

Policy Procedure Requirements

When covered employers have written guidance to employees concerning employee benefits or leave rights, such as employee handbooks, information concerning FMLA entitlements and employee obligations must be included in the handbook or other document. See page 103 in this guidebook for samples of FMLA policies.

Penalties for non-compliance

An employer that willfully violates the posting requirement may be assessed a civil money penalty by the Wage and Hour Division not to exceed \$110 for each separate offense. Furthermore, an employer that fails to post the required notice cannot take any adverse action against an employee, including denying FMLA leave, for failing to furnish the employer with advance notice of a need to take FMLA leave.

Complaint Resolution

Generally, a complaint must be filed **within two years** of the date of the last action which the employee contends was in violation of the Act. However, if it can be shown that the action taken by the employer was **willful**, the complaint may be filed **within three years** of that date. For the best chance of success in resolving the complaint, the complaint should be filed as soon after the date of the last action thought to be in violation of the Act as reasonably possible.

The complaint may be filed by the employee or any other person on behalf of the employee.

Complaints may be filed with the Secretary of Labor by contacting the nearest office of the Wage and Hour Division of the Employment Standards Administration, U. S. Department of Labor. The complaint may be filed in person, by letter or by telephone, however, the complaint must be reduced to writing.

The U.S. Department of Labor will review the merits of the complaint, and where appropriate will undertake to resolve the complaint administratively, through negotiations with the employer. When the complaint is resolved administratively, actions are limited to a two-year period and interest and liquidated damages are not recovered. In some cases, the Secretary of Labor may file a lawsuit on behalf of the employee in the event negotiations with the employer are unsuccessful and the Secretary is convinced that violations of the Act did occur.

Where a lawsuit is filed in the courts to resolve the alleged violation of the Act, there is no requirement that the Secretary of Labor be notified before the filing of such a lawsuit. In addition to a judgment an employee may recover from the employer:

- Reasonable attorney's fees
- Reasonable expert witness fees
- Other costs of the action

Remedies available to the employee in the event the employer is found to have violated FMLA may include:

- Wages

- Employment benefits
- Other compensation denied or lost to the employee
- Actual monetary loss to the employee such as:
- Cost of providing care (this is limited to 12 weeks of wages for the employee) for example to a family member with a serious health condition
- Interest
- An equal amount in liquidated damages unless the employer can show action was taken in good faith

The employee may also obtain appropriate equitable relief such as:

- Employment
- Reinstatement
- Promotion

Frequently Asked Questions about the FMLA

Q: How much leave are employees entitled to under FMLA?

If they are an "eligible" employee, they are entitled to 12 weeks of leave for certain family and medical reasons during a 12-month period.

Q: How is the 12-month period calculated under FMLA?

Employers may select one of four options for determining the 12-month period:

1. The calendar year;
2. Any fixed 12-month "leave year" such as a fiscal year, a year required by state law, or a year starting on the employee's "anniversary" date;
3. The 12-month period measured forward from the date any employee's first FMLA leave begins; or
4. A "rolling" 12-month period measured backward from the date an employee uses FMLA leave.

Q: Does the law guarantee paid time off?

No. The FMLA only requires unpaid leave. However, the law permits an employee to elect, or the employer to require the employee, to use accrued paid vacation leave or, subject to certain restrictions, sick or family leave, for some or all of the FMLA leave period. When paid leave is substituted for unpaid FMLA leave, it may be counted against the 12-week FMLA leave entitlement.

Q: Does workers' compensation leave count against an employee's FMLA leave entitlement?

It can. FMLA leave and workers' compensation leave can run together, provided the reason for the absence is due to a qualifying serious illness or injury.

Q: Can the employer count leave taken due to pregnancy complications against the 12 weeks of FMLA leave for the birth and care of my child?

Yes. An eligible employee is entitled to a total of 12 weeks of FMLA leave in a 12-month period. If the employee has to use some of that leave for another reason, including a difficult pregnancy, it may be counted as part of the 12-week FMLA leave entitlement.

Q: Can the employer count time on maternity leave or pregnancy disability as FMLA leave?

Yes. Pregnancy disability leave or maternity leave for the birth of a child would be considered qualifying FMLA leave for a serious health condition and may be counted in the 12 weeks of leave.

Q: Who is considered an immediate "family member" for purposes of taking FMLA leave?

An employee's spouse, children (son or daughter), and parents are immediate family members for purposes of FMLA. The term "parent" does not include a parent "in-law". The terms son or daughter do not include individuals age 18 or over unless they are "incapable of self-care" because of mental or physical disability that limits one or more of the "major life activities" as

those terms are defined in regulations issued by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) under the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA).

Q: May an employee take FMLA leave for visits to a physical therapist, if their doctor prescribes the therapy?

Yes. FMLA permits employees to take leave to receive "continuing treatment by a health care provider," which can include recurring absences for therapy treatments such as those ordered by a doctor for physical therapy after a hospital stay or for treatment of severe arthritis.

Q: Which employees are eligible to take FMLA leave?

Employees are eligible to take FMLA leave if they have worked for their employer for at least 12 months, and have worked for at least 1,250 hours over the previous 12 months, and work at a location where at least 50 employees are employed by the employer within 75 miles.

Q: Do the 12 months of service with the employer have to be continuous or consecutive?

No. The 12 months do not have to be continuous or consecutive; all time worked for the employer is counted.

Q: Do the 1,250 hours include paid leave time or other absences from work?

No. The 1,250 hours include only those hours actually worked for the employer. Paid leave and unpaid leave, including FMLA leave, are not included.

Q: How do I determine if an employee has worked 1,250 hours in a 12-month period?

Their individual record of hours worked would be used to determine whether 1,250 hours had been worked in the 12 months prior to the commencement of FMLA leave. As a rule of thumb, the following may be helpful for estimating whether this test for eligibility has been met;

24 hours worked in each of the 52 weeks of the year; or
over 104 hours worked in each of the 12 months of the year; or
40 hours worked per week for more than 31 weeks (over seven months) of the year.

Q: Do employees have to give the employer their medical records for leave due to a serious health condition?

No. They do not have to provide medical records. The employer may, however, request that, for any leave taken due to a serious health condition, you provide a medical certification confirming that a serious health condition exists.

Q: Can an employer require an employee to return to work before they exhaust their leave?

Subject to certain limitations, your employer may deny the continuation of FMLA leave due to a serious health condition if the employee fails to fulfill any obligations to provide supporting medical certification. The employer may not, however, require an employee to return to work early by offering a light duty assignment.

Q: Are there any restrictions on how an employee spends their time while on leave?

Employers with established policies regarding outside employment while on paid or unpaid leave may uniformly apply those policies to employees on FMLA leave. Otherwise, the employer may not restrict an employee's activities. The protections of FMLA will not, however, cover situations where the reason for leave no longer exists, where the employee has not provided required notices or certifications, or where the employee has misrepresented the reason for leave.

Q: Can an employer make inquiries about an employee's leave during their absence?

Yes, but only to the employee on leave. An employer may ask questions to confirm whether the leave needed or being taken qualifies for FMLA purposes, and may require periodic reports on the employee's status and intent to return to work after leave. Also, if the employer wishes to obtain another opinion, the employee may be required to obtain additional medical certification at the employer's expense, or rectification during a period of FMLA leave. The employer may have a health care provider representing the employer contact the health care provider, with the employee's permission, to clarify information in the medical certification or to confirm that it was provided by the health care provider. The inquiry may **not seek additional information** regarding the employee's health condition or that of a family member.

Q: Can an employer refuse to grant FMLA leave?

If the employee is an "eligible" employee who has met FMLA's notice and certification requirements (and they have not exhausted your FMLA leave entitlement for the year), the employee may **not** be denied FMLA leave.

Q: Can an employee be terminated if they take FMLA leave?

Generally, no. It is unlawful for any employer to interfere with or restrain or deny the exercise of any right provided under this law. Employers cannot use the taking of FMLA leave as a negative factor in employment actions, such as hiring, promotions or disciplinary actions; nor can FMLA leave be counted under "no fault" attendance policies. Under limited circumstances, an employer may deny reinstatement to work - but not the use of FMLA leave - to certain highly-paid, salaried ("key") employees.

Q: Are there other circumstances in which my employer can deny an employee FMLA leave or reinstatement to their job?

In addition to denying reinstatement in certain circumstances to "key" employees, employers are not required to continue FMLA benefits or reinstate employees who would have been laid off or otherwise had their employment terminated had they continued to work during the FMLA leave period as, for example, due to a general layoff.

Employees who give unequivocal notice that they do not intend to return to work lose their entitlement to FMLA leave.

Employees who are unable to return to work and have exhausted their 12 weeks of FMLA leave in the designated "12 month period" no longer have FMLA protections of leave or job restoration

Under certain circumstances, employers who advise employees experiencing a serious health condition that they will require a medical certificate of fitness for duty to return to work may deny reinstatement to an employee who fails to provide the certification, or may delay reinstatement until the certification is submitted.

Q: Can an employer fire an employee for complaining about a violation of FMLA?

No. Nor can the employer take any other adverse employment action on this basis. It is unlawful for any employer to discharge or otherwise discriminate against an employee for opposing a practice made unlawful under FMLA.

Q: Does an employer have to pay bonuses to employees who have been on FMLA leave?

The FMLA requires that employees be restored to the same or an equivalent position. If an employee was eligible for a bonus before taking FMLA leave, the employee would be eligible for the bonus upon returning to work. The FMLA leave may not be counted against the employee. For example, if an employer offers a perfect attendance bonus, and the employee has not missed any time prior to taking FMLA leave, the employee would still be eligible for the bonus upon returning from FMLA leave.

On the other hand, FMLA does not require that employees on FMLA leave be allowed to accrue benefits or seniority. For example, an employee on FMLA leave might not have sufficient sales to qualify for a bonus. The employer is not required to make any special accommodation for this employee because of FMLA. The employer must, of course, treat an employee who has used FMLA leave at least as well as other employees on paid and unpaid leave (as appropriate) are treated.

Q: Under what circumstances is leave designated as FMLA leave and counted against the employee's total entitlement?

In all circumstances, it is the employer's responsibility to designate leave taken for an FMLA reason as FMLA leave. The designation must be based upon information furnished by the employee or the employee's representative.

Q: Can an employer count FMLA leave against a no fault absentee policy?

No.

Leave Rights for Military Families

Overview

On January 28, 2008, President Bush signed into law H.R. 4986, the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). Among other things, section 585 of the NDAA amends the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) to expand the FMLA entitlement to 26 workweeks for certain military family members caring for a servicemember with a serious illness or injury. The provisions in the NDAA providing this leave are effective as of the date of the President's signing.

The amendments provide two new leave entitlements to eligible specified family members:

1) **Military Caregiver Leave (also known as Covered Servicemember Leave)**: Under the first of these new military family leave entitlements, eligible employees who are family members of covered servicemembers will be able to take up to 26 workweeks of leave in a "single 12-month period" to care for a covered servicemember with a serious illness or injury incurred in the line of duty on active duty. This 26 workweek entitlement is a special provision that extends FMLA job-protected leave beyond the normal 12 weeks of FMLA leave. This provision also extends FMLA protection to additional family members (i.e., next of kin) beyond those who may take FMLA leave for other qualifying reasons.

2) **Qualifying Exigency Leave**: The second new military leave entitlement helps families of members of the National Guard and Reserves manage their affairs while the member is on active duty in support of a contingency operation. This provision makes the normal 12 workweeks of FMLA job-protected leave available to eligible employees with a covered military member serving in the National Guard or Reserves to use for "any qualifying exigency" arising out of the fact that a covered military member is on active duty or called to active duty status in support of a contingency operation. The Department's final rule defines qualifying exigency by referring to a number of broad categories for which employees can use FMLA leave: (1) Short-notice deployment; (2) Military events and related activities; (3) Childcare and school activities; (4) Financial and legal arrangements; (5) Counseling; (6) Rest and recuperation; (7) Post-deployment activities; and (8) Additional activities not encompassed in the other categories, but agreed to by the employer and employee.

If an employee has to miss work due to National Guard or Reserve duty, this does not affect their eligibility for FMLA leave. The rule makes clear the protections for our men and women serving in the military by stating that a break in service due to an employee's fulfillment of military obligations must be taken into consideration when determining whether an employee has been employed for 12 months or has the required 1,250 hours of service.

Under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA), hours that an employee would have worked but for his or her military service are credited toward the employee's required 1,250 hours worked for FMLA eligibility. Similarly, the time in military service also must be counted in determining whether the employee has been employed at least 12 months by the employer.

Example:

Dean worked for his employer for six months in 2006, then was called to active duty status with the Reserves and deployed to Iraq. In 2008, Dean returned to his employer, requesting to be reinstated under the USERRA. Both the hours and the months that Dean would have worked but for his military status must be counted in determining his FMLA eligibility.

The Department of Labor has released a poster providing information on the above amendments that were part of the NDAA. The notice is mandatory to post for all employers who fall under the FMLA.

The final rule also includes two new DOL certification forms that may be used by employees and employers to facilitate the certification requirements for the use of military family leave.

Incorporation of New Military Family Leave Entitlements into the FMLA Regulations

In crafting the final regulations on military family leave, the Department was mindful of the special circumstances underlying the need for such leave. Since many of the NDAA provisions providing for military family leave under the FMLA adopt existing provisions of law generally applicable to the military, the Department engaged in extensive discussions with the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs before finalizing the regulations. The Department also consulted with a number of military service organizations. These discussions focused on creating regulatory requirements under the FMLA that reflect an understanding of and appreciation for the unique circumstances facing military families when a servicemember is deployed in support of a contingency operation or injured in the line of duty on active duty, as well as providing appropriate deference to existing military protocol.

The Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs are fully cognizant of the central role each of them will play in ensuring that military families are able to avail themselves of the new entitlements when needed and to comply with the statutory and regulatory requirements for the taking of job-protected leave under the FMLA when a servicemember is deployed or seriously injured or ill. The Department also acknowledges the critical role employers play in helping the men and women serving in the military, especially those in the National Guard and Reserves. In workplaces around the country, employer support is vital to the implementation of the military family leave provisions in a manner that recognizes and contributes to the success of the members of the military and their families.

In the Notice of Proposed Rules, the Department specifically requested comments on whether the new military family leave entitlements should be incorporated into the broader FMLA regulatory framework, or whether completely separate, stand-alone regulatory sections should be created for one or both of the new entitlements. The Department proposed to adopt many of the same or similar procedures for taking military family leave as are applied to other types of FMLA leave and suggested a number of sections to which conforming changes would need to be made in order to reflect these new leave entitlements.

Among other items, the Department also suggested that the poster and general notice discussed in proposed § 825.300(a), the eligibility notice in proposed § 825.300(b), and the designation notice in proposed § 825.300(c) would need to incorporate appropriate references to the military family leave entitlements. The Department also requested comments on any other regulatory sections that should be revised in light of the military family leave entitlements.

After reviewing the public comments, the Department concurs with the majority of comments that stated that the procedures used when taking military family leave should be the same as those used for other types of FMLA leave whenever possible. The Department believes that this approach is beneficial to both employees and employers—each of whom should find it easier to apply the same or similar procedures for taking and administering FMLA leave regardless of the qualifying reason. Accordingly, the Department has, when feasible, incorporated a discussion of the new military family leave entitlements into the proposed regulatory provisions that concern the taking of FMLA leave for other qualifying reasons. The Department also has created four new regulatory sections—numbered as §§ 825.126, 825.127, 825.309 and 825.310—which address specific employee and employer responsibilities for purposes of military family leave.

The Department received a few comments regarding the incorporation of the military family leave entitlements into the proposed FMLA regulatory framework. Taking this comments into consideration, they decided to incorporate, wherever feasible, the new military family leave entitlements into the proposed FMLA regulations governing the taking of job-protected leave for other qualifying reasons. The Department believes that completely separating the military family

leave provisions from the provisions governing the taking of other types of FMLA leave would create unnecessary confusion and complexity for employees and employers. By integrating the military family leave provisions into the amended FMLA regulations where applicable and appropriate, employees and employers will be better able to understand their rights and obligations under the new entitlements. Because Congress chose to incorporate the new entitlements into the existing FMLA statutory framework rather than create a new entitlement separate from the rest of the FMLA, ensuring that the totality of the FMLA regulations reflects the new military family leave provisions is both necessary and consistent with congressional intent.

In most cases, these changes are modest technical changes that acknowledge the military leave entitlements in the context of the FMLA. For example, some references to certification in the regulations have been altered to clarify whether they refer only to “medical certifications” of a serious health condition or if they refer also to “certifications” under the military family leave provisions. In some places, certain references to an employee’s entitlement to 12 workweeks of leave are changed to simply reference the employee’s leave entitlement, including the entitlement of up to 26 workweeks for military caregiver leave. In some instances, the changes are more substantial, such as in the notice provisions in §§ 825.302 and 825.303, and the general description of the FMLA in § 825.100. In addition, several new terms related to the military family leave provisions have been added to the definitions in § 825.800

The Department also recognizes that the NDAA amendments to the FMLA created certain new concepts that are applicable only to the taking of military family leave. Accordingly, the final rule includes four new regulatory sections, numbered §§ 825.126, 825.127, 825.309, and 825.310, which address those unique aspects of the military family leave entitlements. Generally speaking, §§ 825.126 and 825.127 discuss an employee’s entitlement to qualifying exigency and military caregiver leave respectively.

Sections 825.309 and 825.310 of the final rule cover the certification requirements for taking qualifying exigency and military caregiver leave respectively. The proposed FMLA provisions beginning with § 825.309 and ending with § 825.311 have been renumbered in the final rule as §§ 825.311–825.313 to allow for the addition of these two new military family leave certification provisions.

Certification of Qualifying Exigency
For Military Family Leave
(Family and Medical Leave Act)

U.S. Department of Labor
Employment Standards Administration
Wage and Hour Division



OMB Control Number: 1215-0181
Expires: 12/31/2011

SECTION I: For Completion by the EMPLOYER

INSTRUCTIONS to the EMPLOYER: The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) provides that an employer may require an employee seeking FMLA leave due to a qualifying exigency to submit a certification. Please complete Section I before giving this form to your employee. Your response is voluntary, and while you are not required to use this form, you may not ask the employee to provide more information than allowed under the FMLA regulations, 29 C.F.R. § 825.309.

Employer name: _____

Contact Information: _____

SECTION II: For Completion by the EMPLOYEE

INSTRUCTIONS to the EMPLOYEE: Please complete Section II fully and completely. The FMLA permits an employer to require that you submit a timely, complete, and sufficient certification to support a request for FMLA leave due to a qualifying exigency. Several questions in this section seek a response as to the frequency or duration of the qualifying exigency. Be as specific as you can; terms such as “unknown,” or “indeterminate” may not be sufficient to determine FMLA coverage. Your response is required to obtain a benefit. 29 C.F.R. § 825.310. While you are not required to provide this information, failure to do so may result in a denial of your request for FMLA leave. Your employer must give you at least 15 calendar days to return this form to your employer.

Your Name: _____
 First Middle Last

Name of covered military member on active duty or call to active duty status in support of a contingency operation:

 First Middle Last

Relationship of covered military member to you: _____

Period of covered military member’s active duty: _____

A complete and sufficient certification to support a request for FMLA leave due to a qualifying exigency includes written documentation confirming a covered military member’s active duty or call to active duty status in support of a contingency operation. Please check one of the following:

- A copy of the covered military member’s active duty orders is attached.
- Other documentation from the military certifying that the covered military member is on active duty (or has been notified of an impending call to active duty) in support of a contingency operation is attached.
- I have previously provided my employer with sufficient written documentation confirming the covered military member’s active duty or call to active duty status in support of a contingency operation.

PART C:

If leave is requested to meet with a third party (such as to arrange for childcare, to attend counseling, to attend meetings with school or childcare providers, to make financial or legal arrangements, to act as the covered military member's representative before a federal, state, or local agency for purposes of obtaining, arranging or appealing military service benefits, or to attend any event sponsored by the military or military service organizations), a complete and sufficient certification includes the name, address, and appropriate contact information of the individual or entity with whom you are meeting (i.e., either the telephone or fax number or email address of the individual or entity). This information may be used by your employer to verify that the information contained on this form is accurate.

Name of Individual: _____ Title: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: (_____) _____ Fax: (_____) _____

Email: _____

Describe nature of meeting: _____

PART D:

I certify that the information I provided above is true and correct.

Signature of Employee

Date

PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT NOTICE AND PUBLIC BURDEN STATEMENT

If submitted, it is mandatory for employers to retain a copy of this disclosure in their records for three years. 29 U.S.C. § 2616; 29 C.F.R. § 825.500. Persons are not required to respond to this collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The Department of Labor estimates that it will take an average of 20 minutes for respondents to complete this collection of information, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. If you have any comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, send them to the Administrator, Wage and Hour Division, U.S. Department of Labor, Room S-3502, 200 Constitution AV, NW, Washington, DC 20210. **DO NOT SEND THE COMPLETED FORM TO THE WAGE AND HOUR DIVISION; RETURN IT TO THE EMPLOYER.**

Certification for Serious Injury or
Illness of Covered Servicemember - -
for Military Family Leave (Family and
Medical Leave Act)

U.S. Department of Labor
Employment Standards Administration
Wage and Hour Division



OMB Control Number: 1215-0181
Expires: 12/31/2011

Notice to the EMPLOYER INSTRUCTIONS to the EMPLOYER: The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) provides that an employer may require an employee seeking FMLA leave due to a serious injury or illness of a covered servicemember to submit a certification providing sufficient facts to support the request for leave. Your response is voluntary. While you are not required to use this form, you may not ask the employee to provide more information than allowed under the FMLA regulations, 29 C.F.R. § 825.310. Employers must generally maintain records and documents relating to medical certifications, recertifications, or medical histories of employees or employees' family members, created for FMLA purposes as confidential medical records in separate files/records from the usual personnel files and in accordance with 29 C.F.R. § 1630.14(c)(1), if the Americans with Disabilities Act applies.

SECTION I: For Completion by the EMPLOYEE and/or the COVERED SERVICEMEMBER for whom the Employee Is Requesting Leave INSTRUCTIONS to the EMPLOYEE or COVERED SERVICEMEMBER: Please complete Section I before having Section II completed. The FMLA permits an employer to require that an employee submit a timely, complete, and sufficient certification to support a request for FMLA leave due to a serious injury or illness of a covered servicemember. If requested by the employer, your response is required to obtain or retain the benefit of FMLA-protected leave. 29 U.S.C. §§ 2613, 2614(c)(3). Failure to do so may result in a denial of an employee's FMLA request. 29 C.F.R. § 825.310(f). The employer must give an employee at least 15 calendar days to return this form to the employer.

SECTION II: For Completion by a UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE ("DOD") HEALTH CARE PROVIDER or a HEALTH CARE PROVIDER who is either: (1) a United States Department of Veterans Affairs ("VA") health care provider; (2) a DOD TRICARE network authorized private health care provider; or (3) a DOD non-network TRICARE authorized private health care provider INSTRUCTIONS to the HEALTH CARE PROVIDER: The employee listed on Page 2 has requested leave under the FMLA to care for a family member who is a member of the Regular Armed Forces, the National Guard, or the Reserves who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy, is otherwise in outpatient status, or is otherwise on the temporary disability retired list for a serious injury or illness. For purposes of FMLA leave, a serious injury or illness is one that was incurred in the line of duty on active duty that may render the servicemember medically unfit to perform the duties of his or her office, grade, rank, or rating.

A complete and sufficient certification to support a request for FMLA leave due to a covered servicemember's serious injury or illness includes written documentation confirming that the covered servicemember's injury or illness was incurred in the line of duty on active duty and that the covered servicemember is undergoing treatment for such injury or illness by a health care provider listed above. Answer, fully and completely, all applicable parts. Several questions seek a response as to the frequency or duration of a condition, treatment, etc. Your answer should be your best estimate based upon your medical knowledge, experience, and examination of the patient. Be as specific as you can; terms such as "lifetime," "unknown," or "indeterminate" may not be sufficient to determine FMLA coverage. Limit your responses to the condition for which the employee is seeking leave.

Certification for Serious Injury or Illness
of Covered Servicemember - - for
Military Family Leave (Family and
Medical Leave Act)

U.S. Department of Labor
Employment Standards Administration
Wage and Hour Division



SECTION I: For Completion by the EMPLOYEE and/or the COVERED SERVICEMEMBER for whom the Employee Is Requesting Leave: (This section must be completed first before any of the below sections can be completed by a health care provider.)

Part A: EMPLOYEE INFORMATION

Name and Address of Employer (this is the employer of the employee requesting leave to care for covered servicemember):

Name of Employee Requesting Leave to Care for Covered Servicemember:

First Middle Last

Name of Covered Servicemember (for whom employee is requesting leave to care):

First Middle Last

Relationship of Employee to Covered Servicemember Requesting Leave to Care:

Spouse Parent Son Daughter Next of Kin

Part B: COVERED SERVICEMEMBER INFORMATION

(1) Is the Covered Servicemember a Current Member of the Regular Armed Forces, the National Guard or Reserves? Yes No

If yes, please provide the covered servicemember's military branch, rank and unit currently assigned to:

Is the covered servicemember assigned to a military medical treatment facility as an outpatient or to a unit established for the purpose of providing command and control of members of the Armed Forces receiving medical care as outpatients (such as a medical hold or warrior transition unit)? Yes No If yes, please provide the name of the medical treatment facility or unit:

(2) Is the Covered Servicemember on the Temporary Disability Retired List (TDRL)? Yes No

Part C: CARE TO BE PROVIDED TO THE COVERED SERVICEMEMBER

Describe the Care to Be Provided to the Covered Servicemember and an Estimate of the Leave Needed to Provide the Care:

SECTION II: For Completion by a United States Department of Defense (“DOD”) Health Care Provider or a Health Care Provider who is either: (1) a United States Department of Veterans Affairs (“VA”) health care provider; (2) a DOD TRICARE network authorized private health care provider; or (3) a DOD non-network TRICARE authorized private health care provider. If you are unable to make certain of the military-related determinations contained below in Part B, you are permitted to rely upon determinations from an authorized DOD representative (such as a DOD recovery care coordinator). (Please ensure that Section I above has been completed before completing this section.) Please be sure to sign the form on the last page.

Part A: HEALTH CARE PROVIDER INFORMATION

Health Care Provider’s Name and Business Address:

Type of Practice/Medical Specialty: _____

Please state whether you are either: (1) a DOD health care provider; (2) a VA health care provider; (3) a DOD TRICARE network authorized private health care provider; or (4) a DOD non-network TRICARE authorized private health care provider: _____

Telephone: () _____ Fax: () _____ Email: _____

PART B: MEDICAL STATUS

(1) Covered Servicemember’s medical condition is classified as (Check One of the Appropriate Boxes):

(VSI) Very Seriously Ill/Injured – Illness/Injury is of such a severity that life is imminently endangered. Family members are requested at bedside immediately. (Please note this is an internal DOD casualty assistance designation used by DOD healthcare providers.)

(SI) Seriously Ill/Injured – Illness/injury is of such severity that there is cause for immediate concern, but there is no imminent danger to life. Family members are requested at bedside. (Please note this is an internal DOD casualty assistance designation used by DOD healthcare providers.)

OTHER Ill/Injured – a serious injury or illness that may render the servicemember medically unfit to perform the duties of the member’s office, grade, rank, or rating.

NONE OF THE ABOVE (Note to Employee: If this box is checked, you may still be eligible to take leave to care for a covered family member with a “serious health condition” under § 825.113 of the FMLA. If such leave is requested, you may be required to complete DOL FORM WH-380 or an employer-provided form seeking the same information.)

(2) Was the condition for which the Covered Service member is being treated incurred in line of duty on active duty in the armed forces? Yes No

(3) Approximate date condition commenced: _____

(4) Probable duration of condition and/or need for care: _____

(5) Is the covered servicemember undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy? Yes No. If yes, please describe medical treatment, recuperation or therapy:

PART C: COVERED SERVICEMEMBER'S NEED FOR CARE BY FAMILY MEMBER

- (1) Will the covered servicemember need care for a single continuous period of time, including any time for treatment and recovery? Yes No
If yes, estimate the beginning and ending dates for this period of time: _____
- (2) Will the covered servicemember require periodic follow-up treatment appointments?
 Yes No If yes, estimate the treatment schedule: _____
- (3) Is there a medical necessity for the covered servicemember to have periodic care for these follow-up treatment appointments? Yes No
- (4) Is there a medical necessity for the covered servicemember to have periodic care for other than scheduled follow-up treatment appointments (e.g., episodic flare-ups of medical condition)? Yes No If yes, please estimate the frequency and duration of the periodic care:

Signature of Health Care Provider: _____ **Date:** _____

PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT NOTICE AND PUBLIC BURDEN STATEMENT

If submitted, it is mandatory for employers to retain a copy of this disclosure in their records for three years, in accordance with 29 U.S.C. § 2616; 29 C.F.R. § 825.500. Persons are not required to respond to this collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The Department of Labor estimates that it will take an average of 20 minutes for respondents to complete this collection of information, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. If you have any comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, send them to the Administrator, Wage and Hour Division, U.S. Department of Labor, Room S-3502, 200 Constitution AV, NW, Washington, DC 20210. **DO NOT SEND THE COMPLETED FORM TO THE WAGE AND HOUR DIVISION; RETURN IT TO THE PATIENT.**

Summary of Revised Regulations

Coverage Issues

Section 825.106 (Joint employer coverage)

The Department clarifies that Professional Employer Organizations (PEOs) that contract with client employers merely to perform administrative functions, including payroll, benefits, regulatory paperwork, and updating employment policies, are not joint employers with their clients, provided they merely perform such administrative functions. On the other hand, if in a particular fact situation a PEO has the right to hire, fire, assign, or direct and control the employees, or benefits from the work that the employees perform, such a PEO may be a joint employer with the client company depending on all the facts and circumstances.

Section 825.110 (“Eligible” employee)

The Department created a new § 825.110(b)(1) to provide that although the 12 months of employment need not be consecutive, employment prior to a continuous break in service of five years or more need not be counted. The Department’s intent is not to change the three year record keeping requirements under FMLA. Thus, employers would have documentation to confirm previous employment for a former employee who at the time of rehiring had a break in service of three years or less. Where an employee relies on a period of employment that predates the employer’s records, it will be incumbent upon the employee to put forth some proof of the prior employment. This is consistent with the employee’s obligation to establish if he or she is an eligible employee. Of course, in determining whether an employee has met the eligibility criterion, an employer may have a policy to consider employment prior to a longer break in service, but in that event must do so in a uniform manner for all employees with similar breaks in service.

However, the Department also revised paragraph (b)(2) of this section to address two exceptions to the general rule contained in new paragraph (b)(1): a break in service resulting from the employee’s fulfillment of military obligations; and a period of approved absence or unpaid leave, such as for education or childrearing purposes, where a written agreement or collective bargaining agreement exists concerning the employer’s intent to rehire the employee. In these situations, employment prior to the break in service must be used in determining whether the employee has been employed for at least 12 months, regardless of the length of the break in service.

The regulation clarifies that when an employee is on leave at the time he or she meets the 12-month eligibility requirement, the period of leave prior to meeting the statutory requirement is non-FMLA leave and the period of leave after the statutory requirement is met is FMLA leave.

Section 825.111 (Determining whether 50 employees are employed within 75 miles)

Adopting a 1994 decision of the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals, the revised regulations modify § 825.111(a)(3) to state that after an employee who is jointly employed is stationed at a fixed worksite for a period of at least one year, the employee’s worksite for purposes of employee eligibility is the actual physical place where the employee works. The primary responsibility for placement following FMLA leave rests with the primary employer.

The final rule adds the term “telecommuting” in § 825.111(a)(2) to the existing rule’s use of the term “flexiplace.” This further clarifies that “virtual” employees who work out of their home do not have their personal residence as their worksite; rather, they are considered to work in the “office to which they report and from which assignments are made.”

Section 825.113 (Serious Health Condition)

The final regulations clarify that common ailments, can qualify for FMLA protection if they otherwise meet the definition of "serious health condition." Current DOL regulations suggest

common ailments, such as the common cold, the flu, earaches, upset stomach, minor ulcer, and headaches, would not normally be considered serious health conditions covered by the FMLA.

Section 825.115 (Continuing Treatment)

In a case where a male employee is needed to care for (as defined by § 825.124) a pregnant spouse who is incapacitated or requires prenatal care, the male employee will be entitled to FMLA leave. For example, a male employee's pregnant spouse may have severe morning sickness and need his assistance or he may need to accompany his pregnant spouse to a doctor's appointment for prenatal care. In this case, physical care may not be needed, but psychological care may be involved.

The DOL rejected employer pleas that employees with chronic serious health condition provide doctor's notes confirming the medical need for absences. The DOL reasoned that such a requirement could adversely affect the health of employees.

The Department recognizes that certain conditions, such as asthma and diabetes, continue over an extended period of time often without affecting day-to-day ability to work or perform other activities but may cause episodic periods of incapacity of less than three days. Although persons with such underlying conditions generally visit a health care provider periodically, when subject to a flare-up or other incapacitating episode, staying home and self-treatment are often more effective than visiting the health care provider (e.g., the asthma sufferer who is advised to stay home and inside due to the pollen count being too high). The definition has, therefore, been revised to include such conditions as serious health conditions, even if the individual episodes of incapacity are not of more than three days duration.

The Department defines the term "periodic" as twice or more a year, based on an expectation that employees with chronic serious health conditions generally will visit their health care providers with that minimum.

The final rule includes a new paragraph (5) in § 825.115(a) that provides an explanation of "extenuating circumstances." The new paragraph provides that the term "extenuating circumstances" means circumstances that prevent the follow-up visit from occurring as planned by the health care provider, and includes an example of such circumstances.

Section 825.125 (Definition of Health Care Provider)

The Department clarifies the status of PAs as health care providers by adding "physician assistants" to the list of recognized health care providers and by deleting the requirement that PAs operate "without supervision by a doctor or other health care provider."

Section 825.126 (Leave Because of a Qualifying Exigency)

The NDAA provides a new qualifying reason for taking FMLA leave which allows eligible employees of covered employers to take leave for any qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that a spouse, son, daughter, or parent is on active duty or has been notified of an impending call or order to active duty in support of a contingency operation. The Department has organized the discussion of this new leave entitlement into two major categories: (1) An employee's entitlement to qualifying exigency leave; (2) the specific circumstances under which qualifying exigency leave may be taken.

The DOL defined "qualifying exigency" to include the following 8 situations: (1) short-notice deployment, (2) military events and related activities, (3) childcare and school activities, (4) financial and legal arrangements, (5) counseling, (6) rest and recuperation, (7) post-deployment activities, and (8) additional activities.

Section 825.127 (Leave To Care for a Covered Servicemember with a Serious Injury or Illness) (i.e., “Military Caregiver Leave”)

Section 585(a) of the NDAA amends the FMLA to allow an eligible employee who is the spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin of a “covered servicemember” to take 26 workweeks of leave during a 12-month period to care for the servicemember. This section sets forth definitions for “son or daughter of a covered servicemember,” “parent of a covered servicemember” and “next of kin”—all of which are new terms applicable only to the taking of military caregiver leave by an eligible employee.

In order for an eligible employee to be entitled to take FMLA leave to care for a servicemember, the NDAA requires that the servicemember be a “covered servicemember” who is receiving treatment for a “serious injury or illness” that “may render the member medically unfit to perform the duties of the member’s office, grade, rank, or rating.” A “covered servicemember” is defined by statute as a member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy, is otherwise in “outpatient status,” or is otherwise on the temporary disability retired list, for a “serious injury or illness.”

An eligible employee may take more than one period of 26 workweeks of leave to care for a covered servicemember with more than one serious injury or illness only when the serious injury or illness is a subsequent serious injury or illness or is a different servicemember. The employee is limited to taking no more than 26 workweeks of leave in each “single 12-month period”. Spouses working for the same employer are limited to a combined total of 26 workweeks.

Leave that qualifies both as leave to care for a covered servicemember and leave taken to care for a family member with a serious health condition during the “single 12-month period” cannot be designated and counted as both leave to care for a covered servicemember and leave to care for a family member with a serious health condition.

Employee Leave Rights

Section 825.200 (Amount of Leave)

If an employee is not required to be at work because of a holiday on the day he or she requested leave, then no leave would be charged to the employee’s FMLA entitlement. Thus, the Department revised language in § 825.200(f) to clarify that, if an employee needs less than a full week of FMLA leave, and a holiday falls within the partial week of leave, the hours that the employee does not work on the holiday cannot be counted against the employee’s FMLA leave entitlement if the employee would not otherwise have been required to report for work on that day. If an employee needs a full week of leave in a week with a holiday, however, the hours the employee does not work on the holiday will count against the employee’s FMLA entitlement.

Section 825.203 (Scheduling of Intermittent or Reduced Schedule Leave)

Revised § 825.203 clarifies that an employee who takes intermittent leave when medically necessary has a statutory obligation to make a “reasonable effort” as opposed to an “attempt” to schedule leave so as not to disrupt unduly the employer’s operations.

Section 825.205 (Increments of Leave for Intermittent or Reduced Schedule Leave)

When an employee takes FMLA leave on an intermittent or reduced leave scheduler basis, the employer must account for the leave using an increment no greater than the shortest period of time that the employer uses to account for use of other forms of leave provided that it is not greater than one hour and provided that an employee’s FMLA leave entitlement may not be reduced by more than the amount of leave actually taken.

Responding to requests for stronger or clearer regulatory provisions prohibiting FMLA interference and discrimination, the DOL revised language setting forth the remedy for interfering with an employee's rights under the FMLA. Specifically, employers may be liable "for compensation and benefits lost by reason of the violation, for other actual monetary losses sustained as a direct result of the violation, and for appropriate equitable or other relief, including employment, reinstatement, promotion or any other relief tailored to the harm suffered."

Also in this section, the Department wishes to make clear that when an employee is performing light duty assignment, that employee's rights to FMLA leave and to job restoration are not affected by such light duty assignment. If an employee is voluntarily performing a light duty assignment and performing work, the employee is not on FMLA leave and the employee should not be deprived of future FMLA-qualifying leave when performing such work. By deleting this language, the Department in no way intends to discourage employees and employers from engaging in such light duty work arrangements.

The DOL declined various requests to require employees to accept light duty work in lieu of taking FMLA leave.

Finally, in the interest of clarity, the Department made explicit in paragraph (d) that employees and employers should be permitted to voluntarily agree to the settlement of past claims without having to first obtain the permission or approval of the Department or a court.

Employer Notice Requirements

Section 825.300 (Employer Notice Requirements)

Revised § 825.300 is divided into separate paragraphs that address the major topics of "(a): [g]eneral notice"; "(b): [e]ligibility notice"; "(c): [d]esignation notice"; and "(d): [c]onsequences of failing to provide notice". The "general notice" requirement requires an employer to post a notice explaining the Act's provisions and complaint filing procedures, and to provide this same notice in employee handbooks or by distributing a copy annually. The "eligibility notice" provides notice to the employee that he or she is an eligible employee under FMLA (as defined in § 825.110), has FMLA leave available, and has certain rights and responsibilities. Within five business days of having obtained sufficient information to determine whether the requested leave is being taken for a qualifying reason, the employer must provide the employee with a notice regarding designation of FMLA leave— referred to as the "designation notice." The designation notice informs the employee whether the particular leave requested will be designated as FMLA leave.

General Notice Requirements

The revised § 825.300(a) is a "general notice requirement" that merges the poster/notice requirement contained in current § 825.300 with the written guidance required in current § 825.301(a). In the final rule §825.300(a)(1) maintains the statutory requirement that every covered employer post and keep posted in conspicuous places on its premises a notice providing information about the FMLA. If employers have employee handbooks or other written materials concerning benefits and leave, such written materials must include the general notice information. Where such materials do not exist, the final rule requires an employer to provide the general notice to new employees upon being hired, rather than requiring that it be distributed to all employees.

Given the growth of the Internet since the Department issued the 1995 regulations, however, as well as the practical realities that more and more employees do not physically report to a central location, the Department clarifies that this posting requirement may be satisfied through an electronic posting of the notice as long as it otherwise meets the requirements of this section. To provide sufficient notice required by the statute, the employer must make sure that the information is accessible to applicants as well as employees, so simply posting such information

The DOL also addressed the issue of overtime in this section by clarifying that missed overtime must be counted against the employee's FMLA leave entitlement if the employee would otherwise be required to report for duty but for the taking of FMLA leave.

Section 825.207 (Substitution of Paid Leave)

The Department clarifies that the terms and conditions of an employer's paid leave policies apply and must be followed by the employee in order to substitute any form of accrued paid leave—including, for example, paid vacation, personal leave, family leave, "paid time off" (PTO), or sick leave.

The Department also added language clarifying that, when providing notice of eligibility for FMLA leave to an employee pursuant to § 825.300, an employer must make the employee aware of any additional requirements for the use of paid leave and must inform the employee that he/she remains entitled to unpaid FMLA leave even if he/she chooses not to meet the terms and conditions of the employer's paid leave policies. Employers may not discriminate against employees on FMLA leave in the administration of their paid leave policies.

Leave taken pursuant to a disability leave plan would be considered FMLA leave for a serious health condition and counted in the leave entitlement permitted under FMLA if it meets the criteria set forth in §§ 825.112-115.

Further changes were made to the current § 825.207(h), which states that when an employer's procedural requirements for taking paid leave are less stringent than the requirements of the FMLA, employees cannot be required to comply with higher FMLA standards, has been deleted because it does not properly implement section 103 of the FMLA, which states that employers may require sufficient FMLA certification in support of *any* request for FMLA leave for either the employee's own serious health condition or a covered family member's serious health condition.

Finally, the Department revised the rules to allow the use of compensatory time accrued by public agency employees under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) to run concurrently with unpaid FMLA leave when leave is taken for an FMLA qualifying reason.

Section 825.212 (Employee Failure to Make Health Premium Payments)

The Department added language to current paragraph (c) of this section to make clear that if an employer allows an employee's health insurance to lapse due to the employee's failure to pay his or her share of the premium as set forth in the regulations, the employer still has a duty to reinstate the employee's health insurance when the employee returns to work and can be liable for harm suffered by the employee if it fails to do so.

Section 825.215 (Equivalent Position)

The Department changed paragraph (c)(2) regarding bonuses to allow an employer to disqualify an employee from a bonus or award predicated on the achievement of a goal where the employee fails to achieve that goal as a result of an FMLA absence. If a bonus or other payment is based on the achievement of a specified goal such as hours worked, products sold or perfect attendance, and the employee has not met the goal due to FMLA leave, then the payment may be denied.

Of course, an employer could not disqualify only those individuals on FMLA-qualified leave and allow other employees on other forms of non-FMLA leave to receive such an award without violating the FMLA's non-discrimination requirement.

Section 825.220 (Protection for Employees Who Request Leave or Otherwise Assert FMLA Rights)

on an intranet that is not accessible to applicants will not meet the requirements. Electronic posting could be accomplished, for example, by posting the notice in a conspicuous manner on the employer's Internet webpage inviting applicants to apply if the employer accepts applications only through the Internet. If the employer also accepts applications on-site, however, the notice would have to be physically posted for applicants to view on-site unless the employer had a computer kiosk available for applicants to view the poster on-line. Similarly, in order for electronic-only posting to provide sufficient notice to employees, all employees must have access to company computers that post the information in a conspicuous manner.

In the final rule, the Department has also updated the prototype general notice to indicate more clearly the type of information an employee may need to provide to his or her employer for the notice to be "sufficient." See §§ 825.302 and 825.303.

Additionally, the final rule applies the same "significant portion of workers not literate in English" standard for translation of the notification of eligibility and rights and responsibilities in § 825.300(b)(2) and (c)(1).

The Department decided to increase the civil money penalty for violation of this posting to \$110.00 to meet requirements of the Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996.

Eligibility Notice

Under the final rule the employer is required to notify the employee whether leave is still available in the applicable 12-month period. If the employee is not eligible or has no FMLA leave available, then the notice must indicate at least one reason why the employee is sets the time frame for providing the eligibility notice to five business days The Department believes that setting this time frame to five business days affords the employer with the opportunity to calculate more accurately whether the employee is, in fact, eligible without compromising the employee's FMLA rights.

The regulations clarify that the eligibility notice must be provided "at the commencement of the first instance of leave in the 12- month FMLA leave year for each FMLA qualifying reason" and that eligibility to take FMLA leave "as to that reason for leave does not change during the leave year." If an employee needs FMLA leave due to a different FMLA-qualifying reason in the same leave year and is determined not to be eligible as to that second qualifying reason, the final rule requires the employer to notify the employee of the change in eligibility status within five business days, absent extenuating circumstances, of the employee's request for leave due to the second reason.

Rights and Responsibility Notice

If the employee is eligible for FMLA leave, then the regulations also require that the employer inform the employee of the employee's rights and responsibilities, such as any requirement to provide sufficient medical certification, pay premiums for continuing benefits, and job restoration rights upon expiration of FMLA leave. The employer is required to provide this notice to employees at the same time they provide the eligibility notice.

The Department also added language indicating that employers should include a statement of the employee's essential job functions with the designation notice if they will require that those functions be addressed in a fitness-for-duty certification.

If leave has already begun, the notice should be mailed to the employee's address of record. Revised § 825.300(b)(7) states that if information changes, the employer should provide notice to the employee of any information that has changed within five business days, a change from the current two-day requirement. The proposal also contains new language stating that the employer should include the medical certification form, if the employer requires such information, along with the eligibility notice.

Designation Notice

The revised designation notice requires that an employer notify the employee within five business days (a change from the current requirement of two business days) absent extenuating circumstances that leave is designated as FMLA leave once the employer has sufficient information to make such a determination. Only one designation notice is required for each FMLA-qualifying reason per leave year, regardless of whether the leave is taken as a continuous block of leave or on an intermittent or reduced leave schedule basis.

The designation notice also contains a provision that expressly requires the employer to inform the employee of the number of hours, days or weeks, if possible, that will be designated as FMLA leave. The final rule permits the employer to notify the employee of the hours counted against the FMLA leave entitlement orally and follow up with written notification on a pay stub at the next payday (unless the next payday is in less than one week, in which case the notice must be no later than the subsequent payday).

In situations in which the amount of leave to be taken is not known at the designation stage (e.g., when unforeseeable intermittent leave will be needed), the final rule modifies the employer's obligation, requiring employers to inform the employee of the number of hours counted against the FMLA leave entitlement only upon employee request, and no more often than every 30 days if FMLA leave was taken during that period.

If the employer will require that the fitness-for-duty certification specifically address the employee's ability to perform the essential functions of the employee's job, the employer must provide the employee with a list of the essential functions no later than with the designation notice required by final § 825.300(d), and the employer must also indicate in the designation notice that the fitness-for-duty certification must address the employee's ability to perform those essential functions.

Further, the final rule adds a new § 825.300(d)(5) that requires employers to notify employees if the information in the designation notice changes. For example, if an employee exhausts his or her FMLA leave entitlement and the leave will no longer be designated as FMLA leave, the employer must provide the employee with written notice of this change consistent with this section.

Remedy Provision

The Department has included a provision explaining that failure to comply with the notice requirements set forth in this section could result in the interference with, restraint of, or denial of the use of FMLA leave. If the employee is able to demonstrate harm as a result of the employer's failure to provide notice of eligibility or designation of FMLA leave as required, an employer may be liable for the harm suffered as a result of the violation, such as lost compensation and benefits, other monetary losses, and appropriate equitable or other relief, including employment, reinstatement or promotion.

Section 825.301 (Employer Designation of FMLA Leave)

This section outlines employee responsibilities of requesting leave. If there is a dispute between an employer and an employee as to whether leave qualifies as FMLA leave, it should be resolved through discussions between the employee and employer. Such discussions and the decision must be documented.

The regulations state that in all cases where a leave is FMLA-qualifying, an employer and an employee can mutually agree that leave be retroactively designated as FMLA leave.

Employee Notice Requirements

Section 825.302 (Employee Notice Requirements for Foreseeable FMLA Leave)

Timing of Notice

The final rule § 825.302(a) retains both the current requirement that an employee must give at least 30 days' notice when the need for FMLA leave is foreseeable at least 30 days in advance, and the requirement that notice be provided "as soon as practicable" if leave is foreseeable but 30 days' notice is not practicable. The determination of when an employee could practicably provide notice must take into account the individual facts and circumstances. The Department further requires that when an employee gives less than 30 days' advance notice, the employee must respond to a request from the employer and explain why it was not practicable to give 30 days' notice.

In the final rule, the same requirements for providing notice for foreseeable leave that apply to existing FMLA leave are extended to military caregiver leave. The rule also makes clear that the 30-day advanced notice requirement for foreseeable leave does not apply to qualifying exigency leave. Employees are not obligated to provide notice to an employer when they first become aware of a covered family member's active duty or call to active duty status. The Department believes this is an unnecessary requirement because many employees with a covered military member may never need to use qualifying exigency leave. Notice for qualifying exigency leave should be provided when the employee first seeks to take leave for a qualifying exigency.

Content of Notice

The Department retained the standard that an employee need not assert his or her rights under the FMLA or even mention the FMLA to put the employer on notice of the need for FMLA leave, but at the same time employees must provide sufficient information to make an employer aware that FMLA rights may be at issue. The Department clarifies that sufficient information must indicate that the employee is unable to perform the functions of the job (or that a covered family member is unable to participate in regular daily activities), the anticipated duration of the absence, and whether the employee (or family member) intends to visit a health care provider or is receiving continuing treatment.

The revised rule also states that employees must respond to employers' inquiries designed to determine whether leave is FMLA qualifying or risk losing FMLA protection if the employer is unable to determine whether the leave qualifies.

Complying with Employer Policy

The revision of § 825.302(d) retains the current rule providing that an employer may require an employee to comply with the employer's usual notice and procedural requirements for calling in absences and requesting leave. However, the Department eliminated the current language stating that an employer cannot delay or deny FMLA leave if an employee fails to follow such procedures. Where an employee does not comply with the employer's usual notice and procedural requirements, and no unusual circumstances justify the failure to comply, FMLA-protected leave may be delayed or denied unless the employer's policy requires notice to be given sooner than set forth in the FMLA.

The Department clarifies that, absent unusual circumstances, employees may be required to follow established call-in procedures (except one that imposes a more stringent timing requirement than the regulations provide), and failure to properly notify employers of absences may cause a delay or denial of FMLA protections.

Scheduling and Planned Medical Treatment

When planning medical treatment, the employee must consult with the employer and make a reasonable effort to schedule the treatment so as not to disrupt unduly the employer's operations, subject to the approval of the health care provider.

Section 825.303 (Employee Notice Requirements for Unforeseeable FMLA Leave)

Timing of Notice

In the case of unforeseeable leave, the Department maintained the requirement that an employee provide notice as soon as practicable under the facts and circumstances of the particular case. While this is the same standard as notice for FMLA leave that is foreseeable less than 30 days in advance, the Department is aware that the employer's need for prompt notice of the need for leave is heightened in situations in which the need for leave is not foreseeable. Accordingly, the Department expects that in all but the most extraordinary circumstances, employees will be able to provide notice to their employers of the need for leave at least prior to the start of their shift.

To emphasize the importance of notice when the need for FMLA leave was unforeseen, the Department added language to §825.303(a) to clarify that it is expected employees will provide notice to their employers promptly.

Content of Notice When "Not Foreseeable"

The regulations require that the employee provide the employer with sufficient information to put the employer on notice that the absence may be FMLA-protected.

In addition, because issues are frequently raised with employees giving notice of unforeseen absences by simply calling in "sick," revised §825.303(b) clarifies that calling in with the simple statement that the employee or the employee's family member is "sick" without providing more information will not be considered sufficient notice to trigger an employer's obligations under the Act in the case of unforeseeable leave. Of course, many unforeseeable conditions do develop and deteriorate over a period of a few days, and a condition that did not initially appear to be a serious health condition may develop into one. The employee would be expected to provide the employer the additional information needed to determine if the serious health condition standard is met as it became available.

Complying With Employer Policy When "Not Foreseeable"

The rules §825.303(c) clarifies that an employee must comply with the employer's usual procedures for calling in and requesting unforeseeable leave, except when extraordinary circumstances exist (or the procedure imposes a more stringent timing requirement than the regulations provide), such as when the employee or a family member needs emergency medical treatment.

If an employee fails to follow the employer's call-in procedures (assuming any required timing is not more stringent than required by §825.303(a)), except under extraordinary circumstances, then the employer may delay or deny FMLA coverage until the employee complies with the rules.

Employers may not enforce advance written notice requirements where the leave is due to a medical emergency.

Section 825.305 (Medical certification, general rule)

The employer should request that an employee furnish certification at the time the employee gives notice of the need for leave or within five business days thereafter or in the case of unforeseen leave, within five business days after the leave commences.

The employee must provide the requested certification to the employer within 15 calendar days after the employer's request unless it is not practicable.

When an employer determines that a certification is incomplete or insufficient, the employer must state in writing what additional information is necessary and provide the employee with seven calendar days to cure the deficiency. Additional time must be allowed where the employee notifies the employer within the seven-calendar day period that he or she is unable to obtain the additional information despite diligent good faith efforts.

The Department also added a provision allowing for annual medical certifications in those cases in which the serious health condition extends beyond a leave year.

Section 825.306 (Content of medical certification for leave taken because of an employee's own serious health condition or the serious health condition of a family member)

This section addresses how much information an employer can obtain in the medical certification to substantiate the existence of a serious health condition (of the employee or a family member) and the employee's need for leave due to the condition. This section also explains that the Department provides an optional form (Form WH-380) for use in the medical certification process; other forms may be used, but they may only seek information related to the condition for which leave is sought, and no additional information beyond that contained in the WH-380 may be required.

In response to expressed dissatisfaction over the current WH-380 form medical certification form, the DOL has completely revamped the medical certification form. The changes simplify the form and elicit the information needed to grant or deny leave.

The new form includes three sections. In Section I, the employer is required to list the work schedule and essential job duties of the employee's position. The essential job duties listed on the new medical certification form will be used later in the fitness-for-duty process. Section II asks the employee to fill out basic identifying information. The most significant changes to the form are included in Section III, the health care provider's portion. This section inquires into the specific medical facts which support the need for leave. The health care provider must list the symptoms, diagnosis, medications or other information which relates to the requested leave. If the employee requests leave on an intermittent or reduced schedule basis, the health care provider must state the leave is medically necessary. The form also includes specific questions as to the treatment schedule, the length of appointments, the estimated part-time/reduced schedule needed (if any) and information as to flare-ups.

The Department added a new § 825.306(d), which clarifies that where a serious health condition may also be a disability, employers are not prevented from following the procedures under the ADA for requesting medical information.

Section 825.307 (Authentication and clarification of medical certification for leave taken because of an employee's own serious health condition or the serious health condition of a family member; second and third opinions)

Revised § 825.307(a) clarifies the limited nature of the authentication process and removes the requirement of employee consent to authenticate the certification. To make such contact, the employer must use a health care provider, a human resources professional, a leave administrator, or a management official. Under no circumstances may the employee's direct supervisor contact the employee's health care provider. Employers may also only clarify that which is on the medical certification. Employers may not ask health care providers for additional

information beyond that required by the certification form. The requirements of HIPAA must be satisfied in regards to employee privacy.

The regulations state that such contact by the employer may only take place after the employee has been afforded the opportunity to cure any deficiencies with the certification. Language has also been added to make clear that if such consent is not given, an employee may jeopardize his or her FMLA rights if the information provided is incomplete or insufficient.

In order to assist individuals referring to the regulations on second and third opinions, changes have been made to timeframes. The timeframe for employers to provide employees with copies of second and third medical opinions upon the employees' request under paragraph (d) extended from two to five business days, to be uniform with other similar timeframes.

Section 825.308 (Recertifications for leave taken because of an employee's own serious health condition or the serious health condition of a family member)

The Department restructured § 825.308 for the sake of clarity. Paragraph (a), titled "30-day rule," merely states a general rule that an employer may request recertification no more often than every 30 days and only in connection with the absence of the employee.

Paragraph (b), titled "[m]ore than 30 days," explains, consistent with the existing regulation, that if a minimum duration for the period of incapacity is specified, the employer may not request recertification until that time period has expired, but adds that in all cases, recertifications may be requested every six months.

The Department believes that it would be reasonable for employers to obtain recertifications every six months in circumstances in which the certification indicates that the condition will last for an extended period of time. An extended period of time includes not only specific months or years (e.g., one year) but certified durations of "indefinite," "unknown," or "lifetime."

Paragraph (c) of this section explains, with some modifications to the current rule, what circumstances must exist to request medical recertification in less than 30 days and is now titled "[l]ess than 30 days." The paragraph explains that recertification may be requested in less than 30 days if the employee requests an extension of leave, the circumstances have changed significantly based on the duration or frequency of the absence or the nature or severity of the illness, or if the employer receives information that casts doubt upon the employee's stated reason for the absence or the continuing validity of the certification.

The employee must provide the requested recertification to the employer within the timeframe requested by the employers which must allow at least 15 calendar days.

As stated in the current regulations, the employee is responsible for the costs associated with the recertification and that no second or third opinion may be required.

Section 825.309 (Certification for leave taken because of a qualifying exigency)

The first time an employee requests leave because of a qualifying exigency arising out of the active duty of a covered military member, an employer may require the employee to provide a copy of the covered military member's active duty orders or other documentation issued by the military which indicates that the covered member is on active duty and the dates of the covered military member's active duty service. This information need only be provided to the employer once. If the certification is complete and sufficient then the employer may not ask for additional information unless the qualifying exigency involves a third party. The employer may, however, contact the Department of Defense to verify that the member is on active duty or status but may not request additional information. The employee's permission is not required.

Section 825.310 (Certification for leave taken to care for a covered servicemember)

Section 825.310 of the final rule provides that when leave is taken to care for a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness, an employer *may* require an employee to support his or her request for leave with a sufficient certification. Section 825.310(a) of the final rule permits an employer to require that certain necessary information to support the request for leave be supported by a certification from one of the following authorized health care providers: (1) A DOD health care provider; (2) a VA health care provider; (3) a DOD TRICARE network authorized private health care provider; or (4) a DOD non-network TRICARE authorized private health care provider.

Section 825.310(b)–(c) of the final rule sets forth the information an employer may request from an employee (or the authorized health care provider) in order to support the employee’s request for leave. As indicated in § 825.310(d) of the final rule, the Department has developed a new optional form, Form WH–385, which may be used to obtain appropriate information to support an employee’s request for leave to care for a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness. An employer may use this optional form, or another form containing the same basic information; however, as is the case for any required certification for leave taken to care for a family member with a serious health condition, no information may be required beyond that specified in § 825.310 of the final rule.

Section 825.312 (Fitness-for-duty certification)

The Department added a sentence clarifying that employees have the same obligation to provide a complete certification or provide sufficient authorization to the health care provider to provide the information directly to the employer at the fitness-for-duty stage as they do in the initial certification stage.

An employer may seek a fitness-for-duty certificate only with regard to the particular health condition that caused the employee’s need for FMLA leave. The employer may provide the employee with a list of the employee’s essential job duties together with the eligibility notice, in which the employer advises the employee of the necessity for a fitness-for-duty certification. If the employer provides such a list of essential functions, it may require the employee’s health care provider to certify that the employee can perform them. If the employer wants the health care provider to consider a list of essential functions, it must provide them with the designation notice.

The regulation retains the basic fitness-for-duty certification procedures, but states that for purposes of authenticating and clarifying the fitness-for-duty statement, the employer may contact the employee’s health care provider. The proposal also replaces the requirement that the certification must only be a “simple statement” with the statutory language that the employee must obtain a certification from his or her health care provider that the employee is able to resume work.

The statement in the current regulations that no additional information may be acquired has been deleted, as the process of clarifying the fitness-for-duty certification may result in the employer obtaining additional information not initially provided on the fitness-for-duty certification. But the employer may not request or require additional information in a certification to establish fitness-for-duty other than what is specified under these regulations.

Under both the current and revised regulations, the employee is responsible for the cost of obtaining a fitness-for-duty certification.

The Department added language, consistent with current regulations, to make clear that the employee is not entitled to the reinstatement protections of the Act if he or she does not provide such a requested certification or request additional FMLA leave.

The Department also clarified that an employer be permitted to require an employee to furnish a fitness-for-duty certificate every 30 days if an employee has used intermittent leave during that period and reasonable safety concerns exist.

Section 825.313 (Failure to provide medical certification)

In the new regulations, the Department explains more clearly the implications of an employee's failure to provide the medical certification in a timely manner. Currently, the regulation states that an employer may "delay the taking of FMLA leave." If the employee takes leave without timely providing a sufficient medical certification for foreseeable leave, then any leave during the time period that the certification was "delayed" is not FMLA-protected. To make sure both employees and employers understand the intended meaning of this provision, the Department amended the wording to state that the employer may "deny FMLA coverage" for the period at issue.

The employer may appropriately enforce its attendance policy which may result in disciplinary action being taken against the employee. The regulations provide that if a recertification is not provided within 15 days of the request, or as soon as practicable, the employer may deny the continuation of the FMLA leave protections until the recertification is provided.

The Revised Regulations provide for the following consequences if employees fail to provide timely medical certifications:

- **Foreseeable leave:** Employers may deny FMLA coverage until the required certification is provided.
- **Unforeseeable leave:** Employers may deny FMLA coverage until sufficient certification is provided. If employees never produce certifications, leaves are not considered FMLA leave.
- **Recertifications:** Employers may deny continuation of the FMLA leave protections until the employee produces the recertification. If employees never produce the recertification, none of the time off is considered FMLA leave.
- **Fitness-for-duty certifications:** Employers may delay restoration until the certification is provided. Unless employees provide either a fitness-for-duty certification or a new medical certification for a serious health condition, employees may be terminated.

Section 825.702 (Interaction with Federal and State anti-discrimination laws)

On July 22, 2002, the DOL issued guidance stating that, based upon the reinstatement rights provided by USERRA, an employee is entitled to credit for FMLA eligibility purposes for the months and hours that the employee would have worked during the 12 months preceding the start of the leave but for his or her qualifying active duty uniformed service. This guidance has been incorporated into paragraph (g) of the final regulations.

Definitions

Section 825.800 highlights the definitions of important FMLA terms including those that refer to leave to care for a servicemember. Highlights of terms that appear due to the addition of the military caregiver leave are listed below:

The term "Active duty" is defined by H.R. 4986 as duty under a call or order to active duty under a provision of law referred to in 10 U.S.C. 101(a)(13)(B).

"Contingency operation" is defined by the military family leave provisions of H.R. 4986 as a military operation designated by the Secretary of Defense in which members of the armed forces are or may become involved in military actions, operation, or hostilities against an enemy of the United States or against an opposing military force.

“Covered servicemember” is defined by the military family leave provisions of H.R. 4986 as a member of the Armed Forces (including National Guard or Reserves) “who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy, is otherwise in outpatient status, or is otherwise on the temporary disability retired list, for a serious injury or illness.”

The Department’s includes that any treatment, recuperation, or therapy provided to a servicemember for a serious injury or illness, and not just that provided by the Armed Forces, is covered.

“Outpatient status” for a covered servicemember is defined by the military family leave provisions of H.R. 4986 as the status of a member of the Armed Forces assigned to (a) a medical treatment facility as an outpatient or (b) a unit established to provide command and control of members of the Armed Forces receiving medical care as outpatients.

“Next of kin” is defined by the military family leave provisions of H.R. 4986 as the nearest blood relative other than the covered service member’s spouse, parent, son, or daughter. The regulations list the order or priority.

“Serious injury or illness” in the case of members of the Armed Forces, National Guard or Reserves is defined by the military family leave provisions of H.R. 4986 as “an injury or illness incurred by the member in line of duty on active duty in the Armed Forces that may render the member medically unfit to perform the duties of the member’s office, grade, rank, or rating.”

“Son or daughter of a covered servicemember” means a covered servicemember’s biological, adopted, or foster child, stepchild, legal ward, or a child for whom the covered servicemember stood in loco parentis, and who is of any age.

Revised Regulatory Text

PART 825—THE FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT OF 1993

Subpart A—Coverage Under the Family and Medical Leave Act

- Sec.
- 825.100 The Family and Medical Leave Act.
- 825.101 Purpose of the Act.
- 825.102 [Reserved]
- 825.103 [Reserved]
- 825.104 Covered employer.
- 825.105 Counting employees for determining coverage.
- 825.106 Joint employer coverage.
- 825.107 Successor in interest coverage.
- 825.108 Public agency coverage.
- 825.109 Federal agency coverage.
- 825.110 Eligible employee.
- 825.111 Determining whether 50 employees are employed within 75 miles.
- 825.112 Qualifying reasons for leave, general rule.
- 825.113 Serious health condition.
- 825.114 Inpatient care.
- 825.115 Continuing treatment.
- 825.116 [Reserved]
- 825.117 [Reserved]
- 825.118 [Reserved]
- 825.119 Leave for treatment of substance abuse.
- 825.120 Leave for pregnancy or birth.
- 825.121 Leave for adoption or foster care.
- 825.122 Definitions of spouse, parent, son or daughter, next of kin of a covered servicemember, adoption, foster care, son or daughter on active duty or call to active duty status, son or daughter of a covered servicemember, and parent of a covered servicemember.
- 825.123 Unable to perform the functions of the position.

- 825.124 Needed to care for a family member or covered servicemember.
- 825.125 Definition of health care provider.
- 825.126 Leave because of a qualifying exigency.
- 825.127 Leave to care for a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness.

Subpart B—Employee Leave Entitlements Under the Family and Medical Leave Act

- 825.200 Amount of leave.
- 825.201 Leave to care for a parent.
- 825.202 Intermittent leave or reduced leave schedule.
- 825.203 Scheduling of intermittent or reduced schedule leave.
- 825.204 Transfer of an employee to an alternative position during intermittent leave or reduced schedule leave.
- 825.205 Increments of FMLA leave for intermittent or reduced schedule leave.
- 825.206 Interaction with the FLSA.
- 825.207 Substitution of paid leave.
- 825.208 [Reserved]
- 825.209 Maintenance of employee benefits.
- 825.210 Employee payment of group health benefit premiums.
- 825.211 Maintenance of benefits under multi-employer health plans.
- 825.212 Employee failure to pay health plan premium payments.
- 825.213 Employer recovery of benefit costs.
- 825.214 Employee right to reinstatement.
- 825.215 Equivalent position.
- 825.216 Limitations on an employee's right to reinstatement.
- 825.217 Key employee, general rule.
- 825.218 Substantial and grievous economic injury.
- 825.219 Rights of a key employee.
- 825.220 Protection for employees who request leave or otherwise assert FMLA rights.

Subpart C—Employee and Employer Rights and Obligations Under the Act

- 825.300 Employer notice requirements.
- 825.301 Designation of FMLA leave.
- 825.302 Employee notice requirements for foreseeable FMLA leave.
- 825.303 Employee notice requirements for unforeseeable FMLA leave.
- 825.304 Employee failure to provide notice.
- 825.305 Certification, general rule.
- 825.306 Content of medical certification for leave taken because of an employee's own serious health condition or the serious health condition of a family member.
- 825.307 Authentication and clarification of medical certification for leave taken because of an employee's own serious health condition or the serious health condition of a family member; second and third opinions.
- 825.308 Recertifications for leave taken because of an employee's own serious health condition or the serious health condition of a family member.
- 825.309 Certification for leave taken because of a qualifying exigency.
- 825.310 Certification for leave taken to care for a covered servicemember (military caregiver leave).
- 825.311 Intent to return to work.

68074 Federal Register / Vol. 73, No. 222 / Monday, November 17, 2008 / Rules and Regulations

- 825.312 Fitness-for-duty certification.
- 825.313 Failure to provide certification.

Subpart D—Enforcement Mechanisms

- 825.400 Enforcement, general rules.
- 825.401 Filing a complaint with the Federal Government.
- 825.402 Violations of the posting requirement.
- 825.403 Appealing the assessment of a penalty for willful violation of the posting requirement.
- 825.404 Consequences for an employer when not paying the penalty assessment after a final order is issued.

Subpart E—Record-Keeping Requirements

- 825.500 Record-keeping requirements.

Subpart F—Special Rules Applicable to Employees of Schools

- 825.600 Special rules for school employees, definitions.
- 825.601 Special rules for school employees, limitations on intermittent leave.
- 825.602 Special rules for school employees, limitations on leave near the end of an academic term.
- 825.603 Special rules for school employees, duration of FMLA leave.
- 825.604 Special rules for school employees, restoration to “an equivalent position.”

Subpart G—Effect of Other Laws, Employer Practices, and Collective Bargaining Agreements on Employee Rights Under FMLA

- 825.700 Interaction with employer’s policies.
- 825.701 Interaction with State laws.
- 825.702 Interaction with Federal and State anti-discrimination laws.

Subpart H—Definitions

- 825.800 Definitions.

Appendix A to Part 825—Index [Reserved]

Appendix B to Part 825—Certification of Health Care Provider (Forms WH-380E & WH-380F)

Appendix C to Part 825—Notice to Employees Of Rights Under FMLA (WH Publication 1420)

Appendix D to Part 825—Notice of Eligibility and Rights & Responsibilities (Form WH-381)

Appendix E to Part 825—Designation Notice to Employee of FMLA Leave (Form WH-382)

Appendix F to Part 825—[Reserved]

Appendix G to Part 825—Certification of Qualifying Exigency for Military Family Leave (Form WH-384)

Appendix H to Part 825—Certification for Serious Injury or Illness of Covered Servicemember for Military Family Leave (Form WH-385)

Authority: 29 U.S.C. 2654.

Subpart A—Coverage Under the Family and Medical Leave Act

§ 825.100 The Family and Medical Leave Act.

(a) The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, as amended, (FMLA or Act) allows “eligible” employees of a covered employer to take job-protected, unpaid leave, or to substitute appropriate paid leave if the employee has earned or accrued it, for up to a total of 12 workweeks in any 12 months (see § 825.200(b)) because of the birth of a child and to care for the newborn child, because of the placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care, because the employee is needed to care for a family member (child, spouse, or parent) with a serious health condition, because the employee’s own serious health condition makes the employee unable to perform the functions of his or her job, or because of any qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that the employee’s spouse, son, daughter, or parent is a covered military member on active duty (or has been notified of an impending call or order to active duty) in support of a contingency operation. In addition, “eligible” employees of a covered employer may take job-protected, unpaid leave, or substitute appropriate paid leave if the employee has earned or accrued it, for up to a total of 26 workweeks in a “single 12-month period” to care for a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness (see § 825.127(c)). In certain cases, FMLA leave may be taken on an intermittent basis rather than all at once, or the employee may work a part-time schedule.

(b) An employee on FMLA leave is also entitled to have health benefits maintained while on leave as if the employee had continued to work instead of taking the leave. If an employee was paying all or part of the premium payments prior to leave, the employee would continue to pay his or her share during the leave period. The employer may recover its share only if the employee does not return to work for a reason other than the serious health condition of the employee or the employee’s covered family member, the serious injury or illness of a covered servicemember, or another reason beyond the employee’s control.

(c) An employee generally has a right to return to the same position or an equivalent position with equivalent pay, benefits, and working conditions at the conclusion of the leave. The taking of FMLA leave cannot result in the loss of any benefit that accrued prior to the start of the leave.

(d) The employer generally has a right to advance notice from the employee. In addition, the employer may require an employee to submit certification to substantiate that the leave is due to the serious health condition of the employee or the employee’s covered family member, due to the serious injury or illness of a covered servicemember, or because of a qualifying exigency. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in a delay in the start of FMLA leave. Pursuant to a uniformly applied policy, the employer may also require that an employee present a certification of fitness to return to work when the absence was caused by the employee’s serious health condition (see §§ 825.312 and 825.313). The employer may delay restoring the employee to employment without such certificate relating to the health condition which caused the employee’s absence.

§ 825.101 Purpose of the Act.

(a) FMLA is intended to allow employees to balance their work and family life by taking reasonable unpaid leave for medical reasons, for the birth or adoption of a child, for the care of a child, spouse, or parent who has a serious health condition, for the care of a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness, or because of a qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that the employee’s spouse, son, daughter, or parent is on active duty or call to active duty status in support of a contingency operation. The Act is intended to balance the demands of the workplace with the needs of families, to promote the stability and economic security of families, and to promote national interests in preserving family integrity. It was intended that the Act accomplish these purposes in a manner that accommodates the legitimate interests of employers, and in a manner consistent with the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment in minimizing the potential for employment discrimination on the basis of sex, while promoting equal employment opportunity for men and women.

(b) The FMLA was predicated on two fundamental concerns—the needs of the American workforce, and the development of high-performance organizations. Increasingly, America’s children and elderly are dependent upon family members who must spend long hours at work. When a family emergency arises, requiring workers to attend to seriously-ill children or parents, or to newly-born or adopted infants, or even to their own serious illness, workers need reassurance that

they will not be asked to choose between continuing their employment, and meeting their personal and family obligations or tending to vital needs at home.

(c) The FMLA is both intended and expected to benefit employers as well as their employees. A direct correlation exists between stability in the family and productivity in the workplace. FMLA will encourage the development of high-performance organizations. When workers can count on durable links to their workplace they are able to make their own full commitments to their jobs. The record of hearings on family and medical leave indicate the powerful productive advantages of stable workplace relationships, and the comparatively small costs of guaranteeing that those relationships will not be dissolved while workers attend to pressing family health obligations or their own serious illness.

§ 825.102 [Reserved]

§ 825.103 [Reserved]

§ 825.104 Covered employer.

(a) An employer covered by FMLA is any person engaged in commerce or in any industry or activity affecting commerce, who employs 50 or more employees for each working day during each of 20 or more calendar workweeks in the current or preceding calendar year. Employers covered by FMLA also include any person acting, directly or indirectly, in the interest of a covered employer to any of the employees of the employer, any successor in interest of a covered employer, and any public agency. Public agencies are covered employers without regard to the number of employees employed. Public as well as private elementary and secondary schools are also covered employers without regard to the number of employees employed. (See § 825.600.)

(b) The terms "commerce" and "industry affecting commerce" are defined in accordance with section 501(1) and (3) of the Labor Management Relations Act of 1947 (LMRA) (29 U.S.C. 142 (1) and (3)), as set forth in the definitions at § 825.800 of this part. For purposes of the FMLA, employers who meet the 50-employee coverage test are deemed to be engaged in commerce or in an industry or activity affecting commerce.

(c) Normally the legal entity which employs the employee is the employer under FMLA. Applying this principle, a corporation is a single employer rather than its separate establishments or divisions.

(1) Where one corporation has an ownership interest in another

corporation, it is a separate employer unless it meets the "joint employment" test discussed in § 825.106, or the "integrated employer" test contained in paragraph (c)(2) of this section.

(2) Separate entities will be deemed to be parts of a single employer for purposes of FMLA if they meet the "integrated employer" test. Where this test is met, the employees of all entities making up the integrated employer will be counted in determining employer coverage and employee eligibility. A determination of whether or not separate entities are an integrated employer is not determined by the application of any single criterion, but rather the entire relationship is to be reviewed in its totality. Factors considered in determining whether two or more entities are an integrated employer include:

- (i) Common management;
- (ii) Interrelation between operations;
- (iii) Centralized control of labor relations; and
- (iv) Degree of common ownership/financial control.

(d) An "employer" includes any person who acts directly or indirectly in the interest of an employer to any of the employer's employees. The definition of "employer" in section 3(d) of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), 29 U.S.C. 203(d), similarly includes any person acting directly or indirectly in the interest of an employer in relation to an employee. As under the FLSA, individuals such as corporate officers "acting in the interest of an employer" are individually liable for any violations of the requirements of FMLA.

§ 825.105 Counting employees for determining coverage.

(a) The definition of "employ" for purposes of FMLA is taken from the Fair Labor Standards Act, § 3(g), 29 U.S.C. 203(g). The courts have made it clear that the employment relationship under the FLSA is broader than the traditional common law concept of master and servant. The difference between the employment relationship under the FLSA and that under the common law arises from the fact that the term "employ" as defined in the Act includes "to suffer or permit to work." The courts have indicated that, while "to permit" requires a more positive action than "to suffer," both terms imply much less positive action than required by the common law. Mere knowledge by an employer of work done for the employer by another is sufficient to create the employment relationship under the Act. The courts have said that there is no definition that solves all problems as to the limitations of the employer-

employee relationship under the Act; and that determination of the relation cannot be based on "isolated factors" or upon a single characteristic or "technical concepts," but depends "upon the circumstances of the whole activity" including the underlying "economic reality." In general an employee, as distinguished from an independent contractor who is engaged in a business of his/her own, is one who "follows the usual path of an employee" and is dependent on the business which he/she serves.

(b) Any employee whose name appears on the employer's payroll will be considered employed each working day of the calendar week, and must be counted whether or not any compensation is received for the week. However, the FMLA applies only to employees who are employed within any State of the United States, the District of Columbia or any Territory or possession of the United States. Employees who are employed outside these areas are not counted for purposes of determining employer coverage or employee eligibility.

(c) Employees on paid or unpaid leave, including FMLA leave, leaves of absence, disciplinary suspension, etc., are counted as long as the employer has a reasonable expectation that the employee will later return to active employment. If there is no employer/employee relationship (as when an employee is laid off, whether temporarily or permanently) such individual is not counted. Part-time employees, like full-time employees, are considered to be employed each working day of the calendar week, as long as they are maintained on the payroll.

(d) An employee who does not begin to work for an employer until after the first working day of a calendar week, or who terminates employment before the last working day of a calendar week, is not considered employed on each working day of that calendar week.

(e) A private employer is covered if it maintained 50 or more employees on the payroll during 20 or more calendar workweeks (not necessarily consecutive workweeks) in either the current or the preceding calendar year.

(f) Once a private employer meets the 50 employees/20 workweeks threshold, the employer remains covered until it reaches a future point where it no longer has employed 50 employees for 20 (nonconsecutive) workweeks in the current and preceding calendar year. For example, if an employer who met the 50 employees/20 workweeks test in the calendar year as of September 1, 2008, subsequently dropped below 50

employees before the end of 2008 and continued to employ fewer than 50 employees in all workweeks throughout calendar year 2009, the employer would continue to be covered throughout calendar year 2009 because it met the coverage criteria for 20 workweeks of the preceding (*i.e.*, 2008) calendar year.

§ 825.106 Joint employer coverage.

(a) Where two or more businesses exercise some control over the work or working conditions of the employee, the businesses may be joint employers under FMLA. Joint employers may be separate and distinct entities with separate owners, managers, and facilities. Where the employee performs work which simultaneously benefits two or more employers, or works for two or more employers at different times during the workweek, a joint employment relationship generally will be considered to exist in situations such as:

- (1) Where there is an arrangement between employers to share an employee's services or to interchange employees;
- (2) Where one employer acts directly or indirectly in the interest of the other employer in relation to the employee; or,
- (3) Where the employers are not completely disassociated with respect to the employee's employment and may be deemed to share control of the employee, directly or indirectly, because one employer controls, is controlled by, or is under common control with the other employer.

(b)(1) A determination of whether or not a joint employment relationship exists is not determined by the application of any single criterion, but rather the entire relationship is to be viewed in its totality. For example, joint employment will ordinarily be found to exist when a temporary placement agency supplies employees to a second employer.

(2) A type of company that is often called a "Professional Employer Organization" (PEO) contracts with client employers to perform administrative functions such as payroll, benefits, regulatory paperwork, and updating employment policies. The determination of whether a PEO is a joint employer also turns on the economic realities of the situation and must be based upon all the facts and circumstances. A PEO does not enter into a joint employment relationship with the employees of its client companies when it merely performs such administrative functions. On the other hand, if in a particular fact situation, a PEO has the right to hire,

fire, assign, or direct and control the client's employees, or benefits from the work that the employees perform, such rights may lead to a determination that the PEO would be a joint employer with the client employer, depending upon all the facts and circumstances.

(c) In joint employment relationships, only the primary employer is responsible for giving required notices to its employees, providing FMLA leave, and maintenance of health benefits. Factors considered in determining which is the "primary" employer include authority/responsibility to hire and fire, assign/place the employee, make payroll, and provide employment benefits. For employees of temporary placement agencies, for example, the placement agency most commonly would be the primary employer. Where a PEO is a joint employer, the client employer most commonly would be the primary employer.

(d) Employees jointly employed by two employers must be counted by both employers, whether or not maintained on one of the employer's payroll, in determining employer coverage and employee eligibility. For example, an employer who jointly employs 15 workers from a temporary placement agency and 40 permanent workers is covered by FMLA. (A special rule applies to employees jointly employed who physically work at a facility of the secondary employer for a period of at least one year. *See* § 825.111(a)(3).) An employee on leave who is working for a secondary employer is considered employed by the secondary employer, and must be counted for coverage and eligibility purposes, as long as the employer has a reasonable expectation that that employee will return to employment with that employer. In those cases in which a PEO is determined to be a joint employer of a client employer's employees, the client employer would only be required to count employees of the PEO (or employees of other clients of the PEO) if the client employer jointly employed those employees.

(e) Job restoration is the primary responsibility of the primary employer. The secondary employer is responsible for accepting the employee returning from FMLA leave in place of the replacement employee if the secondary employer continues to utilize an employee from the temporary placement agency, and the agency chooses to place the employee with the secondary employer. A secondary employer is also responsible for compliance with the prohibited acts provisions with respect to its jointly employed employees, whether or not the secondary employer

is covered by FMLA. *See* § 825.220(a). The prohibited acts include prohibitions against interfering with an employee's attempt to exercise rights under the Act, or discharging or discriminating against an employee for opposing a practice which is unlawful under FMLA. A covered secondary employer will be responsible for compliance with all the provisions of the FMLA with respect to its regular, permanent workforce.

§ 825.107 Successor in interest coverage.

(a) For purposes of FMLA, in determining whether an employer is covered because it is a "successor in interest" to a covered employer, the factors used under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act and the Vietnam Era Veterans' Adjustment Act will be considered. However, unlike Title VII, whether the successor has notice of the employee's claim is not a consideration. Notice may be relevant, however, in determining successor liability for violations of the predecessor. The factors to be considered include:

- (1) Substantial continuity of the same business operations;
- (2) Use of the same plant;
- (3) Continuity of the work force;
- (4) Similarity of jobs and working conditions;
- (5) Similarity of supervisory personnel;
- (6) Similarity in machinery, equipment, and production methods;
- (7) Similarity of products or services; and
- (8) The ability of the predecessor to provide relief.

(b) A determination of whether or not a "successor in interest" exists is not determined by the application of any single criterion, but rather the entire circumstances are to be viewed in their totality.

(c) When an employer is a "successor in interest," employees' entitlements are the same as if the employment by the predecessor and successor were continuous employment by a single employer. For example, the successor, whether or not it meets FMLA coverage criteria, must grant leave for eligible employees who had provided appropriate notice to the predecessor, or continue leave begun while employed by the predecessor, including maintenance of group health benefits during the leave and job restoration at the conclusion of the leave. A successor which meets FMLA's coverage criteria must count periods of employment and hours worked for the predecessor for purposes of determining employee eligibility for FMLA leave.

§ 825.108 Public agency coverage.

(a) An "employer" under FMLA includes any "public agency," as defined in section 3(x) of the Fair Labor Standards Act, 29 U.S.C. 203(x). Section 3(x) of the FLSA defines "public agency" as the government of the United States; the government of a State or political subdivision of a State; or an agency of the United States, a State, or a political subdivision of a State, or any interstate governmental agency. "State" is further defined in Section 3(c) of the FLSA to include any State of the United States, the District of Columbia, or any Territory or possession of the United States.

(b) The determination of whether an entity is a "public" agency, as distinguished from a private employer, is determined by whether the agency has taxing authority, or whether the chief administrative officer or board, *etc.*, is elected by the voters-at-large or their appointment is subject to approval by an elected official.

(c)(1) A State or a political subdivision of a State constitutes a single public agency and, therefore, a single employer for purposes of determining employee eligibility. For example, a State is a single employer; a county is a single employer; a city or town is a single employer. Whether two agencies of the same State or local government constitute the same public agency can only be determined on a case-by-case basis. One factor that would support a conclusion that two agencies are separate is whether they are treated separately for statistical purposes in the Census of Governments issued by the Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce.

(2) The Census Bureau takes a census of governments at 5-year intervals. Volume I, Government Organization, contains the official counts of the number of State and local governments. It includes tabulations of governments by State, type of government, size, and county location. Also produced is a universe list of governmental units, classified according to type of government. Copies of Volume I, Government Organization, and subsequent volumes are available from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402, U.S. Department of Commerce District Offices, or can be found in Regional and selective depository libraries, or online at <http://www.census.gov/govs/www/index.html>. For a list of all depository libraries, write to the Government Printing Office, 710 N. Capitol St., NW., Washington, DC 20402.

(d) All public agencies are covered by the FMLA regardless of the number of employees; they are not subject to the coverage threshold of 50 employees carried on the payroll each day for 20 or more weeks in a year. However, employees of public agencies must meet all of the requirements of eligibility, including the requirement that the employer (*e.g.*, State) employ 50 employees at the worksite or within 75 miles.

§ 825.109 Federal agency coverage.

(a) Most employees of the government of the United States, if they are covered by the FMLA, are covered under Title II of the FMLA (incorporated in Title V, Chapter 63, Subchapter 5 of the United States Code) which is administered by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM). OPM has separate regulations at 5 CFR part 630, Subpart L. Employees of the Government Printing Office are covered by Title II. While employees of the Government Accountability Office and the Library of Congress are covered by Title I of the FMLA, the Comptroller General of the United States and the Librarian of Congress, respectively, have responsibility for the administration of the FMLA with respect to these employees. Other legislative branch employees, such as employees of the Senate and House of Representatives, are covered by the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995, 2 U.S.C. 1301.

(b) The Federal Executive Branch employees within the jurisdiction of this part 825 include:

(1) Employees of the Postal Service;
(2) Employees of the Postal Regulatory Commission;

(3) A part-time employee who does not have an established regular tour of duty during the administrative workweek; and,

(4) An employee serving under an intermittent appointment or temporary appointment with a time limitation of one year or less.

(c) Employees of other Federal executive agencies are also covered by this part 825 if they are not covered by Title II of FMLA.

(d) Employees of the judicial branch of the United States are covered by these regulations only if they are employed in a unit which has employees in the competitive service. For example, employees of the U.S. Tax Court are covered by this part 825.

(e) For employees covered by these regulations, the U.S. Government constitutes a single employer for purposes of determining employee eligibility. These employees must meet

all of the requirements for eligibility, including the requirement that the Federal Government employ 50 employees at the worksite or within 75 miles.

§ 825.110 Eligible employee.

(a) An "eligible employee" is an employee of a covered employer who:

(1) Has been employed by the employer for at least 12 months, and
(2) Has been employed for at least 1,250 hours of service during the 12-month period immediately preceding the commencement of the leave, and

(3) Is employed at a worksite where 50 or more employees are employed by the employer within 75 miles of that worksite. (*See* § 825.105(b) regarding employees who work outside the U.S.)

(b) The 12 months an employee must have been employed by the employer need not be consecutive months, *provided*

(1) Subject to the exceptions provided in paragraph (b)(2) of this section, employment periods prior to a break in service of seven years or more need not be counted in determining whether the employee has been employed by the employer for at least 12 months.

(2) Employment periods preceding a break in service of more than seven years must be counted in determining whether the employee has been employed by the employer for at least 12 months where:

(i) The employee's break in service is occasioned by the fulfillment of his or her National Guard or Reserve military service obligation. The time served performing the military service must be also counted in determining whether the employee has been employed for at least 12 months by the employer. However, this section does not provide any greater entitlement to the employee than would be available under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA), 38 U.S.C. 4301, *et seq.*; or

(ii) A written agreement, including a collective bargaining agreement, exists concerning the employer's intention to rehire the employee after the break in service (*e.g.*, for purposes of the employee furthering his or her education or for childrearing purposes).

(3) If an employee is maintained on the payroll for any part of a week, including any periods of paid or unpaid leave (sick, vacation) during which other benefits or compensation are provided by the employer (*e.g.*, workers' compensation, group health plan benefits, *etc.*), the week counts as a week of employment. For purposes of determining whether intermittent/occasional/casual employment qualifies

as "at least 12 months," 52 weeks is deemed to be equal to 12 months.

(4) Nothing in this section prevents employers from considering employment prior to a continuous break in service of more than seven years when determining whether an employee has met the 12-month employment requirement. However, if an employer chooses to recognize such prior employment, the employer must do so uniformly, with respect to all employees with similar breaks in service.

(c)(1) Except as provided in paragraph (c)(2) of this section, whether an employee has worked the minimum 1,250 hours of service is determined according to the principles established under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) for determining compensable hours of work. (See 29 CFR part 785). The determining factor is the number of hours an employee has worked for the employer within the meaning of the FLSA. The determination is not limited by methods of recordkeeping, or by compensation agreements that do not accurately reflect all of the hours an employee has worked for or been in service to the employer. Any accurate accounting of actual hours worked under FLSA's principles may be used.

(2) Pursuant to USERRA, an employee returning from fulfilling his or her National Guard or Reserve military obligation shall be credited with the hours of service that would have been performed *but for* the period of military service in determining whether the employee worked the 1,250 hours of service. Accordingly, a person reemployed following military service has the hours that would have been worked for the employer added to any hours actually worked during the previous 12-month period to meet the 1,250 hour requirement. In order to determine the hours that would have been worked during the period of military service, the employee's pre-service work schedule can generally be used for calculations.

(3) In the event an employer does not maintain an accurate record of hours worked by an employee, including for employees who are exempt from FLSA's requirement that a record be kept of their hours worked (e.g., bona fide executive, administrative, and professional employees as defined in FLSA Regulations, 29 CFR part 541), the employer has the burden of showing that the employee has not worked the requisite hours. An employer must be able to clearly demonstrate, for example, that full-time teachers (see § 825.300 for definition) of an elementary or secondary school system, or institution of higher education, or other

educational establishment or institution (who often work outside the classroom or at their homes) did not work 1,250 hours during the previous 12 months in order to claim that the teachers are not eligible for FMLA leave.

(d) The determination of whether an employee has worked for the employer for at least 1,250 hours in the past 12 months and has been employed by the employer for a total of at least 12 months must be made as of the date the FMLA leave is to start. An employee may be on "non-FMLA leave" at the time he or she meets the eligibility requirements, and in that event, any portion of the leave taken for an FMLA-qualifying reason after the employee meets the eligibility requirement would be "FMLA leave." (See § 825.300(b) for rules governing the content of the eligibility notice given to employees.)

(e) Whether 50 employees are employed within 75 miles to ascertain an employee's eligibility for FMLA benefits is determined when the employee gives notice of the need for leave. Whether the leave is to be taken at one time or on an intermittent or reduced leave schedule basis, once an employee is determined eligible in response to that notice of the need for leave, the employee's eligibility is not affected by any subsequent change in the number of employees employed at or within 75 miles of the employee's worksite, for that specific notice of the need for leave. Similarly, an employer may not terminate employee leave that has already started if the employee-count drops below 50. For example, if an employer employs 60 employees in August, but expects that the number of employees will drop to 40 in December, the employer must grant FMLA benefits to an otherwise eligible employee who gives notice of the need for leave in August for a period of leave to begin in December.

§ 825.111 Determining whether 50 employees are employed within 75 miles.

(a) Generally, a worksite can refer to either a single location or a group of contiguous locations. Structures which form a campus or industrial park, or separate facilities in proximity with one another, may be considered a single site of employment. On the other hand, there may be several single sites of employment within a single building, such as an office building, if separate employers conduct activities within the building. For example, an office building with 50 different businesses as tenants will contain 50 sites of employment. The offices of each employer will be considered separate sites of employment for purposes of

FMLA. An employee's worksite under FMLA will ordinarily be the site the employee reports to or, if none, from which the employee's work is assigned.

(1) Separate buildings or areas which are not directly connected or in immediate proximity are a single worksite if they are in reasonable geographic proximity, are used for the same purpose, and share the same staff and equipment. For example, if an employer manages a number of warehouses in a metropolitan area but regularly shifts or rotates the same employees from one building to another, the multiple warehouses would be a single worksite.

(2) For employees with no fixed worksite, e.g., construction workers, transportation workers (e.g., truck drivers, seamen, pilots), salespersons, etc., the "worksite" is the site to which they are assigned as their home base, from which their work is assigned, or to which they report. For example, if a construction company headquartered in New Jersey opened a construction site in Ohio, and set up a mobile trailer on the construction site as the company's on-site office, the construction site in Ohio would be the worksite for any employees hired locally who report to the mobile trailer/company office daily for work assignments, etc. If that construction company also sent personnel such as job superintendents, foremen, engineers, an office manager, etc., from New Jersey to the job site in Ohio, those workers sent from New Jersey continue to have the headquarters in New Jersey as their "worksite." The workers who have New Jersey as their worksite would not be counted in determining eligibility of employees whose home base is the Ohio worksite, but would be counted in determining eligibility of employees whose home base is New Jersey. For transportation employees, their worksite is the terminal to which they are assigned, report for work, depart, and return after completion of a work assignment. For example, an airline pilot may work for an airline with headquarters in New York, but the pilot regularly reports for duty and originates or begins flights from the company's facilities located in an airport in Chicago and returns to Chicago at the completion of one or more flights to go off duty. The pilot's worksite is the facility in Chicago. An employee's personal residence is not a worksite in the case of employees, such as salespersons, who travel a sales territory and who generally leave to work and return from work to their personal residence, or employees who work at home, as under the concept of flexiplace or telecommuting. Rather,

their worksite is the office to which they report and from which assignments are made.

(3) For purposes of determining that employee's eligibility, when an employee is jointly employed by two or more employers (see § 825.106), the employee's worksite is the primary employer's office from which the employee is assigned or reports, unless the employee has physically worked for at least one year at a facility of a secondary employer, in which case the employee's worksite is that location. The employee is also counted by the secondary employer to determine eligibility for the secondary employer's full-time or permanent employees.

(b) The 75-mile distance is measured by surface miles, using surface transportation over public streets, roads, highways and waterways, by the shortest route from the facility where the employee needing leave is employed. Absent available surface transportation between worksites, the distance is measured by using the most frequently utilized mode of transportation (e.g., airline miles).

(c) The determination of how many employees are employed within 75 miles of the worksite of an employee is based on the number of employees maintained on the payroll. Employees of educational institutions who are employed permanently or who are under contract are "maintained on the payroll" during any portion of the year when school is not in session. See § 825.105(c).

§ 825.112 Qualifying reasons for leave, general rule.

(a) *Circumstances qualifying for leave.* Employers covered by FMLA are required to grant leave to eligible employees:

(1) For birth of a son or daughter, and to care for the newborn child (see § 825.120);

(2) For placement with the employee of a son or daughter for adoption or foster care (see § 825.121);

(3) To care for the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent with a serious health condition (see §§ 825.113 and 825.122);

(4) Because of a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the functions of the employee's job (see §§ 825.113 and 825.123);

(5) Because of any qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent is a covered military member on active duty (or has been notified of an impending call or order to active duty)

in support of a contingency operation (see §§ 825.122 and 825.126); and

(6) To care for a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness if the employee is the spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin of the servicemember (see §§ 825.122 and 825.127).

(b) *Equal application.* The right to take leave under FMLA applies equally to male and female employees. A father, as well as a mother, can take family leave for the birth, placement for adoption, or foster care of a child.

(c) *Active employee.* In situations where the employer/employee relationship has been interrupted, such as an employee who has been on layoff, the employee must be recalled or otherwise be re-employed before being eligible for FMLA leave. Under such circumstances, an eligible employee is immediately entitled to further FMLA leave for a qualifying reason.

§ 825.113 Serious health condition.

(a) For purposes of FMLA, "serious health condition" entitling an employee to FMLA leave means an illness, injury, impairment or physical or mental condition that involves inpatient care as defined in § 825.114 or continuing treatment by a health care provider as defined in § 825.115.

(b) The term "incapacity" means inability to work, attend school or perform other regular daily activities due to the serious health condition, treatment therefore, or recovery therefrom.

(c) The term "treatment" includes (but is not limited to) examinations to determine if a serious health condition exists and evaluations of the condition. Treatment does not include routine physical examinations, eye examinations, or dental examinations. A regimen of continuing treatment includes, for example, a course of prescription medication (e.g., an antibiotic) or therapy requiring special equipment to resolve or alleviate the health condition (e.g., oxygen). A regimen of continuing treatment that includes the taking of over-the-counter medications such as aspirin, antihistamines, or salves; or bed-rest, drinking fluids, exercise, and other similar activities that can be initiated without a visit to a health care provider, is not, by itself, sufficient to constitute a regimen of continuing treatment for purposes of FMLA leave.

(d) Conditions for which cosmetic treatments are administered (such as most treatments for acne or plastic surgery) are not "serious health conditions" unless inpatient hospital care is required or unless complications

develop. Ordinarily, unless complications arise, the common cold, the flu, ear aches, upset stomach, minor ulcers, headaches other than migraine, routine dental or orthodontia problems, periodontal disease, etc., are examples of conditions that do not meet the definition of a serious health condition and do not qualify for FMLA leave. Restorative dental or plastic surgery after an injury or removal of cancerous growths are serious health conditions provided all the other conditions of this regulation are met. Mental illness or allergies may be serious health conditions, but only if all the conditions of this section are met.

§ 825.114 Inpatient care.

Inpatient care means an overnight stay in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical care facility, including any period of incapacity as defined in § 825.113(b), or any subsequent treatment in connection with such inpatient care.

§ 825.115 Continuing treatment.

A serious health condition involving continuing treatment by a health care provider includes any one or more of the following:

(a) *Incapacity and treatment.* A period of incapacity of more than three consecutive, full calendar days, and any subsequent treatment or period of incapacity relating to the same condition, that also involves:

(1) Treatment two or more times, within 30 days of the first day of incapacity, unless extenuating circumstances exist, by a health care provider, by a nurse under direct supervision of a health care provider, or by a provider of health care services (e.g., physical therapist) under orders of, or on referral by, a health care provider; or

(2) Treatment by a health care provider on at least one occasion, which results in a regimen of continuing treatment under the supervision of the health care provider.

(3) The requirement in paragraphs (a)(1) and (2) of this section for treatment by a health care provider means an in-person visit to a health care provider. The first (or only) in-person treatment visit must take place within seven days of the first day of incapacity.

(4) Whether additional treatment visits or a regimen of continuing treatment is necessary within the 30-day period shall be determined by the health care provider.

(5) The term "extenuating circumstances" in paragraph (a)(1) of this section means circumstances beyond the employee's control that

prevent the follow-up visit from occurring as planned by the health care provider. Whether a given set of circumstances are extenuating depends on the facts. For example, extenuating circumstances exist if a health care provider determines that a second in-person visit is needed within the 30-day period, but the health care provider does not have any available appointments during that time period.

(b) *Pregnancy or prenatal care.* Any period of incapacity due to pregnancy, or for prenatal care. *See also* § 825.120.

(c) *Chronic conditions.* Any period of incapacity or treatment for such incapacity due to a chronic serious health condition. A chronic serious health condition is one which:

(1) Requires periodic visits (defined as at least twice a year) for treatment by a health care provider, or by a nurse under direct supervision of a health care provider;

(2) Continues over an extended period of time (including recurring episodes of a single underlying condition); and

(3) May cause episodic rather than a continuing period of incapacity (e.g., asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, etc.).

(d) *Permanent or long-term conditions.* A period of incapacity which is permanent or long-term due to a condition for which treatment may not be effective. The employee or family member must be under the continuing supervision of, but need not be receiving active treatment by, a health care provider. Examples include Alzheimer's, a severe stroke, or the terminal stages of a disease.

(e) *Conditions requiring multiple treatments.* Any period of absence to receive multiple treatments (including any period of recovery therefrom) by a health care provider or by a provider of health care services under orders of, or on referral by, a health care provider, for:

(1) Restorative surgery after an accident or other injury; or

(2) A condition that would likely result in a period of incapacity of more than three consecutive, full calendar days in the absence of medical intervention or treatment, such as cancer (chemotherapy, radiation, etc.), severe arthritis (physical therapy), or kidney disease (dialysis).

(f) Absences attributable to incapacity under paragraph (b) or (c) of this section qualify for FMLA leave even though the employee or the covered family member does not receive treatment from a health care provider during the absence, and even if the absence does not last more than three consecutive, full calendar days. For example, an employee with asthma may be unable to report for work

due to the onset of an asthma attack or because the employee's health care provider has advised the employee to stay home when the pollen count exceeds a certain level. An employee who is pregnant may be unable to report to work because of severe morning sickness.

§ 825.116 [Reserved]

§ 825.117 [Reserved]

§ 825.118 [Reserved]

§ 825.119 **Leave for treatment of substance abuse.**

(a) Substance abuse may be a serious health condition if the conditions of §§ 825.113 through 825.115 are met. However, FMLA leave may only be taken for treatment for substance abuse by a health care provider or by a provider of health care services on referral by a health care provider. On the other hand, absence because of the employee's use of the substance, rather than for treatment, does not qualify for FMLA leave.

(b) Treatment for substance abuse does not prevent an employer from taking employment action against an employee. The employer may not take action against the employee because the employee has exercised his or her right to take FMLA leave for treatment. However, if the employer has an established policy, applied in a non-discriminatory manner that has been communicated to all employees, that provides under certain circumstances an employee may be terminated for substance abuse, pursuant to that policy the employee may be terminated whether or not the employee is presently taking FMLA leave. An employee may also take FMLA leave to care for a covered family member who is receiving treatment for substance abuse. The employer may not take action against an employee who is providing care for a covered family member receiving treatment for substance abuse.

§ 825.120 **Leave for pregnancy or birth.**

(a) *General rules.* Eligible employees are entitled to FMLA leave for pregnancy or birth of a child as follows:

(1) Both the mother and father are entitled to FMLA leave for the birth of their child.

(2) Both the mother and father are entitled to FMLA leave to be with the healthy newborn child (i.e., bonding time) during the 12-month period beginning on the date of birth. An employee's entitlement to FMLA leave for a birth expires at the end of the 12-month period beginning on the date of

the birth. If state law allows, or the employer permits, bonding leave to be taken beyond this period, such leave will not qualify as FMLA leave. *See* § 825.701 regarding non-FMLA leave which may be available under applicable State laws. Under this section, both the mother and father are entitled to FMLA leave even if the newborn does not have a serious health condition.

(3) A husband and wife who are eligible for FMLA leave and are employed by the same covered employer may be limited to a combined total of 12 weeks of leave during any 12-month period if the leave is taken for birth of the employee's son or daughter or to care for the child after birth, for placement of a son or daughter with the employee for adoption or foster care or to care for the child after placement, or to care for the employee's parent with a serious health condition. This limitation on the total weeks of leave applies to leave taken for the reasons specified as long as a husband and wife are employed by the "same employer." It would apply, for example, even though the spouses are employed at two different worksites of an employer located more than 75 miles from each other, or by two different operating divisions of the same company. On the other hand, if one spouse is ineligible for FMLA leave, the other spouse would be entitled to a full 12 weeks of FMLA leave. Where the husband and wife both use a portion of the total 12-week FMLA leave entitlement for either the birth of a child, for placement for adoption or foster care, or to care for a parent, the husband and wife would each be entitled to the difference between the amount he or she has taken individually and 12 weeks for FMLA leave for other purposes. For example, if each spouse took 6 weeks of leave to care for a healthy, newborn child, each could use an additional 6 weeks due to his or her own serious health condition or to care for a child with a serious health condition. Note, too, that many State pregnancy disability laws specify a period of disability either before or after the birth of a child; such periods would also be considered FMLA leave for a serious health condition of the mother, and would not be subject to the combined limit.

(4) The mother is entitled to FMLA leave for incapacity due to pregnancy, for prenatal care, or for her own serious health condition following the birth of the child. Circumstances may require that FMLA leave begin before the actual date of birth of a child. An expectant mother may take FMLA leave before the birth of the child for prenatal care or if

her condition makes her unable to work. The mother is entitled to leave for incapacity due to pregnancy even though she does not receive treatment from a health care provider during the absence, and even if the absence does not last for more than three consecutive calendar days. For example, a pregnant employee may be unable to report to work because of severe morning sickness.

(5) The husband is entitled to FMLA leave if needed to care for his pregnant spouse who is incapacitated or if needed to care for her during her prenatal care, or if needed to care for the spouse following the birth of a child if the spouse has a serious health condition. *See* § 825.124.

(6) Both the mother and father are entitled to FMLA leave if needed to care for a child with a serious health condition if the requirements of §§ 825.113 through 825.115 and 825.122(c) are met. Thus, a husband and wife may each take 12 weeks of FMLA leave if needed to care for their newborn child with a serious health condition, even if both are employed by the same employer, provided they have not exhausted their entitlements during the applicable 12-month FMLA leave period.

(b) *Intermittent and reduced schedule leave.* An eligible employee may use intermittent or reduced schedule leave after the birth to be with a healthy newborn child only if the employer agrees. For example, an employer and employee may agree to a part-time work schedule after the birth. If the employer agrees to permit intermittent or reduced schedule leave for the birth of a child, the employer may require the employee to transfer temporarily, during the period the intermittent or reduced leave schedule is required, to an available alternative position for which the employee is qualified and which better accommodates recurring periods of leave than does the employee's regular position. Transfer to an alternative position may require compliance with any applicable collective bargaining agreement, federal law (such as the Americans with Disabilities Act), and State law. Transfer to an alternative position may include altering an existing job to better accommodate the employee's need for intermittent or reduced leave. The employer's agreement is not required for intermittent leave required by the serious health condition of the mother or newborn child. *See* §§ 825.202 through 825.205 for general rules governing the use of intermittent and reduced schedule leave. *See* § 825.121 for rules governing leave for adoption or

foster care. *See* § 825.601 for special rules applicable to instructional employees of schools.

§ 825.121 Leave for adoption or foster care.

(a) *General rules.* Eligible employees are entitled to FMLA leave for placement with the employee of a son or daughter for adoption or foster care as follows:

(1) Employees may take FMLA leave before the actual placement or adoption of a child if an absence from work is required for the placement for adoption or foster care to proceed. For example, the employee may be required to attend counseling sessions, appear in court, consult with his or her attorney or the doctor(s) representing the birth parent, submit to a physical examination, or travel to another country to complete an adoption. The source of an adopted child (e.g., whether from a licensed placement agency or otherwise) is not a factor in determining eligibility for leave for this purpose.

(2) An employee's entitlement to leave for adoption or foster care expires at the end of the 12-month period beginning on the date of the placement. If state law allows, or the employer permits, leave for adoption or foster care to be taken beyond this period, such leave will not qualify as FMLA leave. *See* § 825.701 regarding non-FMLA leave which may be available under applicable State laws. Under this section, the employee is entitled to FMLA leave even if the adopted or foster child does not have a serious health condition.

(3) A husband and wife who are eligible for FMLA leave and are employed by the same covered employer may be limited to a combined total of 12 weeks of leave during any 12-month period if the leave is taken for the placement of the employee's son or daughter or to care for the child after placement, for the birth of the employee's son or daughter or to care for the child after birth, or to care for the employee's parent with a serious health condition. This limitation on the total weeks of leave applies to leave taken for the reasons specified as long as a husband and wife are employed by the "same employer." It would apply, for example, even though the spouses are employed at two different worksites of an employer located more than 75 miles from each other, or by two different operating divisions of the same company. On the other hand, if one spouse is ineligible for FMLA leave, the other spouse would be entitled to a full 12 weeks of FMLA leave. Where the husband and wife both use a portion of

the total 12-week FMLA leave entitlement for either the birth of a child, for placement for adoption or foster care, or to care for a parent, the husband and wife would each be entitled to the difference between the amount he or she has taken individually and 12 weeks for FMLA leave for other purposes. For example, if each spouse took 6 weeks of leave to care for a healthy, newly placed child, each could use an additional 6 weeks due to his or her own serious health condition or to care for a child with a serious health condition.

(4) An eligible employee is entitled to FMLA leave in order to care for an adopted or foster child with a serious health condition if the requirements of §§ 825.113 through 825.115 and 825.122(c) are met. Thus, a husband and wife may each take 12 weeks of FMLA leave if needed to care for an adopted or foster child with a serious health condition, even if both are employed by the same employer, provided they have not exhausted their entitlements during the applicable 12-month FMLA leave period.

(b) *Use of intermittent and reduced schedule leave.* An eligible employee may use intermittent or reduced schedule leave after the placement of a healthy child for adoption or foster care only if the employer agrees. Thus, for example, the employer and employee may agree to a part-time work schedule after the placement for bonding purposes. If the employer agrees to permit intermittent or reduced schedule leave for the placement for adoption or foster care, the employer may require the employee to transfer temporarily, during the period the intermittent or reduced leave schedule is required, to an available alternative position for which the employee is qualified and which better accommodates recurring periods of leave than does the employee's regular position. Transfer to an alternative position may require compliance with any applicable collective bargaining agreement, federal law (such as the Americans with Disabilities Act), and State law. Transfer to an alternative position may include altering an existing job to better accommodate the employee's need for intermittent or reduced leave. The employer's agreement is not required for intermittent leave required by the serious health condition of the adopted or foster child. *See* §§ 825.202 through 825.205 for general rules governing the use of intermittent and reduced schedule leave. *See* § 825.120 for general rules governing leave for pregnancy and birth of a child. *See*

§ 825.601 for special rules applicable to instructional employees of schools.

§ 825.122 Definitions of spouse, parent, son or daughter, next of kin of a covered servicemember, adoption, foster care, son or daughter on active duty or call to active duty status, son or daughter of a covered servicemember, and parent of a covered servicemember.

(a) *Spouse.* Spouse means a husband or wife as defined or recognized under State law for purposes of marriage in the State where the employee resides, including common law marriage in States where it is recognized.

(b) *Parent.* Parent means a biological, adoptive, step or foster father or mother, or any other individual who stood in loco parentis to the employee when the employee was a son or daughter as defined in paragraph (c) of this section. This term does not include parents "in law."

(c) *Son or daughter.* For purposes of FMLA leave taken for birth or adoption, or to care for a family member with a serious health condition, son or daughter means a biological, adopted, or foster child, a stepchild, a legal ward, or a child of a person standing in loco parentis, who is either under age 18, or age 18 or older and "incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability" at the time that FMLA leave is to commence.

(1) "Incapable of self-care" means that the individual requires active assistance or supervision to provide daily self-care in three or more of the "activities of daily living" (ADLs) or "instrumental activities of daily living" (IADLs). Activities of daily living include adaptive activities such as caring appropriately for one's grooming and hygiene, bathing, dressing and eating. Instrumental activities of daily living include cooking, cleaning, shopping, taking public transportation, paying bills, maintaining a residence, using telephones and directories, using a post office, *etc.*

(2) "Physical or mental disability" means a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of an individual. Regulations at 29 CFR 1630.2(h), (i), and (j), issued by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), 42 U.S.C. 12101 *et seq.*, define these terms.

(3) Persons who are "in loco parentis" include those with day-to-day responsibilities to care for and financially support a child, or, in the case of an employee, who had such responsibility for the employee when the employee was a child. A biological or legal relationship is not necessary.

(d) *Next of kin of a covered servicemember.* "Next of kin of a covered servicemember" means the nearest blood relative other than the covered servicemember's spouse, parent, son, or daughter, in the following order of priority: Blood relatives who have been granted legal custody of the covered servicemember by court decree or statutory provisions, brothers and sisters, grandparents, aunts and uncles, and first cousins, unless the covered servicemember has specifically designated in writing another blood relative as his or her nearest blood relative for purposes of military caregiver leave under the FMLA. When no such designation is made, and there are multiple family members with the same level of relationship to the covered servicemember, all such family members shall be considered the covered servicemember's next of kin and may take FMLA leave to provide care to the covered servicemember, either consecutively or simultaneously. When such designation has been made, the designated individual shall be deemed to be the covered servicemember's only next of kin. *See* § 825.127(b)(3).

(e) *Adoption.* "Adoption" means legally and permanently assuming the responsibility of raising a child as one's own. The source of an adopted child (*e.g.*, whether from a licensed placement agency or otherwise) is not a factor in determining eligibility for FMLA leave. *See* § 825.121 for rules governing leave for adoption.

(f) *Foster care.* Foster care is 24-hour care for children in substitution for, and away from, their parents or guardian. Such placement is made by or with the agreement of the State as a result of a voluntary agreement between the parent or guardian that the child be removed from the home, or pursuant to a judicial determination of the necessity for foster care, and involves agreement between the State and foster family that the foster family will take care of the child. Although foster care may be with relatives of the child, State action is involved in the removal of the child from parental custody. *See* § 825.121 for rules governing leave for foster care.

(g) *Son or daughter on active duty or call to active duty status.* "Son or daughter on active duty or call to active duty status" means the employee's biological, adopted, or foster child, stepchild, legal ward, or a child for whom the employee stood in loco parentis, who is on active duty or call to active duty status, and who is of any age. *See* § 825.126(b)(1).

(h) *Son or daughter of a covered servicemember.* "Son or daughter of a

covered servicemember" means the servicemember's biological, adopted, or foster child, stepchild, legal ward, or a child for whom the servicemember stood in loco parentis, and who is of any age. *See* § 825.127(b)(1).

(i) *Parent of a covered servicemember.* "Parent of a covered servicemember" means a covered servicemember's biological, adoptive, step or foster father or mother, or any other individual who stood in loco parentis to the covered servicemember. This term does not include parents "in law." *See* § 825.127(b)(2).

(j) *Documenting relationships.* For purposes of confirmation of family relationship, the employer may require the employee giving notice of the need for leave to provide reasonable documentation or statement of family relationship. This documentation may take the form of a simple statement from the employee, or a child's birth certificate, a court document, *etc.* The employer is entitled to examine documentation such as a birth certificate, *etc.*, but the employee is entitled to the return of the official document submitted for this purpose.

§ 825.123 Unable to perform the functions of the position.

(a) *Definition.* An employee is "unable to perform the functions of the position" where the health care provider finds that the employee is unable to work at all or is unable to perform any one of the essential functions of the employee's position within the meaning of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as amended, 42 U.S.C. 12101 *et seq.*, and the regulations at 29 CFR 1630.2(n). An employee who must be absent from work to receive medical treatment for a serious health condition is considered to be unable to perform the essential functions of the position during the absence for treatment.

(b) *Statement of functions.* An employer has the option, in requiring certification from a health care provider, to provide a statement of the essential functions of the employee's position for the health care provider to review. A sufficient medical certification must specify what functions of the employee's position the employee is unable to perform so that the employer can then determine whether the employee is unable to perform one or more essential functions of the employee's position. For purposes of FMLA, the essential functions of the employee's position are to be determined with reference to the position the employee held at the time

notice is given or leave commenced, whichever is earlier. See § 825.306.

§ 825.124 Needed to care for a family member or covered servicemember.

(a) The medical certification provision that an employee is “needed to care for” a family member or covered servicemember encompasses both physical and psychological care. It includes situations where, for example, because of a serious health condition, the family member is unable to care for his or her own basic medical, hygienic, or nutritional needs or safety, or is unable to transport himself or herself to the doctor. The term also includes providing psychological comfort and reassurance which would be beneficial to a child, spouse or parent with a serious health condition who is receiving inpatient or home care.

(b) The term also includes situations where the employee may be needed to substitute for others who normally care for the family member or covered servicemember, or to make arrangements for changes in care, such as transfer to a nursing home. The employee need not be the only individual or family member available to care for the family member or covered servicemember.

(c) An employee’s intermittent leave or a reduced leave schedule necessary to care for a family member or covered servicemember includes not only a situation where the condition of the family member or covered servicemember itself is intermittent, but also where the employee is only needed intermittently—such as where other care is normally available, or care responsibilities are shared with another member of the family or a third party. See §§ 825.202 through 825.205 for rules governing the use of intermittent or reduced schedule leave.

§ 825.125 Definition of health care provider.

(a) The Act defines “health care provider” as:

(1) A doctor of medicine or osteopathy who is authorized to practice medicine or surgery (as appropriate) by the State in which the doctor practices; or

(2) Any other person determined by the Secretary to be capable of providing health care services.

(b) Others “capable of providing health care services” include only:

(1) Podiatrists, dentists, clinical psychologists, optometrists, and chiropractors (limited to treatment consisting of manual manipulation of the spine to correct a subluxation as demonstrated by X-ray to exist)

authorized to practice in the State and performing within the scope of their practice as defined under State law;

(2) Nurse practitioners, nurse-midwives, clinical social workers and physician assistants who are authorized to practice under State law and who are performing within the scope of their practice as defined under State law;

(3) Christian Science Practitioners listed with the First Church of Christ, Scientist in Boston, Massachusetts. Where an employee or family member is receiving treatment from a Christian Science practitioner, an employee may not object to any requirement from an employer that the employee or family member submit to examination (though not treatment) to obtain a second or third certification from a health care provider other than a Christian Science practitioner except as otherwise provided under applicable State or local law or collective bargaining agreement;

(4) Any health care provider from whom an employer or the employer’s group health plan’s benefits manager will accept certification of the existence of a serious health condition to substantiate a claim for benefits; and

(5) A health care provider listed above who practices in a country other than the United States, who is authorized to practice in accordance with the law of that country, and who is performing within the scope of his or her practice as defined under such law.

(c) The phrase “authorized to practice in the State” as used in this section means that the provider must be authorized to diagnose and treat physical or mental health conditions.

§ 825.126 Leave because of a qualifying exigency.

(a) Eligible employees may take FMLA leave while the employee’s spouse, son, daughter, or parent (the “covered military member”) is on active duty or call to active duty status as defined in § 825.126(b)(2) for one or more of the following qualifying exigencies:

(1) *Short-notice deployment.*

(i) To address any issue that arises from the fact that a covered military member is notified of an impending call or order to active duty in support of a contingency operation seven or less calendar days prior to the date of deployment;

(ii) Leave taken for this purpose can be used for a period of seven calendar days beginning on the date a covered military member is notified of an impending call or order to active duty in support of a contingency operation;

(2) *Military events and related activities.*

(i) To attend any official ceremony, program, or event sponsored by the military that is related to the active duty or call to active duty status of a covered military member; and

(ii) To attend family support or assistance programs and informational briefings sponsored or promoted by the military, military service organizations, or the American Red Cross that are related to the active duty or call to active duty status of a covered military member;

(3) *Childcare and school activities.*

(i) To arrange for alternative childcare when the active duty or call to active duty status of a covered military member necessitates a change in the existing childcare arrangement for a biological, adopted, or foster child, a stepchild, or a legal ward of a covered military member, or a child for whom a covered military member stands in loco parentis, who is either under age 18, or age 18 or older and incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability at the time that FMLA leave is to commence;

(ii) To provide childcare on an urgent, immediate need basis (but not on a routine, regular, or everyday basis) when the need to provide such care arises from the active duty or call to active duty status of a covered military member for a biological, adopted, or foster child, a stepchild, or a legal ward of a covered military member, or a child for whom a covered military member stands in loco parentis, who is either under age 18, or age 18 or older and incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability at the time that FMLA leave is to commence;

(iii) To enroll in or transfer to a new school or day care facility a biological, adopted, or foster child, a stepchild, or a legal ward of the covered military member, or a child for whom the covered military member stands in loco parentis, who is either under age 18, or age 18 or older and incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability at the time that FMLA leave is to commence, when enrollment or transfer is necessitated by the active duty or call to active duty status of a covered military member; and

(iv) To attend meetings with staff at a school or a daycare facility, such as meetings with school officials regarding disciplinary measures, parent-teacher conferences, or meetings with school counselors, for a biological, adopted, or foster child, a stepchild, or a legal ward of the covered military member, or a child for whom the covered military member stands in loco parentis, who is either under age 18, or age 18 or older and incapable of self-care because of a

mental or physical disability at the time that FMLA leave is to commence, when such meetings are necessary due to circumstances arising from the active duty or call to active duty status of a covered military member;

(4) *Financial and legal arrangements.*

(i) To make or update financial or legal arrangements to address the covered military member's absence while on active duty or call to active duty status, such as preparing and executing financial and healthcare powers of attorney, transferring bank account signature authority, enrolling in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS), obtaining military identification cards, or preparing or updating a will or living trust; and

(ii) To act as the covered military member's representative before a federal, state, or local agency for purposes of obtaining, arranging, or appealing military service benefits while the covered military member is on active duty or call to active duty status, and for a period of 90 days following the termination of the covered military member's active duty status;

(5) *Counseling.* To attend counseling provided by someone other than a health care provider for oneself, for the covered military member, or for the biological, adopted, or foster child, a stepchild, or a legal ward of the covered military member, who is either under age 18, or age 18 or older and incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability at the time that FMLA leave is to commence, provided that the need for counseling arises from the active duty or call to active duty status of a covered military member;

(6) *Rest and recuperation.*

(i) To spend time with a covered military member who is on short-term, temporary, rest and recuperation leave during the period of deployment;

(ii) Eligible employees may take up to five days of leave for each instance of rest and recuperation;

(7) *Post-deployment activities.*

(i) To attend arrival ceremonies, reintegration briefings and events, and any other official ceremony or program sponsored by the military for a period of 90 days following the termination of the covered military member's active duty status; and

(ii) To address issues that arise from the death of a covered military member while on active duty status, such as meeting and recovering the body of the covered military member and making funeral arrangements;

(8) *Additional activities.* To address other events which arise out of the covered military member's active duty or call to active duty status provided that the employer and employee agree that such leave shall qualify as an exigency, and agree to both the timing and duration of such leave.

(b) A "covered military member" means the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent on active duty or call to active duty status.

(1) A "son or daughter on active duty or call to active duty status" means the employee's biological, adopted, or foster child, stepchild, legal ward, or a child for whom the employee stood in loco parentis, who is on active duty or call to active duty status, and who is of any age.

(2) "Active duty or call to active duty status" means duty under a call or order to active duty (or notification of an impending call or order to active duty) in support of a contingency operation pursuant to: Section 688 of Title 10 of the United States Code, which authorizes ordering to active duty retired members of the Regular Armed Forces and members of the retired Reserve who retired after completing at least 20 years of active service; Section 12301(a) of Title 10 of the United States Code, which authorizes ordering all reserve component members to active duty in the case of war or national emergency; Section 12302 of Title 10 of the United States Code, which authorizes ordering any unit or unassigned member of the Ready Reserve to active duty; Section 12304 of Title 10 of the United States Code, which authorizes ordering any unit or unassigned member of the Selected Reserve and certain members of the Individual Ready Reserve to active duty; Section 12305 of Title 10 of the United States Code, which authorizes the suspension of promotion, retirement or separation rules for certain Reserve components; Section 12406 of Title 10 of the United States Code, which authorizes calling the National Guard into federal service in certain circumstances; chapter 15 of Title 10 of the United States Code, which authorizes calling the National Guard and state military into federal service in the case of insurrections and national emergencies; or any other provision of law during a war or during a national emergency declared by the President or Congress so long as it is in support of a contingency operation.

(i) Employees are eligible to take FMLA leave because of a qualifying exigency when the covered military member is on active duty or call to active duty status in support of a

contingency operation pursuant to one of the provisions of law identified in paragraph (b)(2) of this section as either a member of the reserve components (Army National Guard of the United States, Army Reserve, Navy Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve, Air National Guard of the United States, Air Force Reserve and Coast Guard Reserve), or a retired member of the Regular Armed Forces or Reserve. An employee whose family member is on active duty or call to active duty status in support of a contingency operation as a member of the Regular Armed Forces is not eligible to take leave because of a qualifying exigency.

(ii) A call to active duty for purposes of leave taken because of a qualifying exigency refers to a Federal call to active duty. State calls to active duty are not covered unless under order of the President of the United States pursuant to one of the provisions of law identified in paragraph (b)(2) of this section in support of a contingency operation.

(3) The active duty orders of a covered military member will generally specify if the servicemember is serving in support of a contingency operation by citation to the relevant section of Title 10 of the United States Code and/or by reference to the specific name of the contingency operation. A military operation qualifies as a contingency operation if it:

(i) is designated by the Secretary of Defense as an operation in which members of the armed forces are or may become involved in military actions, operations, or hostilities against an enemy of the United States or against an opposing military force; or

(ii) results in the call or order to, or retention on, active duty of members of the uniformed services under section 688, 12301(a), 12302, 12304, 12305, or 12406 of Title 10 of the United States Code, chapter 15 of Title 10 of the United States Code, or any other provision of law during a war or during a national emergency declared by the President or Congress. 10 U.S.C. 101(a)(13).

§ 825.127 Leave to care for a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness.

(a) Eligible employees are entitled to FMLA leave to care for a current member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, or a member of the Armed Forces, the National Guard or Reserves who is on the temporary disability retired list, who has a serious injury or illness incurred in the line of duty on active duty for which he or she is

undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy; or otherwise in outpatient status; or otherwise on the temporary disability retired list. Eligible employees may not take leave under this provision to care for former members of the Armed Forces, former members of the National Guard and Reserves, and members on the permanent disability retired list.

(1) A "serious injury or illness" means an injury or illness incurred by a covered servicemember in the line of duty on active duty that may render the servicemember medically unfit to perform the duties of his or her office, grade, rank or rating.

(2) "Outpatient status," with respect to a covered servicemember, means the status of a member of the Armed Forces assigned to either a military medical treatment facility as an outpatient; or a unit established for the purpose of providing command and control of members of the Armed Forces receiving medical care as outpatients.

(b) In order to care for a covered servicemember, an eligible employee must be the spouse, son, daughter, or parent, or next of kin of a covered servicemember.

(1) A "son or daughter of a covered servicemember" means the covered servicemember's biological, adopted, or foster child, stepchild, legal ward, or a child for whom the covered servicemember stood in loco parentis, and who is of any age.

(2) A "parent of a covered servicemember" means a covered servicemember's biological, adoptive, step or foster father or mother, or any other individual who stood in loco parentis to the covered servicemember. This term does not include parents "in law."

(3) The "next of kin of a covered servicemember" is the nearest blood relative, other than the covered servicemember's spouse, parent, son, or daughter, in the following order of priority: blood relatives who have been granted legal custody of the servicemember by court decree or statutory provisions, brothers and sisters, grandparents, aunts and uncles, and first cousins, unless the covered servicemember has specifically designated in writing another blood relative as his or her nearest blood relative for purposes of military caregiver leave under the FMLA. When no such designation is made, and there are multiple family members with the same level of relationship to the covered servicemember, all such family members shall be considered the covered servicemember's next of kin and may take FMLA leave to provide

care to the covered servicemember, either consecutively or simultaneously. When such designation has been made, the designated individual shall be deemed to be the covered servicemember's only next of kin. For example, if a covered servicemember has three siblings and has not designated a blood relative to provide care, all three siblings would be considered the covered servicemember's next of kin. Alternatively, where a covered servicemember has a sibling(s) and designates a cousin as his or her next of kin for FMLA purposes, then only the designated cousin is eligible as the covered servicemember's next of kin. An employer is permitted to require an employee to provide confirmation of covered family relationship to the covered servicemember pursuant to § 825.122(j).

(c) An eligible employee is entitled to 26 workweeks of leave to care for a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness during a "single 12-month period."

(1) The "single 12-month period" described in paragraph (c) of this section begins on the first day the eligible employee takes FMLA leave to care for a covered servicemember and ends 12 months after that date, regardless of the method used by the employer to determine the employee's 12 workweeks of leave entitlement for other FMLA-qualifying reasons. If an eligible employee does not take all of his or her 26 workweeks of leave entitlement to care for a covered servicemember during this "single 12-month period," the remaining part of his or her 26 workweeks of leave entitlement to care for the covered servicemember is forfeited.

(2) The leave entitlement described in paragraph (c) of this section is to be applied on a per-covered-servicemember, per-injury basis such that an eligible employee may be entitled to take more than one period of 26 workweeks of leave if the leave is to care for different covered servicemembers or to care for the same servicemember with a subsequent serious injury or illness, except that no more than 26 workweeks of leave may be taken within any "single 12-month period." An eligible employee may take more than one period of 26 workweeks of leave to care for a covered servicemember with more than one serious injury or illness only when the serious injury or illness is a subsequent serious injury or illness. When an eligible employee takes leave to care for more than one covered servicemember or for a subsequent serious injury or illness of the same covered

servicemember, and the "single 12-month periods" corresponding to the different military caregiver leave entitlements overlap, the employee is limited to taking no more than 26 workweeks of leave in each "single 12-month period."

(3) An eligible employee is entitled to a combined total of 26 workweeks of leave for any FMLA-qualifying reason during the "single 12-month period" described in paragraph (c) of this section, provided that the employee is entitled to no more than 12 weeks of leave for one or more of the following: because of the birth of a son or daughter of the employee and in order to care for such son or daughter; because of the placement of a son or daughter with the employee for adoption or foster care; in order to care for the spouse, son, daughter, or parent with a serious health condition; because of the employee's own serious health condition; or because of a qualifying exigency. Thus, for example, an eligible employee may, during the "single 12-month period," take 16 weeks of FMLA leave to care for a covered servicemember and 10 weeks of FMLA leave to care for a newborn child. However, the employee may not take more than 12 weeks of FMLA leave to care for the newborn child during the "single 12-month period," even if the employee takes fewer than 14 weeks of FMLA leave to care for a covered servicemember.

(4) In all circumstances, including for leave taken to care for a covered servicemember, the employer is responsible for designating leave, paid or unpaid, as FMLA-qualifying, and for giving notice of the designation to the employee as provided in § 825.300. In the case of leave that qualifies as both leave to care for a covered servicemember and leave to care for a family member with a serious health condition during the "single 12-month period" described in paragraph (c) of this section, the employer must designate such leave as leave to care for a covered servicemember in the first instance. Leave that qualifies as both leave to care for a covered servicemember and leave taken to care for a family member with a serious health condition during the "single 12-month period" described in paragraph (c) of this section must not be designated and counted as both leave to care for a covered servicemember and leave to care for a family member with a serious health condition. As is the case with leave taken for other qualifying reasons, employers may retroactively designate leave as leave to care for a covered servicemember pursuant to § 825.301(d).

(d) A husband and wife who are eligible for FMLA leave and are employed by the same covered employer may be limited to a combined total of 26 workweeks of leave during the "single 12-month period" described in paragraph (c) of this section if the leave is taken for birth of the employee's son or daughter or to care for the child after birth, for placement of a son or daughter with the employee for adoption or foster care, or to care for the child after placement, to care for the employee's parent with a serious health condition, or to care for a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness. This limitation on the total weeks of leave applies to leave taken for the reasons specified as long as a husband and wife are employed by the "same employer." It would apply, for example, even though the spouses are employed at two different worksites of an employer located more than 75 miles from each other, or by two different operating divisions of the same company. On the other hand, if one spouse is ineligible for FMLA leave, the other spouse would be entitled to a full 26 workweeks of FMLA leave.

Subpart B—Employee Leave Entitlements Under the Family and Medical Leave Act

§ 825.200 Amount of leave.

(a) Except in the case of leave to care for a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness, an eligible employee's FMLA leave entitlement is limited to a total of 12 workweeks of leave during any 12-month period for any one, or more, of the following reasons:

(1) The birth of the employee's son or daughter, and to care for the newborn child;

(2) The placement with the employee of a son or daughter for adoption or foster care, and to care for the newly placed child;

(3) To care for the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent with a serious health condition;

(4) Because of a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform one or more of the essential functions of his or her job; and,

(5) Because of any qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent is a covered military member on active duty (or has been notified of an impending call or order to active duty) in support of a contingency operation.

(b) An employer is permitted to choose any one of the following methods for determining the "12-month period" in which the 12 weeks of leave

entitlement described in paragraph (a) of this section occurs:

(1) The calendar year;

(2) Any fixed 12-month "leave year," such as a fiscal year, a year required by State law, or a year starting on an employee's "anniversary" date;

(3) The 12-month period measured forward from the date any employee's first FMLA leave under paragraph (a) begins; or,

(4) A "rolling" 12-month period measured backward from the date an employee uses any FMLA leave as described in paragraph (a).

(c) Under methods in paragraphs (b)(1) and (b)(2) of this section an employee would be entitled to up to 12 weeks of FMLA leave at any time in the fixed 12-month period selected. An employee could, therefore, take 12 weeks of leave at the end of the year and 12 weeks at the beginning of the following year. Under the method in paragraph (b)(3) of this section, an employee would be entitled to 12 weeks of leave during the year beginning on the first date FMLA leave is taken; the next 12-month period would begin the first time FMLA leave is taken after completion of any previous 12-month period. Under the method in paragraph (b)(4) of this section, the "rolling" 12-month period, each time an employee takes FMLA leave the remaining leave entitlement would be any balance of the 12 weeks which has not been used during the immediately preceding 12 months. For example, if an employee has taken eight weeks of leave during the past 12 months, an additional four weeks of leave could be taken. If an employee used four weeks beginning February 1, 2008, four weeks beginning June 1, 2008, and four weeks beginning December 1, 2008, the employee would not be entitled to any additional leave until February 1, 2009. However, beginning on February 1, 2009, the employee would again be eligible to take FMLA leave, recouping the right to take the leave in the same manner and amounts in which it was used in the previous year. Thus, the employee would recoup (and be entitled to use) one additional day of FMLA leave each day for four weeks, commencing February 1, 2009. The employee would also begin to recoup additional days beginning on June 1, 2009, and additional days beginning on December 1, 2009. Accordingly, employers using the rolling 12-month period may need to calculate whether the employee is entitled to take FMLA leave each time that leave is requested, and employees taking FMLA leave on such a basis may fall in and out of FMLA protection based on their FMLA usage in the prior

12 months. For example, in the example above, if the employee needs six weeks of leave for a serious health condition commencing February 1, 2009, only the first four weeks of the leave would be FMLA-protected.

(d)(1) Employers will be allowed to choose any one of the alternatives in paragraph (b) of this section for the leave entitlements described in paragraph (a) of this section provided the alternative chosen is applied consistently and uniformly to all employees. An employer wishing to change to another alternative is required to give at least 60 days notice to all employees, and the transition must take place in such a way that the employees retain the full benefit of 12 weeks of leave under whichever method affords the greatest benefit to the employee. Under no circumstances may a new method be implemented in order to avoid the Act's leave requirements.

(2) An exception to this required uniformity would apply in the case of a multi-State employer who has eligible employees in a State which has a family and medical leave statute. The State may require a single method of determining the period during which use of the leave entitlement is measured. This method may conflict with the method chosen by the employer to determine "any 12 months" for purposes of the Federal statute. The employer may comply with the State provision for all employees employed within that State, and uniformly use another method provided by this regulation for the leave entitlements described in paragraph (a) for all other employees.

(e) If an employer fails to select one of the options in paragraph (b) of this section for measuring the 12-month period for the leave entitlements described in paragraph (a), the option that provides the most beneficial outcome for the employee will be used. The employer may subsequently select an option only by providing the 60-day notice to all employees of the option the employer intends to implement. During the running of the 60-day period any other employee who needs FMLA leave may use the option providing the most beneficial outcome to that employee. At the conclusion of the 60-day period the employer may implement the selected option.

(f) An eligible employee's FMLA leave entitlement is limited to a total of 26 workweeks of leave during a "single 12-month period" to care for a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness. An employer shall determine the "single 12-month period" in which the 26-weeks-of-leave-entitlement

described in this paragraph occurs using the 12-month period measured forward from the date an employee's first FMLA leave to care for the covered servicemember begins. *See* § 825.127(d)(1).

(g) During the "single 12-month period" described in paragraph (f), an eligible employee's FMLA leave entitlement is limited to a combined total of 26 workweeks of FMLA leave for any qualifying reason. *See* § 825.127(d)(2).

(h) For purposes of determining the amount of leave used by an employee, the fact that a holiday may occur within the week taken as FMLA leave has no effect; the week is counted as a week of FMLA leave. However, if an employee is using FMLA leave in increments of less than one week, the holiday will not count against the employee's FMLA entitlement unless the employee was otherwise scheduled and expected to work during the holiday. Similarly, if for some reason the employer's business activity has temporarily ceased and employees generally are not expected to report for work for one or more weeks (e.g., a school closing two weeks for the Christmas/New Year holiday or the summer vacation or an employer closing the plant for retooling or repairs), the days the employer's activities have ceased do *not* count against the employee's FMLA leave entitlement. Methods for determining an employee's 12-week leave entitlement are also described in § 825.205.

§ 825.201 Leave to care for a parent.

(a) *General rule.* An eligible employee is entitled to FMLA leave if needed to care for the employee's parent with a serious health condition. Care for parents-in-law is not covered by the FMLA. *See* § 825.122(b) for definition of parent.

(b) *"Same employer" limitation.* A husband and wife who are eligible for FMLA leave and are employed by the same covered employer may be limited to a combined total of 12 weeks of leave during any 12-month period if the leave is taken to care for the employee's parent with a serious health condition, for the birth of the employee's son or daughter or to care for the child after the birth, or for placement of a son or daughter with the employee for adoption or foster care or to care for the child after placement. This limitation on the total weeks of leave applies to leave taken for the reasons specified as long as a husband and wife are employed by the "same employer." It would apply, for example, even though the spouses are employed at two different worksites of an employer located more than 75

miles from each other, or by two different operating divisions of the same company. On the other hand, if one spouse is ineligible for FMLA leave, the other spouse would be entitled to a full 12 weeks of FMLA leave. Where the husband and wife both use a portion of the total 12-week FMLA leave entitlement for either the birth of a child, for placement for adoption or foster care, or to care for a parent, the husband and wife would each be entitled to the difference between the amount he or she has taken individually and 12 weeks for FMLA leave for other purposes. For example, if each spouse took 6 weeks of leave to care for a parent, each could use an additional 6 weeks due to his or her own serious health condition or to care for a child with a serious health condition. *See also* § 825.127(d).

§ 825.202 Intermittent leave or reduced leave schedule.

(a) *Definition.* FMLA leave may be taken "intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule" under certain circumstances. Intermittent leave is FMLA leave taken in separate blocks of time due to a single qualifying reason. A reduced leave schedule is a leave schedule that reduces an employee's usual number of working hours per workweek, or hours per workday. A reduced leave schedule is a change in the employee's schedule for a period of time, normally from full-time to part-time.

(b) *Medical necessity.* For intermittent leave or leave on a reduced leave schedule taken because of one's own serious health condition, to care for a parent, son, or daughter with a serious health condition, or to care for a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness, there must be a medical need for leave and it must be that such medical need can be best accommodated through an intermittent or reduced leave schedule. The treatment regimen and other information described in the certification of a serious health condition and in the certification of a serious injury or illness, if required by the employer, addresses the medical necessity of intermittent leave or leave on a reduced leave schedule. *See* §§ 825.306, 825.310. Leave may be taken intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule when medically necessary for planned and/or unanticipated medical treatment of a serious health condition or of a covered servicemember's serious injury or illness, or for recovery from treatment or recovery from a serious health condition or a covered servicemember's serious injury or illness. It may also be taken to provide

care or psychological comfort to a covered family member with a serious health condition or a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness.

(1) Intermittent leave may be taken for a serious health condition of a parent, son, or daughter, for the employee's own serious health condition, or a serious injury or illness of a covered servicemember which requires treatment by a health care provider periodically, rather than for one continuous period of time, and may include leave of periods from an hour or more to several weeks. Examples of intermittent leave would include leave taken on an occasional basis for medical appointments, or leave taken several days at a time spread over a period of six months, such as for chemotherapy. A pregnant employee may take leave intermittently for prenatal examinations or for her own condition, such as for periods of severe morning sickness. An example of an employee taking leave on a reduced leave schedule is an employee who is recovering from a serious health condition and is not strong enough to work a full-time schedule.

(2) Intermittent or reduced schedule leave may be taken for absences where the employee or family member is incapacitated or unable to perform the essential functions of the position because of a chronic serious health condition or a serious injury or illness of a covered servicemember, even if he or she does not receive treatment by a health care provider. *See* §§ 825.113 and 825.127.

(c) *Birth or placement.* When leave is taken after the birth of a healthy child or placement of a healthy child for adoption or foster care, an employee may take leave intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule only if the employer agrees. Such a schedule reduction might occur, for example, where an employee, with the employer's agreement, works part-time after the birth of a child, or takes leave in several segments. The employer's agreement is not required, however, for leave during which the mother has a serious health condition in connection with the birth of her child or if the newborn child has a serious health condition. *See* § 825.204 for rules governing transfer to an alternative position that better accommodates intermittent leave. *See also* § 825.120 (pregnancy) and § 825.121 (adoption and foster care).

(d) *Qualifying exigency.* Leave due to a qualifying exigency may be taken on an intermittent or reduced leave schedule basis.

§ 825.203 Scheduling of intermittent or reduced schedule leave.

Eligible employees may take FMLA leave on an intermittent or reduced schedule basis when medically necessary due to the serious health condition of a covered family member or the employee or the serious injury or illness of a covered servicemember. See § 825.202. Eligible employees may also take FMLA leave on an intermittent or reduced schedule basis when necessary because of a qualifying exigency. If an employee needs leave intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule for planned medical treatment, then the employee must make a reasonable effort to schedule the treatment so as not to disrupt unduly the employer's operations.

§ 825.204 Transfer of an employee to an alternative position during intermittent leave or reduced schedule leave.

(a) *Transfer or reassignment.* If an employee needs intermittent leave or leave on a reduced leave schedule that is foreseeable based on planned medical treatment for the employee, a family member, or a covered servicemember, including during a period of recovery from one's own serious health condition, a serious health condition of a spouse, parent, son, or daughter, or a serious injury or illness of a covered servicemember, or if the employer agrees to permit intermittent or reduced schedule leave for the birth of a child or for placement of a child for adoption or foster care, the employer may require the employee to transfer temporarily, during the period that the intermittent or reduced leave schedule is required, to an available alternative position for which the employee is qualified and which better accommodates recurring periods of leave than does the employee's regular position. See § 825.601 for special rules applicable to instructional employees of schools.

(b) *Compliance.* Transfer to an alternative position may require compliance with any applicable collective bargaining agreement, federal law (such as the Americans with Disabilities Act), and State law. Transfer to an alternative position may include altering an existing job to better accommodate the employee's need for intermittent or reduced schedule leave.

(c) *Equivalent pay and benefits.* The alternative position must have equivalent pay and benefits. An alternative position for these purposes does not have to have equivalent duties. The employer may increase the pay and benefits of an existing alternative position, so as to make them equivalent to the pay and benefits of the

employee's regular job. The employer may also transfer the employee to a part-time job with the same hourly rate of pay and benefits, provided the employee is not required to take more leave than is medically necessary. For example, an employee desiring to take leave in increments of four hours per day could be transferred to a half-time job, or could remain in the employee's same job on a part-time schedule, paying the same hourly rate as the employee's previous job and enjoying the same benefits. The employer may not eliminate benefits which otherwise would not be provided to part-time employees; however, an employer may proportionately reduce benefits such as vacation leave where an employer's normal practice is to base such benefits on the number of hours worked.

(d) *Employer limitations.* An employer may not transfer the employee to an alternative position in order to discourage the employee from taking leave or otherwise work a hardship on the employee. For example, a white collar employee may not be assigned to perform laborer's work; an employee working the day shift may not be reassigned to the graveyard shift; an employee working in the headquarters facility may not be reassigned to a branch a significant distance away from the employee's normal job location. Any such attempt on the part of the employer to make such a transfer will be held to be contrary to the prohibited acts of the FMLA.

(e) *Reinstatement of employee.* When an employee who is taking leave intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule and has been transferred to an alternative position no longer needs to continue on leave and is able to return to full-time work, the employee must be placed in the same or equivalent job as the job he or she left when the leave commenced. An employee may not be required to take more leave than necessary to address the circumstance that precipitated the need for leave.

§ 825.205 Increments of FMLA leave for intermittent or reduced schedule leave.

(a) *Minimum increment.* (1) When an employee takes FMLA leave on an intermittent or reduced leave schedule basis, the employer must account for the leave using an increment no greater than the shortest period of time that the employer uses to account for use of other forms of leave provided that it is not greater than one hour and provided further that an employee's FMLA leave entitlement may not be reduced by more than the amount of leave actually taken. If an employer accounts for use of leave in varying increments at different times

of the day or shift, the employer may not account for FMLA leave in a larger increment than the shortest period used to account for other leave during the period in which the FMLA leave is taken. If an employer accounts for other forms of leave use in increments greater than one hour, the employer must account for FMLA leave use in increments no greater than one hour. An employer may account for FMLA leave in shorter increments than used for other forms of leave. For example, an employer that accounts for other forms of leave in one hour increments may account for FMLA leave in a shorter increment when the employee arrives at work several minutes late, and the employer wants the employee to begin work immediately. Such accounting for FMLA leave will not alter the increment considered to be the shortest period used to account for other forms of leave or the use of FMLA leave in other circumstances.

(2) Where it is physically impossible for an employee using intermittent leave or working a reduced leave schedule to commence or end work mid-way through a shift, such as where a flight attendant or a railroad conductor is scheduled to work aboard an airplane or train, or a laboratory employee is unable to enter or leave a sealed "clean room" during a certain period of time, the entire period that the employee is forced to be absent is designated as FMLA leave and counts against the employee's FMLA entitlement.

(b) *Calculation of leave.* (1) When an employee takes leave on an intermittent or reduced leave schedule, only the amount of leave actually taken may be counted toward the employee's leave entitlement. The actual workweek is the basis of leave entitlement. Therefore, if an employee who would otherwise work 40 hours a week takes off 8 hours, the employee would use 1/5 of a week of FMLA leave. Similarly, if a full-time employee who would otherwise work 8-hour days works 4-hour days under a reduced leave schedule, the employee would use 1/2 week of FMLA leave. Where an employee works a part-time schedule or variable hours, the amount of FMLA leave that an employee uses is determined on a pro rata or proportional basis. For example, if an employee who would otherwise work 30 hours per week, but works only 20 hours a week under a reduced leave schedule, the employee's ten hours of leave would constitute one-third (1/3) of a week of FMLA leave for each week the employee works the reduced leave schedule. An employer may convert these fractions to their hourly equivalent so long as the conversion equitably reflects the

employee's total normally scheduled hours. *See also*, §§ 825.601 and 825.602, special rules for schools.

(2) If an employer has made a permanent or long-term change in the employee's schedule (for reasons other than FMLA, and prior to the notice of need for FMLA leave), the hours worked under the new schedule are to be used for making this calculation.

(3) If an employee's schedule varies from week to week to such an extent that an employer is unable to determine with any certainty how many hours the employee would otherwise have worked (but for the taking of FMLA leave), a weekly average of the hours scheduled over the 12 months prior to the beginning of the leave period (including any hours for which the employee took leave of any type) would be used for calculating the employee's leave entitlement.

(c) *Overtime.* If an employee would normally be required to work overtime, but is unable to do so because of a FMLA-qualifying reason that limits the employee's ability to work overtime, the hours which the employee would have been required to work may be counted against the employee's FMLA entitlement. In such a case, the employee is using intermittent or reduced schedule leave. For example, if an employee would normally be required to work for 48 hours in a particular week, but due to a serious health condition the employee is unable to work more than 40 hours that week, the employee would utilize eight hours of FMLA-protected leave out of the 48-hour workweek ($\frac{8}{48} = \frac{1}{6}$ workweek). Voluntary overtime hours that an employee does not work due to a serious health condition may not be counted against the employee's FMLA leave entitlement.

§ 825.206 Interaction with the FLSA.

(a) Leave taken under FMLA may be unpaid. If an employee is otherwise exempt from minimum wage and overtime requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) as a salaried executive, administrative, professional, or computer employee (under regulations issued by the Secretary, 29 CFR part 541), providing unpaid FMLA-qualifying leave to such an employee will not cause the employee to lose the FLSA exemption. *See* 29 CFR 541.602(b)(7). This means that under regulations currently in effect, where an employee meets the specified duties test, is paid on a salary basis, and is paid a salary of at least the amount specified in the regulations, the employer may make deductions from the employee's salary for any hours taken as

intermittent or reduced FMLA leave within a workweek, without affecting the exempt status of the employee. The fact that an employer provides FMLA leave, whether paid or unpaid, and maintains records required by this part regarding FMLA leave, will not be relevant to the determination whether an employee is exempt within the meaning of 29 CFR part 541.

(b) For an employee paid in accordance with the fluctuating workweek method of payment for overtime (*see* 29 CFR 778.114), the employer, during the period in which intermittent or reduced schedule FMLA leave is scheduled to be taken, may compensate an employee on an hourly basis and pay only for the hours the employee works, including time and one-half the employee's regular rate for overtime hours. The change to payment on an hourly basis would include the entire period during which the employee is taking intermittent leave, including weeks in which no leave is taken. The hourly rate shall be determined by dividing the employee's weekly salary by the employee's normal or average schedule of hours worked during weeks in which FMLA leave is not being taken. If an employer chooses to follow this exception from the fluctuating workweek method of payment, the employer must do so uniformly, with respect to all employees paid on a fluctuating workweek basis for whom FMLA leave is taken on an intermittent or reduced leave schedule basis. If an employer does not elect to convert the employee's compensation to hourly pay, no deduction may be taken for FMLA leave absences. Once the need for intermittent or reduced scheduled leave is over, the employee may be restored to payment on a fluctuating work week basis.

(c) This special exception to the "salary basis" requirements of the FLSA exemption or fluctuating workweek payment requirements applies only to employees of covered employers who are eligible for FMLA leave, and to leave which qualifies as FMLA leave. Hourly or other deductions which are not in accordance with 29 CFR part 541 or 29 CFR 778.114 may not be taken, for example, from the salary of an employee who works for an employer with fewer than 50 employees, or where the employee has not worked long enough to be eligible for FMLA leave without potentially affecting the employee's eligibility for exemption. Nor may deductions which are not permitted by 29 CFR part 541 or 29 CFR 778.114 be taken from such an employee's salary for any leave which does not qualify as FMLA leave, for example, deductions

from an employee's pay for leave required under State law or under an employer's policy or practice for a reason which does not qualify as FMLA leave, *e.g.*, leave to care for a grandparent or for a medical condition which does not qualify as a serious health condition or serious injury or illness; or for leave which is more generous than provided by FMLA. Employers may comply with State law or the employer's own policy/practice under these circumstances and maintain the employee's eligibility for exemption or for the fluctuating workweek method of pay by not taking hourly deductions from the employee's pay, in accordance with FLSA requirements, or may take such deductions, treating the employee as an "hourly" employee and pay overtime premium pay for hours worked over 40 in a workweek.

§ 825.207 Substitution of paid leave.

(a) Generally, FMLA leave is unpaid leave. However, under the circumstances described in this section, FMLA permits an eligible employee to choose to substitute accrued paid leave for FMLA leave. If an employee does not choose to substitute accrued paid leave, the employer may require the employee to substitute accrued paid leave for unpaid FMLA leave. The term "substitute" means that the paid leave provided by the employer, and accrued pursuant to established policies of the employer, will run concurrently with the unpaid FMLA leave. Accordingly, the employee receives pay pursuant to the employer's applicable paid leave policy during the period of otherwise unpaid FMLA leave. An employee's ability to substitute accrued paid leave is determined by the terms and conditions of the employer's normal leave policy. When an employee chooses, or an employer requires, substitution of accrued paid leave, the employer must inform the employee that the employee must satisfy any procedural requirements of the paid leave policy only in connection with the receipt of such payment. *See* § 825.300(c). If an employee does not comply with the additional requirements in an employer's paid leave policy, the employee is not entitled to substitute accrued paid leave, but the employee remains entitled to take unpaid FMLA leave. Employers may not discriminate against employees on FMLA leave in the administration of their paid leave policies.

(b) If neither the employee nor the employer elects to substitute paid leave for unpaid FMLA leave under the above conditions and circumstances, the employee will remain entitled to all the

paid leave which is earned or accrued under the terms of the employer's plan.

(c) If an employee uses paid leave under circumstances which do not qualify as FMLA leave, the leave will not count against the employee's FMLA leave entitlement. For example, paid sick leave used for a medical condition which is not a serious health condition or serious injury or illness does not count against the employee's FMLA leave entitlement.

(d) Leave taken pursuant to a disability leave plan would be considered FMLA leave for a serious health condition and counted in the leave entitlement permitted under FMLA if it meets the criteria set forth above in §§ 825.112–825.115. In such cases, the employer may designate the leave as FMLA leave and count the leave against the employee's FMLA leave entitlement. Because leave pursuant to a disability benefit plan is not unpaid, the provision for substitution of the employee's accrued paid leave is inapplicable, and neither the employee nor the employer may require the substitution of paid leave. However, employers and employees may agree, where state law permits, to have paid leave supplement the disability plan benefits, such as in the case where a plan only provides replacement income for two-thirds of an employee's salary.

(e) The Act provides that a serious health condition may result from injury to the employee "on or off" the job. If the employer designates the leave as FMLA leave in accordance with § 825.300(d), the leave counts against the employee's FMLA leave entitlement. Because the workers' compensation absence is not unpaid, the provision for substitution of the employee's accrued paid leave is not applicable, and neither the employee nor the employer may require the substitution of paid leave. However, employers and employees may agree, where state law permits, to have paid leave supplement workers' compensation benefits, such as in the case where workers' compensation only provides replacement income for two-thirds of an employee's salary. If the health care provider treating the employee for the workers' compensation injury certifies the employee is able to return to a "light duty job" but is unable to return to the same or equivalent job, the employee may decline the employer's offer of a "light duty job." As a result the employee may lose workers' compensation payments, but is entitled to remain on unpaid FMLA leave until the employee's FMLA leave entitlement is exhausted. As of the date workers' compensation benefits cease,

the substitution provision becomes applicable and either the employee may elect or the employer may require the use of accrued paid leave. *See also* §§ 825.210(f), 825.216(d), 825.220(d), 825.307(a) and 825.702(d)(1) and (2) regarding the relationship between workers' compensation absences and FMLA leave.

(f) Section 7(o) of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) permits public employers under prescribed circumstances to substitute compensatory time off accrued at one and one-half hours for each overtime hour worked in lieu of paying cash to an employee when the employee works overtime hours as prescribed by the Act. This section of the FLSA limits the number of hours of compensatory time an employee may accumulate depending upon whether the employee works in fire protection or law enforcement (480 hours) or elsewhere for a public agency (240 hours). In addition, under the FLSA, an employer always has the right to cash out an employee's compensatory time or to require the employee to use the time. Therefore, if an employee requests and is permitted to use accrued compensatory time to receive pay for time taken off for an FMLA reason, or if the employer requires such use pursuant to the FLSA, the time taken may be counted against the employee's FMLA leave entitlement.

§ 825.208 [Reserved]

§ 825.209 Maintenance of employee benefits.

(a) During any FMLA leave, an employer must maintain the employee's coverage under any group health plan (as defined in the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 at 26 U.S.C. 5000(b)(1)) on the same conditions as coverage would have been provided if the employee had been continuously employed during the entire leave period. All employers covered by FMLA, including public agencies, are subject to the Act's requirements to maintain health coverage. The definition of "group health plan" is set forth in § 825.800. For purposes of FMLA, the term "group health plan" shall not include an insurance program providing health coverage under which employees purchase individual policies from insurers provided that:

(1) No contributions are made by the employer;

(2) Participation in the program is completely voluntary for employees;

(3) The sole functions of the employer with respect to the program are, without endorsing the program, to permit the

insurer to publicize the program to employees, to collect premiums through payroll deductions and to remit them to the insurer;

(4) The employer receives no consideration in the form of cash or otherwise in connection with the program, other than reasonable compensation, excluding any profit, for administrative services actually rendered in connection with payroll deduction; and,

(5) The premium charged with respect to such coverage does not increase in the event the employment relationship terminates.

(b) The same group health plan benefits provided to an employee prior to taking FMLA leave must be maintained during the FMLA leave. For example, if family member coverage is provided to an employee, family member coverage must be maintained during the FMLA leave. Similarly, benefit coverage during FMLA leave for medical care, surgical care, hospital care, dental care, eye care, mental health counseling, substance abuse treatment, *etc.*, must be maintained during leave if provided in an employer's group health plan, including a supplement to a group health plan, whether or not provided through a flexible spending account or other component of a cafeteria plan.

(c) If an employer provides a new health plan or benefits or changes health benefits or plans while an employee is on FMLA leave, the employee is entitled to the new or changed plan/benefits to the same extent as if the employee were not on leave. For example, if an employer changes a group health plan so that dental care becomes covered under the plan, an employee on FMLA leave must be given the same opportunity as other employees to receive (or obtain) the dental care coverage. Any other plan changes (*e.g.*, in coverage, premiums, deductibles, *etc.*) which apply to all employees of the workforce would also apply to an employee on FMLA leave.

(d) Notice of any opportunity to change plans or benefits must also be given to an employee on FMLA leave. If the group health plan permits an employee to change from single to family coverage upon the birth of a child or otherwise add new family members, such a change in benefits must be made available while an employee is on FMLA leave. If the employee requests the changed coverage it must be provided by the employer.

(e) An employee may choose not to retain group health plan coverage during FMLA leave. However, when an employee returns from leave, the employee is entitled to be reinstated on

the same terms as prior to taking the leave, including family or dependent coverages, without any qualifying period, physical examination, exclusion of pre-existing conditions, *etc.* See § 825.212(c).

(f) Except as required by the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1986 (COBRA) and for “key” employees (as discussed below), an employer’s obligation to maintain health benefits during leave (and to restore the employee to the same or equivalent employment) under FMLA ceases if and when the employment relationship would have terminated if the employee had not taken FMLA leave (*e.g.*, if the employee’s position is eliminated as part of a nondiscriminatory reduction in force and the employee would not have been transferred to another position); an employee informs the employer of his or her intent not to return from leave (including before starting the leave if the employer is so informed before the leave starts); or the employee fails to return from leave or continues on leave after exhausting his or her FMLA leave entitlement in the 12-month period.

(g) If a “key employee” (*see* § 825.218) does not return from leave when notified by the employer that substantial or grievous economic injury will result from his or her reinstatement, the employee’s entitlement to group health plan benefits continues unless and until the employee advises the employer that the employee does not desire restoration to employment at the end of the leave period, or the FMLA leave entitlement is exhausted, or reinstatement is actually denied.

(h) An employee’s entitlement to benefits other than group health benefits during a period of FMLA leave (*e.g.*, holiday pay) is to be determined by the employer’s established policy for providing such benefits when the employee is on other forms of leave (paid or unpaid, as appropriate).

§ 825.210 Employee payment of group health benefit premiums.

(a) Group health plan benefits must be maintained on the same basis as coverage would have been provided if the employee had been continuously employed during the FMLA leave period. Therefore, any share of group health plan premiums which had been paid by the employee prior to FMLA leave must continue to be paid by the employee during the FMLA leave period. If premiums are raised or lowered, the employee would be required to pay the new premium rates. Maintenance of health insurance policies which are not a part of the

employer’s group health plan, as described in § 825.209(a), are the sole responsibility of the employee. The employee and the insurer should make necessary arrangements for payment of premiums during periods of unpaid FMLA leave.

(b) If the FMLA leave is substituted paid leave, the employee’s share of premiums must be paid by the method normally used during any paid leave, presumably as a payroll deduction.

(c) If FMLA leave is unpaid, the employer has a number of options for obtaining payment from the employee. The employer may require that payment be made to the employer or to the insurance carrier, but no additional charge may be added to the employee’s premium payment for administrative expenses. The employer may require employees to pay their share of premium payments in any of the following ways:

(1) Payment would be due at the same time as it would be made if by payroll deduction;

(2) Payment would be due on the same schedule as payments are made under COBRA;

(3) Payment would be prepaid pursuant to a cafeteria plan at the employee’s option;

(4) The employer’s existing rules for payment by employees on “leave without pay” would be followed, provided that such rules do not require prepayment (*i.e.*, prior to the commencement of the leave) of the premiums that will become due during a period of unpaid FMLA leave or payment of higher premiums than if the employee had continued to work instead of taking leave; or,

(5) Another system voluntarily agreed to between the employer and the employee, which may include prepayment of premiums (*e.g.*, through increased payroll deductions when the need for the FMLA leave is foreseeable).

(d) The employer must provide the employee with advance written notice of the terms and conditions under which these payments must be made. *See* § 825.300(c).

(e) An employer may not require more of an employee using unpaid FMLA leave than the employer requires of other employees on “leave without pay.”

(f) An employee who is receiving payments as a result of a workers’ compensation injury must make arrangements with the employer for payment of group health plan benefits when simultaneously taking FMLA leave. *See* § 825.207(e).

§ 825.211 Maintenance of benefits under multi-employer health plans.

(a) A multi-employer health plan is a plan to which more than one employer is required to contribute, and which is maintained pursuant to one or more collective bargaining agreements between employee organization(s) and the employers.

(b) An employer under a multi-employer plan must continue to make contributions on behalf of an employee using FMLA leave as though the employee had been continuously employed, unless the plan contains an explicit FMLA provision for maintaining coverage such as through pooled contributions by all employers party to the plan.

(c) During the duration of an employee’s FMLA leave, coverage by the group health plan, and benefits provided pursuant to the plan, must be maintained at the level of coverage and benefits which were applicable to the employee at the time FMLA leave commenced.

(d) An employee using FMLA leave cannot be required to use “banked” hours or pay a greater premium than the employee would have been required to pay if the employee had been continuously employed.

(e) As provided in § 825.209(f) of this part, group health plan coverage must be maintained for an employee on FMLA leave until:

(1) The employee’s FMLA leave entitlement is exhausted;

(2) The employer can show that the employee would have been laid off and the employment relationship terminated; or,

(3) The employee provides unequivocal notice of intent not to return to work.

§ 825.212 Employee failure to pay health plan premium payments.

(a)(1) In the absence of an established employer policy providing a longer grace period, an employer’s obligations to maintain health insurance coverage cease under FMLA if an employee’s premium payment is more than 30 days late. In order to drop the coverage for an employee whose premium payment is late, the employer must provide written notice to the employee that the payment has not been received. Such notice must be mailed to the employee at least 15 days before coverage is to cease, advising that coverage will be dropped on a specified date at least 15 days after the date of the letter unless the payment has been received by that date. If the employer has established policies regarding other forms of unpaid leave that provide for the employer to cease

coverage retroactively to the date the unpaid premium payment was due, the employer may drop the employee from coverage retroactively in accordance with that policy, provided the 15-day notice was given. In the absence of such a policy, coverage for the employee may be terminated at the end of the 30-day grace period, where the required 15-day notice has been provided.

(2) An employer has no obligation regarding the maintenance of a health insurance policy which is not a "group health plan." See § 825.209(a).

(3) All other obligations of an employer under FMLA would continue; for example, the employer continues to have an obligation to reinstate an employee upon return from leave.

(b) The employer may recover the employee's share of any premium payments missed by the employee for any FMLA leave period during which the employer maintains health coverage by paying the employee's share after the premium payment is missed.

(c) If coverage lapses because an employee has not made required premium payments, upon the employee's return from FMLA leave the employer must still restore the employee to coverage/benefits equivalent to those the employee would have had if leave had not been taken and the premium payment(s) had not been missed, including family or dependent coverage. See § 825.215(d)(1) through (5). In such case, an employee may not be required to meet any qualification requirements imposed by the plan, including any new preexisting condition waiting period, to wait for an open season, or to pass a medical examination to obtain reinstatement of coverage. If an employer terminates an employee's insurance in accordance with this section and fails to restore the employee's health insurance as required by this section upon the employee's return, the employer may be liable for benefits lost by reason of the violation, for other actual monetary losses sustained as a direct result of the violation, and for appropriate equitable relief tailored to the harm suffered.

§ 825.213 Employer recovery of benefit costs.

(a) In addition to the circumstances discussed in § 825.212(b), an employer may recover its share of health plan premiums during a period of unpaid FMLA leave from an employee if the employee fails to return to work after the employee's FMLA leave entitlement has been exhausted or expires, unless the reason the employee does not return is due to:

(1) The continuation, recurrence, or onset of either a serious health condition of the employee or the employee's family member, or a serious injury or illness of a covered servicemember, which would otherwise entitle the employee to leave under FMLA; or

(2) Other circumstances beyond the employee's control. Examples of "other circumstances beyond the employee's control" are necessarily broad. They include such situations as where a parent chooses to stay home with a newborn child who has a serious health condition; an employee's spouse is unexpectedly transferred to a job location more than 75 miles from the employee's worksite; a relative or individual other than a covered family member has a serious health condition and the employee is needed to provide care; the employee is laid off while on leave; or, the employee is a "key employee" who decides not to return to work upon being notified of the employer's intention to deny restoration because of substantial and grievous economic injury to the employer's operations and is not reinstated by the employer. Other circumstances beyond the employee's control would not include a situation where an employee desires to remain with a parent in a distant city even though the parent no longer requires the employee's care, or a parent chooses not to return to work to stay home with a well, newborn child.

(3) When an employee fails to return to work because of the continuation, recurrence, or onset of either a serious health condition of the employee or employee's family member, or a serious injury or illness of a covered servicemember, thereby precluding the employer from recovering its (share of) health benefit premium payments made on the employee's behalf during a period of unpaid FMLA leave, the employer may require medical certification of the employee's or the family member's serious health condition or the covered servicemember's serious injury or illness. Such certification is not required unless requested by the employer. The cost of the certification shall be borne by the employee, and the employee is not entitled to be paid for the time or travel costs spent in acquiring the certification. The employee is required to provide medical certification in a timely manner which, for purposes of this section, is within 30 days from the date of the employer's request. For purposes of medical certification, the employee may use the optional DOL forms developed for these

purposes (see §§ 825.306(b), 825.310(c)-(d) and Appendices B and H of this part). If the employer requests medical certification and the employee does not provide such certification in a timely manner (within 30 days), or the reason for not returning to work does not meet the test of other circumstances beyond the employee's control, the employer may recover 100% of the health benefit premiums it paid during the period of unpaid FMLA leave.

(b) Under some circumstances an employer may elect to maintain other benefits, e.g., life insurance, disability insurance, etc., by paying the employee's (share of) premiums during periods of unpaid FMLA leave. For example, to ensure the employer can meet its responsibilities to provide equivalent benefits to the employee upon return from unpaid FMLA leave, it may be necessary that premiums be paid continuously to avoid a lapse of coverage. If the employer elects to maintain such benefits during the leave, at the conclusion of leave, the employer is entitled to recover only the costs incurred for paying the employee's share of any premiums whether or not the employee returns to work.

(c) An employee who returns to work for at least 30 calendar days is considered to have "returned" to work. An employee who transfers directly from taking FMLA leave to retirement, or who retires during the first 30 days after the employee returns to work, is deemed to have returned to work.

(d) When an employee elects or an employer requires paid leave to be substituted for FMLA leave, the employer may not recover its (share of) health insurance or other non-health benefit premiums for any period of FMLA leave covered by paid leave. Because paid leave provided under a plan covering temporary disabilities (including workers' compensation) is not unpaid, recovery of health insurance premiums does not apply to such paid leave.

(e) The amount that self-insured employers may recover is limited to only the employer's share of allowable "premiums" as would be calculated under COBRA, excluding the 2 percent fee for administrative costs.

(f) When an employee fails to return to work, any health and non-health benefit premiums which this section of the regulations permits an employer to recover are a debt owed by the non-returning employee to the employer. The existence of this debt caused by the employee's failure to return to work does not alter the employer's responsibilities for health benefit coverage and, under a self-insurance

plan, payment of claims incurred during the period of FMLA leave. To the extent recovery is allowed, the employer may recover the costs through deduction from any sums due to the employee (e.g., unpaid wages, vacation pay, profit sharing, etc.), provided such deductions do not otherwise violate applicable Federal or State wage payment or other laws. Alternatively, the employer may initiate legal action against the employee to recover such costs.

§ 825.214 Employee right to reinstatement.

General rule. On return from FMLA leave, an employee is entitled to be returned to the same position the employee held when leave commenced, or to an equivalent position with equivalent benefits, pay, and other terms and conditions of employment. An employee is entitled to such reinstatement even if the employee has been replaced or his or her position has been restructured to accommodate the employee's absence. *See also* § 825.106(e) for the obligations of joint employers.

§ 825.215 Equivalent position.

(a) *Equivalent position.* An equivalent position is one that is virtually identical to the employee's former position in terms of pay, benefits and working conditions, including privileges, perquisites and status. It must involve the same or substantially similar duties and responsibilities, which must entail substantially equivalent skill, effort, responsibility, and authority.

(b) *Conditions to qualify.* If an employee is no longer qualified for the position because of the employee's inability to attend a necessary course, renew a license, fly a minimum number of hours, etc., as a result of the leave, the employee shall be given a reasonable opportunity to fulfill those conditions upon return to work.

(c) *Equivalent pay.* (1) An employee is entitled to any unconditional pay increases which may have occurred during the FMLA leave period, such as cost of living increases. Pay increases conditioned upon seniority, length of service, or work performed must be granted in accordance with the employer's policy or practice with respect to other employees on an equivalent leave status for a reason that does not qualify as FMLA leave. An employee is entitled to be restored to a position with the same or equivalent pay premiums, such as a shift differential. If an employee departed from a position averaging ten hours of overtime (and corresponding overtime pay) each week, an employee is

ordinarily entitled to such a position on return from FMLA leave.

(2) Equivalent pay includes any bonus or payment, whether it is discretionary or non-discretionary, made to employees consistent with the provisions of paragraph (c)(1) of this section. However, if a bonus or other payment is based on the achievement of a specified goal such as hours worked, products sold or perfect attendance, and the employee has not met the goal due to FMLA leave, then the payment may be denied, unless otherwise paid to employees on an equivalent leave status for a reason that does not qualify as FMLA leave. For example, if an employee who used paid vacation leave for a non-FMLA purpose would receive the payment, then the employee who used paid vacation leave for an FMLA-protected purpose also must receive the payment.

(d) *Equivalent benefits.* "Benefits" include all benefits provided or made available to employees by an employer, including group life insurance, health insurance, disability insurance, sick leave, annual leave, educational benefits, and pensions, regardless of whether such benefits are provided by a practice or written policy of an employer through an employee benefit plan as defined in Section 3(3) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, 29 U.S.C. 1002(3).

(1) At the end of an employee's FMLA leave, benefits must be resumed in the same manner and at the same levels as provided when the leave began, and subject to any changes in benefit levels that may have taken place during the period of FMLA leave affecting the entire workforce, unless otherwise elected by the employee. Upon return from FMLA leave, an employee cannot be required to requalify for any benefits the employee enjoyed before FMLA leave began (including family or dependent coverages). For example, if an employee was covered by a life insurance policy before taking leave but is not covered or coverage lapses during the period of unpaid FMLA leave, the employee cannot be required to meet any qualifications, such as taking a physical examination, in order to requalify for life insurance upon return from leave. Accordingly, some employers may find it necessary to modify life insurance and other benefits programs in order to restore employees to equivalent benefits upon return from FMLA leave, make arrangements for continued payment of costs to maintain such benefits during unpaid FMLA leave, or pay these costs subject to recovery from the employee on return from leave. *See* § 825.213(b).

(2) An employee may, but is not entitled to, accrue any additional benefits or seniority during unpaid FMLA leave. Benefits accrued at the time leave began, however, (e.g., paid vacation, sick or personal leave to the extent not substituted for FMLA leave) must be available to an employee upon return from leave.

(3) If, while on unpaid FMLA leave, an employee desires to continue life insurance, disability insurance, or other types of benefits for which he or she typically pays, the employer is required to follow established policies or practices for continuing such benefits for other instances of leave without pay. If the employer has no established policy, the employee and the employer are encouraged to agree upon arrangements before FMLA leave begins.

(4) With respect to pension and other retirement plans, any period of unpaid FMLA leave shall not be treated as or counted toward a break in service for purposes of vesting and eligibility to participate. Also, if the plan requires an employee to be employed on a specific date in order to be credited with a year of service for vesting, contributions or participation purposes, an employee on unpaid FMLA leave on that date shall be deemed to have been employed on that date. However, unpaid FMLA leave periods need not be treated as credited service for purposes of benefit accrual, vesting and eligibility to participate.

(5) Employees on unpaid FMLA leave are to be treated as if they continued to work for purposes of changes to benefit plans. They are entitled to changes in benefits plans, except those which may be dependent upon seniority or accrual during the leave period, immediately upon return from leave or to the same extent they would have qualified if no leave had been taken. For example, if the benefit plan is predicated on a pre-established number of hours worked each year and the employee does not have sufficient hours as a result of taking unpaid FMLA leave, the benefit is lost. (In this regard, § 825.209 addresses health benefits.)

(e) *Equivalent terms and conditions of employment.* An equivalent position must have substantially similar duties, conditions, responsibilities, privileges and status as the employee's original position.

(1) The employee must be reinstated to the same or a geographically proximate worksite (*i.e.*, one that does not involve a significant increase in commuting time or distance) from where the employee had previously been employed. If the employee's original worksite has been closed, the employee is entitled to the same rights

as if the employee had not been on leave when the worksite closed. For example, if an employer transfers all employees from a closed worksite to a new worksite in a different city, the employee on leave is also entitled to transfer under the same conditions as if he or she had continued to be employed.

(2) The employee is ordinarily entitled to return to the same shift or the same or an equivalent work schedule.

(3) The employee must have the same or an equivalent opportunity for bonuses, profit-sharing, and other similar discretionary and non-discretionary payments.

(4) FMLA does not prohibit an employer from accommodating an employee's request to be restored to a different shift, schedule, or position which better suits the employee's personal needs on return from leave, or to offer a promotion to a better position. However, an employee cannot be induced by the employer to accept a different position against the employee's wishes.

(f) *De minimis exception.* The requirement that an employee be restored to the same or equivalent job with the same or equivalent pay, benefits, and terms and conditions of employment does not extend to de minimis, intangible, or unmeasurable aspects of the job.

§ 825.216 Limitations on an employee's right to reinstatement.

(a) An employee has no greater right to reinstatement or to other benefits and conditions of employment than if the employee had been continuously employed during the FMLA leave period. An employer must be able to show that an employee would not otherwise have been employed at the time reinstatement is requested in order to deny restoration to employment. For example:

(1) If an employee is laid off during the course of taking FMLA leave and employment is terminated, the employer's responsibility to continue FMLA leave, maintain group health plan benefits and restore the employee cease at the time the employee is laid off, provided the employer has no continuing obligations under a collective bargaining agreement or otherwise. An employer would have the burden of proving that an employee would have been laid off during the FMLA leave period and, therefore, would not be entitled to restoration. Restoration to a job slated for lay-off when the employee's original position is not would not meet the requirements of an equivalent position.

(2) If a shift has been eliminated, or overtime has been decreased, an employee would not be entitled to return to work that shift or the original overtime hours upon restoration. However, if a position on, for example, a night shift has been filled by another employee, the employee is entitled to return to the same shift on which employed before taking FMLA leave.

(3) If an employee was hired for a specific term or only to perform work on a discrete project, the employer has no obligation to restore the employee if the employment term or project is over and the employer would not otherwise have continued to employ the employee. On the other hand, if an employee was hired to perform work on a contract, and after that contract period the contract was awarded to another contractor, the successor contractor may be required to restore the employee if it is a successor employer. See § 825.107.

(b) In addition to the circumstances explained above, an employer may deny job restoration to salaried eligible employees ("key employees," as defined in § 825.217(c)), if such denial is necessary to prevent substantial and grievous economic injury to the operations of the employer; or may delay restoration to an employee who fails to provide a fitness-for-duty certificate to return to work under the conditions described in § 825.312.

(c) If the employee is unable to perform an essential function of the position because of a physical or mental condition, including the continuation of a serious health condition or an injury or illness also covered by workers' compensation, the employee has no right to restoration to another position under the FMLA. The employer's obligations may, however, be governed by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as amended. See § 825.702, state leave laws, or workers' compensation laws.

(d) An employee who fraudulently obtains FMLA leave from an employer is not protected by FMLA's job restoration or maintenance of health benefits provisions.

(e) If the employer has a uniformly-applied policy governing outside or supplemental employment, such a policy may continue to apply to an employee while on FMLA leave. An employer which does not have such a policy may not deny benefits to which an employee is entitled under FMLA on this basis unless the FMLA leave was fraudulently obtained as in paragraph (d) of this section.

§ 825.217 Key employee, general rule.

(a) A "key employee" is a salaried FMLA-eligible employee who is among the highest paid 10 percent of all the employees employed by the employer within 75 miles of the employee's worksite.

(b) The term "salaried" means "paid on a salary basis," as defined in 29 CFR 541.602. This is the Department of Labor regulation defining employees who may qualify as exempt from the minimum wage and overtime requirements of the FLSA as executive, administrative, professional, and computer employees.

(c) A "key employee" must be "among the highest paid 10 percent" of all the employees—both salaried and non-salaried, eligible and ineligible—who are employed by the employer within 75 miles of the worksite.

(1) In determining which employees are among the highest paid 10 percent, year-to-date earnings are divided by weeks worked by the employee (including weeks in which paid leave was taken). Earnings include wages, premium pay, incentive pay, and non-discretionary and discretionary bonuses. Earnings do not include incentives whose value is determined at some future date, e.g., stock options, or benefits or perquisites.

(2) The determination of whether a salaried employee is among the highest paid 10 percent shall be made at the time the employee gives notice of the need for leave. No more than 10 percent of the employer's employees within 75 miles of the worksite may be "key employees."

§ 825.218 Substantial and grievous economic injury.

(a) In order to deny restoration to a key employee, an employer must determine that the restoration of the employee to employment will cause "substantial and grievous economic injury" to the operations of the employer, not whether the absence of the employee will cause such substantial and grievous injury.

(b) An employer may take into account its ability to replace on a temporary basis (or temporarily do without) the employee on FMLA leave. If permanent replacement is unavoidable, the cost of then reinstating the employee can be considered in evaluating whether substantial and grievous economic injury will occur from restoration; in other words, the effect on the operations of the company of reinstating the employee in an equivalent position.

(c) A precise test cannot be set for the level of hardship or injury to the

employer which must be sustained. If the reinstatement of a "key employee" threatens the economic viability of the firm, that would constitute "substantial and grievous economic injury." A lesser injury which causes substantial, long-term economic injury would also be sufficient. Minor inconveniences and costs that the employer would experience in the normal course of doing business would certainly not constitute "substantial and grievous economic injury."

(d) FMLA's "substantial and grievous economic injury" standard is different from and more stringent than the "undue hardship" test under the ADA (*see also* § 825.702).

§ 825.219 Rights of a key employee.

(a) An employer who believes that reinstatement may be denied to a key employee, must give written notice to the employee at the time the employee gives notice of the need for FMLA leave (or when FMLA leave commences, if earlier) that he or she qualifies as a key employee. At the same time, the employer must also fully inform the employee of the potential consequences with respect to reinstatement and maintenance of health benefits if the employer should determine that substantial and grievous economic injury to the employer's operations will result if the employee is reinstated from FMLA leave. If such notice cannot be given immediately because of the need to determine whether the employee is a key employee, it shall be given as soon as practicable after being notified of a need for leave (or the commencement of leave, if earlier). It is expected that in most circumstances there will be no desire that an employee be denied restoration after FMLA leave and, therefore, there would be no need to provide such notice. However, an employer who fails to provide such timely notice will lose its right to deny restoration even if substantial and grievous economic injury will result from reinstatement.

(b) As soon as an employer makes a good faith determination, based on the facts available, that substantial and grievous economic injury to its operations will result if a key employee who has given notice of the need for FMLA leave or is using FMLA leave is reinstated, the employer shall notify the employee in writing of its determination, that it cannot deny FMLA leave, and that it intends to deny restoration to employment on completion of the FMLA leave. It is anticipated that an employer will ordinarily be able to give such notice prior to the employee starting leave. The

employer must serve this notice either in person or by certified mail. This notice must explain the basis for the employer's finding that substantial and grievous economic injury will result, and, if leave has commenced, must provide the employee a reasonable time in which to return to work, taking into account the circumstances, such as the length of the leave and the urgency of the need for the employee to return.

(c) If an employee on leave does not return to work in response to the employer's notification of intent to deny restoration, the employee continues to be entitled to maintenance of health benefits and the employer may not recover its cost of health benefit premiums. A key employee's rights under FMLA continue unless and until the employee either gives notice that he or she no longer wishes to return to work, or the employer actually denies reinstatement at the conclusion of the leave period.

(d) After notice to an employee has been given that substantial and grievous economic injury will result if the employee is reinstated to employment, an employee is still entitled to request reinstatement at the end of the leave period even if the employee did not return to work in response to the employer's notice. The employer must then again determine whether there will be substantial and grievous economic injury from reinstatement, based on the facts at that time. If it is determined that substantial and grievous economic injury will result, the employer shall notify the employee in writing (in person or by certified mail) of the denial of restoration.

§ 825.220 Protection for employees who request leave or otherwise assert FMLA rights.

(a) The FMLA prohibits interference with an employee's rights under the law, and with legal proceedings or inquiries relating to an employee's rights. More specifically, the law contains the following employee protections:

(1) An employer is prohibited from interfering with, restraining, or denying the exercise of (or attempts to exercise) any rights provided by the Act.

(2) An employer is prohibited from discharging or in any other way discriminating against any person (whether or not an employee) for opposing or complaining about any unlawful practice under the Act.

(3) All persons (whether or not employers) are prohibited from discharging or in any other way discriminating against any person

(whether or not an employee) because that person has—

(i) Filed any charge, or has instituted (or caused to be instituted) any proceeding under or related to this Act;

(ii) Given, or is about to give, any information in connection with an inquiry or proceeding relating to a right under this Act;

(iii) Testified, or is about to testify, in any inquiry or proceeding relating to a right under this Act.

(b) Any violations of the Act or of these regulations constitute interfering with, restraining, or denying the exercise of rights provided by the Act. An employer may be liable for compensation and benefits lost by reason of the violation, for other actual monetary losses sustained as a direct result of the violation, and for appropriate equitable or other relief, including employment, reinstatement, promotion, or any other relief tailored to the harm suffered (*see* § 825.400(c)). "Interfering with" the exercise of an employee's rights would include, for example, not only refusing to authorize FMLA leave, but discouraging an employee from using such leave. It would also include manipulation by a covered employer to avoid responsibilities under FMLA, for example:

(1) Transferring employees from one worksite to another for the purpose of reducing worksites, or to keep worksites, below the 50-employee threshold for employee eligibility under the Act;

(2) Changing the essential functions of the job in order to preclude the taking of leave;

(3) Reducing hours available to work in order to avoid employee eligibility.

(c) The Act's prohibition against "interference" prohibits an employer from discriminating or retaliating against an employee or prospective employee for having exercised or attempted to exercise FMLA rights. For example, if an employee on leave without pay would otherwise be entitled to full benefits (other than health benefits), the same benefits would be required to be provided to an employee on unpaid FMLA leave. By the same token, employers cannot use the taking of FMLA leave as a negative factor in employment actions, such as hiring, promotions or disciplinary actions; nor can FMLA leave be counted under "no fault" attendance policies. *See* § 825.215.

(d) Employees cannot waive, nor may employers induce employees to waive, their prospective rights under FMLA. For example, employees (or their collective bargaining representatives)

cannot "trade off" the right to take FMLA leave against some other benefit offered by the employer. This does not prevent the settlement or release of FMLA claims by employees based on past employer conduct without the approval of the Department of Labor or a court. Nor does it prevent an employee's voluntary and uncoerced acceptance (not as a condition of employment) of a "light duty" assignment while recovering from a serious health condition (see § 825.702(d)). An employee's acceptance of such "light duty" assignment does not constitute a waiver of the employee's prospective rights, including the right to be restored to the same position the employee held at the time the employee's FMLA leave commenced or to an equivalent position. The employee's right to restoration, however, ceases at the end of the applicable 12-month FMLA leave year.

(e) Individuals, and not merely employees, are protected from retaliation for opposing (e.g., filing a complaint about) any practice which is unlawful under the Act. They are similarly protected if they oppose any practice which they reasonably believe to be a violation of the Act or regulations.

Subpart C—Employee and Employer Rights and Obligations Under the Act

§ 825.300 Employer notice requirements.

(a) *General notice.* (1) Every employer covered by the FMLA is required to post and keep posted on its premises, in conspicuous places where employees are employed, a notice explaining the Act's provisions and providing information concerning the procedures for filing complaints of violations of the Act with the Wage and Hour Division. The notice must be posted prominently where it can be readily seen by employees and applicants for employment. The poster and the text must be large enough to be easily read and contain fully legible text. Electronic posting is sufficient to meet this posting requirement as long as it otherwise meets the requirements of this section. An employer that willfully violates the posting requirement may be assessed a civil money penalty by the Wage and Hour Division not to exceed \$110 for each separate offense.

(2) Covered employers must post this general notice even if no employees are eligible for FMLA leave.

(3) If an FMLA-covered employer has any eligible employees, it shall also provide this general notice to each employee by including the notice in employee handbooks or other written

guidance to employees concerning employee benefits or leave rights, if such written materials exist, or by distributing a copy of the general notice to each new employee upon hiring. In either case, distribution may be accomplished electronically.

(4) To meet the requirements of paragraph (a)(3) of this section, employers may duplicate the text of the notice contained in Appendix C of this part or may use another format so long as the information provided includes, at a minimum, all of the information contained in that notice. Where an employer's workforce is comprised of a significant portion of workers who are not literate in English, the employer shall provide the general notice in a language in which the employees are literate. Prototypes are available from the nearest office of the Wage and Hour Division or on the Internet at <http://www.wagehour.dol.gov>. Employers furnishing FMLA notices to sensory-impaired individuals must also comply with all applicable requirements under Federal or State law.

(b) *Eligibility notice.* (1) When an employee requests FMLA leave, or when the employer acquires knowledge that an employee's leave may be for an FMLA-qualifying reason, the employer must notify the employee of the employee's eligibility to take FMLA leave within five business days, absent extenuating circumstances. See § 825.110 for definition of an eligible employee. Employee eligibility is determined (and notice must be provided) at the commencement of the first instance of leave for each FMLA-qualifying reason in the applicable 12-month period (see §§ 825.127(c) and 825.200(b)). All FMLA absences for the same qualifying reason are considered a single leave and employee eligibility as to that reason for leave does not change during the applicable 12-month period.

(2) The eligibility notice must state whether the employee is eligible for FMLA leave as defined in § 825.110(a). If the employee is not eligible for FMLA leave, the notice must state at least one reason why the employee is not eligible, including as applicable the number of months the employee has been employed by the employer, the number of hours of service worked for the employer during the 12-month period, and whether the employee is employed at a worksite where 50 or more employees are employed by the employer within 75 miles of that worksite. Notification of eligibility may be oral or in writing; employers may use Appendix D of this part 825 to provide such notification to employees. The employer is obligated to translate this

notice in any situation in which it is obligated to do so in § 825.300(a)(4).

(3) If, at the time an employee provides notice of a subsequent need for FMLA leave during the applicable 12-month period due to a different FMLA-qualifying reason, and the employee's eligibility status has not changed, no additional eligibility notice is required. If, however, the employee's eligibility status has changed (e.g., if the employee has worked less than 1,250 hours of service for the employer in the 12 months preceding the commencement of leave for the subsequent qualifying reason or the size of the workforce at the worksite has dropped below 50 employees), the employer must notify the employee of the change in eligibility status within five business days, absent extenuating circumstances.

(c) *Rights and responsibilities notice.* (1) Employers shall provide written notice detailing the specific expectations and obligations of the employee and explaining any consequences of a failure to meet these obligations. The employer is obligated to translate this notice in any situation in which it is obligated to do so in § 825.300(a)(4). This notice shall be provided to the employee each time the eligibility notice is provided pursuant to paragraph (b) of this section. If leave has already begun, the notice should be mailed to the employee's address of record. Such specific notice must include, as appropriate:

(i) That the leave may be designated and counted against the employee's annual FMLA leave entitlement if qualifying (see §§ 825.300(c) and 825.301) and the applicable 12-month period for FMLA entitlement (see §§ 825.127(c), 825.200(b), (f), and (g));

(ii) Any requirements for the employee to furnish certification of a serious health condition, serious injury or illness, or qualifying exigency arising out of active duty or call to active duty status, and the consequences of failing to do so (see §§ 825.305, 825.309, 825.310, 825.313);

(iii) The employee's right to substitute paid leave, whether the employer will require the substitution of paid leave, the conditions related to any substitution, and the employee's entitlement to take unpaid FMLA leave if the employee does not meet the conditions for paid leave (see § 825.207);

(iv) Any requirement for the employee to make any premium payments to maintain health benefits and the arrangements for making such payments (see § 825.210), and the possible consequences of failure to make such

payments on a timely basis (*i.e.*, the circumstances under which coverage may lapse);

(v) The employee's status as a "key employee" and the potential consequence that restoration may be denied following FMLA leave, explaining the conditions required for such denial (*see* § 825.218);

(vi) The employee's rights to maintenance of benefits during the FMLA leave and restoration to the same or an equivalent job upon return from FMLA leave (*see* §§ 825.214 and 825.604); and

(vii) The employee's potential liability for payment of health insurance premiums paid by the employer during the employee's unpaid FMLA leave if the employee fails to return to work after taking FMLA leave (*see* § 825.213).

(2) The notice of rights and responsibilities may include other information—*e.g.*, whether the employer will require periodic reports of the employee's status and intent to return to work—but is not required to do so.

(3) The notice of rights and responsibilities may be accompanied by any required certification form.

(4) If the specific information provided by the notice of rights and responsibilities changes, the employer shall, within five business days of receipt of the employee's first notice of need for leave subsequent to any change, provide written notice referencing the prior notice and setting forth any of the information in the notice of rights and responsibilities that has changed. For example, if the initial leave period was paid leave and the subsequent leave period would be unpaid leave, the employer may need to give notice of the arrangements for making premium payments.

(5) Employers are also expected to responsively answer questions from employees concerning their rights and responsibilities under the FMLA.

(6) A prototype notice of rights and responsibilities is contained in Appendix D of this part; the prototype may be obtained from local offices of the Wage and Hour Division or from the Internet at www.wagehour.dol.gov. Employers may adapt the prototype notice as appropriate to meet these notice requirements. The notice of rights and responsibilities may be distributed electronically so long as it otherwise meets the requirements of this section.

(d) *Designation notice.* (1) The employer is responsible in all circumstances for designating leave as FMLA-qualifying, and for giving notice of the designation to the employee as provided in this section. When the employer has enough information to

determine whether the leave is being taken for a FMLA-qualifying reason (*e.g.*, after receiving a certification), the employer must notify the employee whether the leave will be designated and will be counted as FMLA leave within five business days absent extenuating circumstances. Only one notice of designation is required for each FMLA-qualifying reason per applicable 12-month period, regardless of whether the leave taken due to the qualifying reason will be a continuous block of leave or intermittent or reduced schedule leave. If the employer determines that the leave will not be designated as FMLA-qualifying (*e.g.*, if the leave is not for a reason covered by FMLA or the FMLA leave entitlement has been exhausted), the employer must notify the employee of that determination. If the employer requires paid leave to be substituted for unpaid FMLA leave, or that paid leave taken under an existing leave plan be counted as FMLA leave, the employer must inform the employee of this designation at the time of designating the FMLA leave.

(2) If the employer has sufficient information to designate the leave as FMLA leave immediately after receiving notice of the employee's need for leave, the employer may provide the employee with the designation notice at that time.

(3) If the employer will require the employee to present a fitness-for-duty certification to be restored to employment, the employer must provide notice of such requirement with the designation notice. If the employer will require that the fitness-for-duty certification address the employee's ability to perform the essential functions of the employee's position, the employer must so indicate in the designation notice, and must include a list of the essential functions of the employee's position. *See* § 825.312. If the employer handbook or other written documents (if any) describing the employer's leave policies clearly provide that a fitness-for-duty certification will be required in specific circumstances (*e.g.*, by stating that fitness-for-duty certification will be required in all cases of back injuries for employees in a certain occupation), the employer is not required to provide written notice of the requirement with the designation notice, but must provide oral notice no later than with the designation notice.

(4) The designation notice must be in writing. A prototype designation notice is contained in Appendix E of this part; the prototype designation notice may be obtained from local offices of the Wage and Hour Division or from the Internet

at <http://www.wagehour.dol.gov>. If the leave is not designated as FMLA leave because it does not meet the requirements of the Act, the notice to the employee that the leave is not designated as FMLA leave may be in the form of a simple written statement.

(5) If the information provided by the employer to the employee in the designation notice changes (*e.g.*, the employee exhausts the FMLA leave entitlement), the employer shall provide, within five business days of receipt of the employee's first notice of need for leave subsequent to any change, written notice of the change.

(6) The employer must notify the employee of the amount of leave counted against the employee's FMLA leave entitlement. If the amount of leave needed is known at the time the employer designates the leave as FMLA-qualifying, the employer must notify the employee of the number of hours, days, or weeks that will be counted against the employee's FMLA leave entitlement in the designation notice. If it is not possible to provide the hours, days, or weeks that will be counted against the employee's FMLA leave entitlement (such as in the case of unforeseeable intermittent leave), then the employer must provide notice of the amount of leave counted against the employee's FMLA leave entitlement upon the request by the employee, but no more often than once in a 30-day period and only if leave was taken in that period. The notice of the amount of leave counted against the employee's FMLA entitlement may be oral or in writing. If such notice is oral, it shall be confirmed in writing, no later than the following payday (unless the payday is less than one week after the oral notice, in which case the notice must be no later than the subsequent payday). Such written notice may be in any form, including a notation on the employee's pay stub.

(e) *Consequences of failing to provide notice.* Failure to follow the notice requirements set forth in this section may constitute an interference with, restraint, or denial of the exercise of an employee's FMLA rights. An employer may be liable for compensation and benefits lost by reason of the violation, for other actual monetary losses sustained as a direct result of the violation, and for appropriate equitable or other relief, including employment, reinstatement, promotion, or any other relief tailored to the harm suffered (*see* § 825.400(c)).

§ 825.301 Designation of FMLA leave.

(a) *Employer responsibilities.* The employer's decision to designate leave as FMLA-qualifying must be based only

on information received from the employee or the employee's spokesperson (e.g., if the employee is incapacitated, the employee's spouse, adult child, parent, doctor, etc.), may provide notice to the employer of the need to take FMLA leave). In any circumstance where the employer does not have sufficient information about the reason for an employee's use of leave, the employer should inquire further of the employee or the spokesperson to ascertain whether leave is potentially FMLA-qualifying. Once the employer has acquired knowledge that the leave is being taken for a FMLA-qualifying reason, the employer must notify the employee as provided in § 825.300(d).

(b) *Employee responsibilities.* An employee giving notice of the need for FMLA leave does not need to expressly assert rights under the Act or even mention the FMLA to meet his or her obligation to provide notice, though the employee would need to state a qualifying reason for the needed leave and otherwise satisfy the notice requirements set forth in § 825.302 or § 825.303 depending on whether the need for leave is foreseeable or unforeseeable. An employee giving notice of the need for FMLA leave must explain the reasons for the needed leave so as to allow the employer to determine whether the leave qualifies under the Act. If the employee fails to explain the reasons, leave may be denied. In many cases, in explaining the reasons for a request to use leave, especially when the need for the leave was unexpected or unforeseen, an employee will provide sufficient information for the employer to designate the leave as FMLA leave. An employee using accrued paid leave may in some cases not spontaneously explain the reasons or their plans for using their accrued leave. However, if an employee requesting to use paid leave for a FMLA-qualifying reason does not explain the reason for the leave and the employer denies the employee's request, the employee will need to provide sufficient information to establish a FMLA-qualifying reason for the needed leave so that the employer is aware that the leave may not be denied and may designate that the paid leave be appropriately counted against (substituted for) the employee's FMLA leave entitlement. Similarly, an employee using accrued paid vacation leave who seeks an extension of unpaid leave for a FMLA-qualifying reason will need to state the reason. If this is due to an event which occurred during the period of paid leave, the employer may count the leave used after the FMLA-

qualifying reason against the employee's FMLA leave entitlement.

(c) *Disputes.* If there is a dispute between an employer and an employee as to whether leave qualifies as FMLA leave, it should be resolved through discussions between the employee and the employer. Such discussions and the decision must be documented.

(d) *Retroactive designation.* If an employer does not designate leave as required by § 825.300, the employer may retroactively designate leave as FMLA leave with appropriate notice to the employee as required by § 825.300 provided that the employer's failure to timely designate leave does not cause harm or injury to the employee. In all cases where leave would qualify for FMLA protections, an employer and an employee can mutually agree that leave be retroactively designated as FMLA leave.

(e) *Remedies.* If an employer's failure to timely designate leave in accordance with § 825.300 causes the employee to suffer harm, it may constitute an interference with, restraint of, or denial of the exercise of an employee's FMLA rights. An employer may be liable for compensation and benefits lost by reason of the violation, for other actual monetary losses sustained as a direct result of the violation, and for appropriate equitable or other relief, including employment, reinstatement, promotion, or any other relief tailored to the harm suffered (see § 825.400(c)). For example, if an employer that was put on notice that an employee needed FMLA leave failed to designate the leave properly, but the employee's own serious health condition prevented him or her from returning to work during that time period regardless of the designation, an employee may not be able to show that the employee suffered harm as a result of the employer's actions. However, if an employee took leave to provide care for a son or daughter with a serious health condition believing it would not count toward his or her FMLA entitlement, and the employee planned to later use that FMLA leave to provide care for a spouse who would need assistance when recovering from surgery planned for a later date, the employee may be able to show that harm has occurred as a result of the employer's failure to designate properly. The employee might establish this by showing that he or she would have arranged for an alternative caregiver for the seriously-ill son or daughter if the leave had been designated timely.

§ 825.302 Employee notice requirements for foreseeable FMLA leave.

(a) *Timing of notice.* An employee must provide the employer at least 30 days advance notice before FMLA leave is to begin if the need for the leave is foreseeable based on an expected birth, placement for adoption or foster care, planned medical treatment for a serious health condition of the employee or of a family member, or the planned medical treatment for a serious injury or illness of a covered servicemember. If 30 days notice is not practicable, such as because of a lack of knowledge of approximately when leave will be required to begin, a change in circumstances, or a medical emergency, notice must be given as soon as practicable. For example, an employee's health condition may require leave to commence earlier than anticipated before the birth of a child. Similarly, little opportunity for notice may be given before placement for adoption. For foreseeable leave due to a qualifying exigency notice must be provided as soon as practicable, regardless of how far in advance such leave is foreseeable. Whether FMLA leave is to be continuous or is to be taken intermittently or on a reduced schedule basis, notice need only be given one time, but the employee shall advise the employer as soon as practicable if dates of scheduled leave change or are extended, or were initially unknown. In those cases where the employee is required to provide at least 30 days notice of foreseeable leave and does not do so, the employee shall explain the reasons why such notice was not practicable upon a request from the employer for such information.

(b) *As soon as practicable* means as soon as both possible and practical, taking into account all of the facts and circumstances in the individual case. When an employee becomes aware of a need for FMLA leave less than 30 days in advance, it should be practicable for the employee to provide notice of the need for leave either the same day or the next business day. In all cases, however, the determination of when an employee could practicably provide notice must take into account the individual facts and circumstances.

(c) *Content of notice.* An employee shall provide at least verbal notice sufficient to make the employer aware that the employee needs FMLA-qualifying leave, and the anticipated timing and duration of the leave. Depending on the situation, such information may include that a condition renders the employee unable to perform the functions of the job; that the employee is pregnant or has been

hospitalized overnight; whether the employee or the employee's family member is under the continuing care of a health care provider; if the leave is due to a qualifying exigency, that a covered military member is on active duty or call to active duty status, and that the requested leave is for one of the reasons listed in § 825.126(a); if the leave is for a family member, that the condition renders the family member unable to perform daily activities, or that the family member is a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness; and the anticipated duration of the absence, if known. When an employee seeks leave for the first time for a FMLA-qualifying reason, the employee need not expressly assert rights under the FMLA or even mention the FMLA. When an employee seeks leave due to a FMLA-qualifying reason, for which the employer has previously provided FMLA-protected leave, the employee must specifically reference the qualifying reason for leave or the need for FMLA leave. In all cases, the employer should inquire further of the employee if it is necessary to have more information about whether FMLA leave is being sought by the employee, and obtain the necessary details of the leave to be taken. In the case of medical conditions, the employer may find it necessary to inquire further to determine if the leave is because of a serious health condition and may request medical certification to support the need for such leave (see § 825.305). An employer may also request certification to support the need for leave for a qualifying exigency or for military caregiver leave (see §§ 825.309, 825.310). When an employee has been previously certified for leave due to more than one FMLA-qualifying reason, the employer may need to inquire further to determine for which qualifying reason the leave is needed. An employee has an obligation to respond to an employer's questions designed to determine whether an absence is potentially FMLA-qualifying. Failure to respond to reasonable employer inquiries regarding the leave request may result in denial of FMLA protection if the employer is unable to determine whether the leave is FMLA-qualifying.

(d) *Complying with employer policy.* An employer may require an employee to comply with the employer's usual and customary notice and procedural requirements for requesting leave, absent unusual circumstances. For example, an employer may require that written notice set forth the reasons for the requested leave, the anticipated

duration of the leave, and the anticipated start of the leave. An employer also may be required by an employer's policy to contact a specific individual. Unusual circumstances would include situations such as when an employee is unable to comply with the employer's policy that requests for leave should be made by contacting a specific number because on the day the employee needs to provide notice of his or her need for FMLA leave there is no one to answer the call-in number and the voice mail box is full. Where an employee does not comply with the employer's usual notice and procedural requirements, and no unusual circumstances justify the failure to comply, FMLA-protected leave may be delayed or denied. However, FMLA-protected leave may not be delayed or denied where the employer's policy requires notice to be given sooner than set forth in paragraph (a) of this section and the employee provides timely notice as set forth in paragraph (a) of this section.

(e) *Scheduling planned medical treatment.* When planning medical treatment, the employee must consult with the employer and make a reasonable effort to schedule the treatment so as not to disrupt unduly the employer's operations, subject to the approval of the health care provider. Employees are ordinarily expected to consult with their employers prior to the scheduling of treatment in order to work out a treatment schedule which best suits the needs of both the employer and the employee. For example, if an employee who provides notice of the need to take FMLA leave on an intermittent basis for planned medical treatment neglects to consult with the employer to make a reasonable effort to arrange the schedule of treatments so as not to unduly disrupt the employer's operations, the employer may initiate discussions with the employee and require the employee to attempt to make such arrangements, subject to the approval of the health care provider. See §§ 825.203 and 825.205.

(f) Intermittent leave or leave on a reduced leave schedule must be medically necessary due to a serious health condition or a serious injury or illness. An employee shall advise the employer, upon request, of the reasons why the intermittent/reduced leave schedule is necessary and of the schedule for treatment, if applicable. The employee and employer shall attempt to work out a schedule for such leave that meets the employee's needs without unduly disrupting the employer's operations, subject to the approval of the health care provider.

(g) An employer may waive employees' FMLA notice requirements. See § 825.304.

§ 825.303 Employee notice requirements for unforeseeable FMLA leave.

(a) *Timing of notice.* When the approximate timing of the need for leave is not foreseeable, an employee must provide notice to the employer as soon as practicable under the facts and circumstances of the particular case. It generally should be practicable for the employee to provide notice of leave that is unforeseeable within the time prescribed by the employer's usual and customary notice requirements applicable to such leave. See § 825.303(c). Notice may be given by the employee's spokesperson (e.g., spouse, adult family member, or other responsible party) if the employee is unable to do so personally. For example, if an employee's child has a severe asthma attack and the employee takes the child to the emergency room, the employee would not be required to leave his or her child in order to report the absence while the child is receiving emergency treatment. However, if the child's asthma attack required only the use of an inhaler at home followed by a period of rest, the employee would be expected to call the employer promptly after ensuring the child has used the inhaler.

(b) *Content of notice.* An employee shall provide sufficient information for an employer to reasonably determine whether the FMLA may apply to the leave request. Depending on the situation, such information may include that a condition renders the employee unable to perform the functions of the job; that the employee is pregnant or has been hospitalized overnight; whether the employee or the employee's family member is under the continuing care of a health care provider; if the leave is due to a qualifying exigency, that a covered military member is on active duty or call to active duty status, that the requested leave is for one of the reasons listed in § 825.126(a), and the anticipated duration of the absence; or if the leave is for a family member that the condition renders the family member unable to perform daily activities or that the family member is a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness; and the anticipated duration of the absence, if known. When an employee seeks leave for the first time for a FMLA-qualifying reason, the employee need not expressly assert rights under the FMLA or even mention the FMLA. When an employee seeks leave due to a qualifying reason, for which the employer has previously

provided the employee FMLA-protected leave, the employee must specifically reference either the qualifying reason for leave or the need for FMLA leave. Calling in "sick" without providing more information will not be considered sufficient notice to trigger an employer's obligations under the Act. The employer will be expected to obtain any additional required information through informal means. An employee has an obligation to respond to an employer's questions designed to determine whether an absence is potentially FMLA-qualifying. Failure to respond to reasonable employer inquiries regarding the leave request may result in denial of FMLA protection if the employer is unable to determine whether the leave is FMLA-qualifying.

(c) *Complying with employer policy.* When the need for leave is not foreseeable, an employee must comply with the employer's usual and customary requirements for requesting leave, absent unusual circumstances. For example, an employer may require employees to call a designated number or a specific individual to request leave. However, if an employee requires emergency medical treatment, he or she would not be required to follow the call-in procedure until his or her condition is stabilized and he or she has access to, and is able to use, a phone. Similarly, in the case of an emergency requiring leave because of a FMLA-qualifying reason, written advance notice pursuant to an employer's internal rules and procedures may not be required when FMLA leave is involved. If an employee does not comply with the employer's usual notice and procedural requirements, and no unusual circumstances justify the failure to comply, FMLA-protected leave may be delayed or denied.

§ 825.304 Employee failure to provide notice.

(a) *Proper notice required.* In all cases, in order for the onset of an employee's FMLA leave to be delayed due to lack of required notice, it must be clear that the employee had actual notice of the FMLA notice requirements. This condition would be satisfied by the employer's proper posting of the required notice at the worksite where the employee is employed and the employer's provision of the required notice in either an employee handbook or employee distribution, as required by § 825.300.

(b) *Foreseeable leave—30 days.* When the need for FMLA leave is foreseeable at least 30 days in advance and an employee fails to give timely advance

notice with no reasonable excuse, the employer may delay FMLA coverage until 30 days after the date the employee provides notice. The need for leave and the approximate date leave would be taken must have been clearly foreseeable to the employee 30 days in advance of the leave. For example, knowledge that an employee would receive a telephone call about the availability of a child for adoption at some unknown point in the future would not be sufficient to establish the leave was clearly foreseeable 30 days in advance.

(c) *Foreseeable leave—less than 30 days.* When the need for FMLA leave is foreseeable fewer than 30 days in advance and an employee fails to give notice as soon as practicable under the particular facts and circumstances, the extent to which an employer may delay FMLA coverage for leave depends on the facts of the particular case. For example, if an employee reasonably should have given the employer two weeks notice but instead only provided one week notice, then the employer may delay FMLA-protected leave for one week (thus, if the employer elects to delay FMLA coverage and the employee nonetheless takes leave one week after providing the notice (*i.e.*, a week before the two week notice period has been met) the leave will not be FMLA-protected).

(d) *Unforeseeable leave.* When the need for FMLA leave is unforeseeable and an employee fails to give notice in accordance with § 825.303, the extent to which an employer may delay FMLA coverage for leave depends on the facts of the particular case. For example, if it would have been practicable for an employee to have given the employer notice of the need for leave very soon after the need arises consistent with the employer's policy, but instead the employee provided notice two days after the leave began, then the employer may delay FMLA coverage of the leave by two days.

(e) *Waiver of notice.* An employer may waive employees' FMLA notice obligations or the employer's own internal rules on leave notice requirements. If an employer does not waive the employee's obligations under its internal leave rules, the employer may take appropriate action under its internal rules and procedures for failure to follow its usual and customary notification rules, absent unusual circumstances, as long as the actions are taken in a manner that does not discriminate against employees taking FMLA leave and the rules are not inconsistent with § 825.303(a).

§ 825.305 Certification, general rule.

(a) *General.* An employer may require that an employee's leave to care for the employee's covered family member with a serious health condition, or due to the employee's own serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform one or more of the essential functions of the employee's position, be supported by a certification issued by the health care provider of the employee or the employee's family member. An employer may also require that an employee's leave because of a qualifying exigency or to care for a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness be supported by a certification, as described in §§ 825.309 and 825.310, respectively. An employer must give notice of a requirement for certification each time a certification is required; such notice must be written notice whenever required by § 825.300(c). An employer's oral request to an employee to furnish any subsequent certification is sufficient.

(b) *Timing.* In most cases, the employer should request that an employee furnish certification at the time the employee gives notice of the need for leave or within five business days thereafter, or, in the case of unforeseen leave, within five business days after the leave commences. The employer may request certification at some later date if the employer later has reason to question the appropriateness of the leave or its duration. The employee must provide the requested certification to the employer within 15 calendar days after the employer's request, unless it is not practicable under the particular circumstances to do so despite the employee's diligent, good faith efforts or the employer provides more than 15 calendar days to return the requested certification.

(c) *Complete and sufficient certification.* The employee must provide a complete and sufficient certification to the employer if required by the employer in accordance with §§ 825.306, 825.309, and 825.310. The employer shall advise an employee whenever the employer finds a certification incomplete or insufficient, and shall state in writing what additional information is necessary to make the certification complete and sufficient. A certification is considered incomplete if the employer receives a certification, but one or more of the applicable entries have not been completed. A certification is considered insufficient if the employer receives a complete certification, but the information provided is vague, ambiguous, or non-responsive. The

employer must provide the employee with seven calendar days (unless not practicable under the particular circumstances despite the employee's diligent good faith efforts) to cure any such deficiency. If the deficiencies specified by the employer are not cured in the resubmitted certification, the employer may deny the taking of FMLA leave, in accordance with § 825.313. A certification that is not returned to the employer is not considered incomplete or insufficient, but constitutes a failure to provide certification.

(d) *Consequences.* At the time the employer requests certification, the employer must also advise an employee of the anticipated consequences of an employee's failure to provide adequate certification. If the employee fails to provide the employer with a complete and sufficient certification, despite the opportunity to cure the certification as provided in paragraph (c) of this section, or fails to provide any certification, the employer may deny the taking of FMLA leave, in accordance with § 825.313. It is the employee's responsibility either to furnish a complete and sufficient certification or to furnish the health care provider providing the certification with any necessary authorization from the employee or the employee's family member in order for the health care provider to release a complete and sufficient certification to the employer to support the employee's FMLA request. This provision will apply in any case where an employer requests a certification permitted by these regulations, whether it is the initial certification, a recertification, a second or third opinion, or a fitness for duty certificate, including any clarifications necessary to determine if such certifications are authentic and sufficient. See §§ 825.306, 825.307, 825.308, and 825.312.

(e) *Annual medical certification.* Where the employee's need for leave due to the employee's own serious health condition, or the serious health condition of the employee's covered family member, lasts beyond a single leave year (as defined in § 825.200), the employer may require the employee to provide a new medical certification in each subsequent leave year. Such new medical certifications are subject to the provisions for authentication and clarification set forth in § 825.307, including second and third opinions.

§ 825.306 Content of medical certification for leave taken because of an employee's own serious health condition or the serious health condition of a family member.

(a) *Required information.* When leave is taken because of an employee's own serious health condition, or the serious health condition of a family member, an employer may require an employee to obtain a medical certification from a health care provider that sets forth the following information:

(1) The name, address, telephone number, and fax number of the health care provider and type of medical practice/specialization;

(2) The approximate date on which the serious health condition commenced, and its probable duration;

(3) A statement or description of appropriate medical facts regarding the patient's health condition for which FMLA leave is requested. The medical facts must be sufficient to support the need for leave. Such medical facts may include information on symptoms, diagnosis, hospitalization, doctor visits, whether medication has been prescribed, any referrals for evaluation or treatment (physical therapy, for example), or any other regimen of continuing treatment;

(4) If the employee is the patient, information sufficient to establish that the employee cannot perform the essential functions of the employee's job as well as the nature of any other work restrictions, and the likely duration of such inability (see § 825.123(b) and (c));

(5) If the patient is a covered family member with a serious health condition, information sufficient to establish that the family member is in need of care, as described in § 825.124, and an estimate of the frequency and duration of the leave required to care for the family member;

(6) If an employee requests leave on an intermittent or reduced schedule basis for planned medical treatment of the employee's or a covered family member's serious health condition, information sufficient to establish the medical necessity for such intermittent or reduced schedule leave and an estimate of the dates and duration of such treatments and any periods of recovery;

(7) If an employee requests leave on an intermittent or reduced schedule basis for the employee's serious health condition, including pregnancy, that may result in unforeseeable episodes of incapacity, information sufficient to establish the medical necessity for such intermittent or reduced schedule leave and an estimate of the frequency and duration of the episodes of incapacity; and

(8) If an employee requests leave on an intermittent or reduced schedule basis to care for a covered family member with a serious health condition, a statement that such leave is medically necessary to care for the family member, as described in §§ 825.124 and 825.203(b), which can include assisting in the family member's recovery, and an estimate of the frequency and duration of the required leave.

(b) DOL has developed two optional forms (Form WH-380E and Form WH-380F, as revised) for use in obtaining medical certification, including second and third opinions, from health care providers that meets FMLA's certification requirements. (See Appendix B to this Part 825.) Optional form WH-380E is for use when the employee's need for leave is due to the employee's own serious health condition. Optional form WH-380F is for use when the employee needs leave to care for a family member with a serious health condition. These optional forms reflect certification requirements so as to permit the health care provider to furnish appropriate medical information. Form WH-380E and WH-380F, as revised, or another form containing the same basic information, may be used by the employer; however, no information may be required beyond that specified in §§ 825.306, 825.307, and 825.308. In all instances the information on the form must relate only to the serious health condition for which the current need for leave exists.

(c) If an employee is on FMLA leave running concurrently with a workers' compensation absence, and the provisions of the workers' compensation statute permit the employer or the employer's representative to request additional information from the employee's workers' compensation health care provider, the FMLA does not prevent the employer from following the workers' compensation provisions and information received under those provisions may be considered in determining the employee's entitlement to FMLA-protected leave. Similarly, an employer may request additional information in accordance with a paid leave policy or disability plan that requires greater information to qualify for payments or benefits, provided that the employer informs the employee that the additional information only needs to be provided in connection with receipt of such payments or benefits. Any information received pursuant to such policy or plan may be considered in determining the employee's entitlement to FMLA-protected leave. If the employee fails to provide the information required for receipt of such

payments or benefits, such failure will not affect the employee's entitlement to take unpaid FMLA leave. See § 825.207(a).

(d) If an employee's serious health condition may also be a disability within the meaning of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as amended, the FMLA does not prevent the employer from following the procedures for requesting medical information under the ADA. Any information received pursuant to these procedures may be considered in determining the employee's entitlement to FMLA-protected leave.

(e) While an employee may choose to comply with the certification requirement by providing the employer with an authorization, release, or waiver allowing the employer to communicate directly with the health care provider of the employee or his or her covered family member, the employee may not be required to provide such an authorization, release, or waiver. In all instances in which certification is requested, it is the employee's responsibility to provide the employer with complete and sufficient certification and failure to do so may result in the denial of FMLA leave. See § 825.305(d).

§ 825.307 Authentication and clarification of medical certification for leave taken because of an employee's own serious health condition or the serious health condition of a family member; second and third opinions.

(a) *Clarification and authentication.* If an employee submits a complete and sufficient certification signed by the health care provider, the employer may not request additional information from the health care provider. However, the employer may contact the health care provider for purposes of clarification and authentication of the medical certification (whether initial certification or recertification) after the employer has given the employee an opportunity to cure any deficiencies as set forth in § 825.305(c). To make such contact, the employer must use a health care provider, a human resources professional, a leave administrator, or a management official. Under no circumstances, however, may the employee's direct supervisor contact the employee's health care provider. For purposes of these regulations, "authentication" means providing the health care provider with a copy of the certification and requesting verification that the information contained on the certification form was completed and/or authorized by the health care provider who signed the document; no additional

medical information may be requested. "Clarification" means contacting the health care provider to understand the handwriting on the medical certification or to understand the meaning of a response. Employers may not ask health care providers for additional information beyond that required by the certification form. The requirements of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act ("HIPAA") Privacy Rule (see 45 CFR parts 160 and 164), which governs the privacy of individually-identifiable health information created or held by HIPAA-covered entities, must be satisfied when individually-identifiable health information of an employee is shared with an employer by a HIPAA-covered health care provider. If an employee chooses not to provide the employer with authorization allowing the employer to clarify the certification with the health care provider, and does not otherwise clarify the certification, the employer may deny the taking of FMLA leave if the certification is unclear. See § 825.305(d). It is the employee's responsibility to provide the employer with a complete and sufficient certification and to clarify the certification if necessary.

(b) *Second opinion.* (1) An employer who has reason to doubt the validity of a medical certification may require the employee to obtain a second opinion at the employer's expense. Pending receipt of the second (or third) medical opinion, the employee is provisionally entitled to the benefits of the Act, including maintenance of group health benefits. If the certifications do not ultimately establish the employee's entitlement to FMLA leave, the leave shall not be designated as FMLA leave and may be treated as paid or unpaid leave under the employer's established leave policies. In addition, the consequences set forth in § 825.305(d) will apply if the employee or the employee's family member fails to authorize his or her health care provider to release all relevant medical information pertaining to the serious health condition at issue if requested by the health care provider designated to provide a second opinion in order to render a sufficient and complete second opinion.

(2) The employer is permitted to designate the health care provider to furnish the second opinion, but the selected health care provider may not be employed on a regular basis by the employer. The employer may not regularly contract with or otherwise regularly utilize the services of the health care provider furnishing the second opinion unless the employer is located in an area where access to

health care is extremely limited (e.g., a rural area where no more than one or two doctors practice in the relevant specialty in the vicinity).

(c) *Third opinion.* If the opinions of the employee's and the employer's designated health care providers differ, the employer may require the employee to obtain certification from a third health care provider, again at the employer's expense. This third opinion shall be final and binding. The third health care provider must be designated or approved jointly by the employer and the employee. The employer and the employee must each act in good faith to attempt to reach agreement on whom to select for the third opinion provider. If the employer does not attempt in good faith to reach agreement, the employer will be bound by the first certification. If the employee does not attempt in good faith to reach agreement, the employee will be bound by the second certification. For example, an employee who refuses to agree to see a doctor in the specialty in question may be failing to act in good faith. On the other hand, an employer that refuses to agree to any doctor on a list of specialists in the appropriate field provided by the employee and whom the employee has not previously consulted may be failing to act in good faith. In addition, the consequences set forth in § 825.305(d) will apply if the employee or the employee's family member fails to authorize his or her health care provider to release all relevant medical information pertaining to the serious health condition at issue if requested by the health care provider designated to provide a third opinion in order to render a sufficient and complete third opinion.

(d) *Copies of opinions.* The employer is required to provide the employee with a copy of the second and third medical opinions, where applicable, upon request by the employee. Requested copies are to be provided within five business days unless extenuating circumstances prevent such action.

(e) *Travel expenses.* If the employer requires the employee to obtain either a second or third opinion the employer must reimburse an employee or family member for any reasonable "out of pocket" travel expenses incurred to obtain the second and third medical opinions. The employer may not require the employee or family member to travel outside normal commuting distance for purposes of obtaining the second or third medical opinions except in very unusual circumstances.

(f) *Medical certification abroad.* In circumstances in which the employee or

a family member is visiting in another country, or a family member resides in another country, and a serious health condition develops, the employer shall accept a medical certification as well as second and third opinions from a health care provider who practices in that country. Where a certification by a foreign health care provider is in a language other than English, the employee must provide the employer with a written translation of the certification upon request.

§ 825.308 Recertifications for leave taken because of an employee's own serious health condition or the serious health condition of a family member.

(a) *30-day rule.* An employer may request recertification no more often than every 30 days and only in connection with an absence by the employee, unless paragraphs (b) or (c) of this section apply.

(b) *More than 30 days.* If the medical certification indicates that the minimum duration of the condition is more than 30 days, an employer must wait until that minimum duration expires before requesting a recertification, unless paragraph (c) of this section applies. For example, if the medical certification states that an employee will be unable to work, whether continuously or on an intermittent basis, for 40 days, the employer must wait 40 days before requesting a recertification. In all cases, an employer may request a recertification of a medical condition every six months in connection with an absence by the employee. Accordingly, even if the medical certification indicates that the employee will need intermittent or reduced schedule leave for a period in excess of six months (e.g., for a lifetime condition), the employer would be permitted to request recertification every six months in connection with an absence.

(c) *Less than 30 days.* An employer may request recertification in less than 30 days if:

- (1) The employee requests an extension of leave;
- (2) Circumstances described by the previous certification have changed significantly (e.g., the duration or frequency of the absence, the nature or severity of the illness, complications). For example, if a medical certification stated that an employee would need leave for one to two days when the employee suffered a migraine headache and the employee's absences for his or her last two migraines lasted four days each, then the increased duration of absence might constitute a significant change in circumstances allowing the employer to request a recertification in

less than 30 days. Likewise, if an employee had a pattern of using unscheduled FMLA leave for migraines in conjunction with his or her scheduled days off, then the timing of the absences also might constitute a significant change in circumstances sufficient for an employer to request a recertification more frequently than every 30 days; or

(3) The employer receives information that casts doubt upon the employee's stated reason for the absence or the continuing validity of the certification. For example, if an employee is on FMLA leave for four weeks due to the employee's knee surgery, including recuperation, and the employee plays in company softball league games during the employee's third week of FMLA leave, such information might be sufficient to cast doubt upon the continuing validity of the certification allowing the employer to request a recertification in less than 30 days.

(d) *Timing.* The employer must provide the requested recertification to the employer within the timeframe requested by the employer (which must allow at least 15 calendar days after the employer's request), unless it is not practicable under the particular circumstances to do so despite the employee's diligent, good faith efforts.

(e) *Content.* The employer may ask for the same information when obtaining recertification as that permitted for the original certification as set forth in § 825.306. The employee has the same obligations to participate and cooperate (including providing a complete and sufficient certification or adequate authorization to the health care provider) in the recertification process as in the initial certification process. See § 825.305(d). As part of the information allowed to be obtained on recertification for leave taken because of a serious health condition, the employer may provide the health care provider with a record of the employee's absence pattern and ask the health care provider if the serious health condition and need for leave is consistent with such a pattern.

(f) Any recertification requested by the employer shall be at the employee's expense unless the employer provides otherwise. No second or third opinion on recertification may be required.

§ 825.309 Certification for leave taken because of a qualifying exigency.

(a) *Active Duty Orders.* The first time an employee requests leave because of a qualifying exigency arising out of the active duty or call to active duty status of a covered military member (as defined in § 825.126(b)(2)), an employer

may require the employee to provide a copy of the covered military member's active duty orders or other documentation issued by the military which indicates that the covered military member is on active duty or call to active duty status in support of a contingency operation, and the dates of the covered military member's active duty service. This information need only be provided to the employer once. A copy of new active duty orders or other documentation issued by the military shall be provided to the employer if the need for leave because of a qualifying exigency arises out of a different active duty or call to active duty status of the same or a different covered military member;

(b) *Required information.* An employer may require that leave for any qualifying exigency specified in § 825.126 be supported by a certification from the employee that sets forth the following information:

(1) A statement or description, signed by the employee, of appropriate facts regarding the qualifying exigency for which FMLA leave is requested. The facts must be sufficient to support the need for leave. Such facts should include information on the type of qualifying exigency for which leave is requested and any available written documentation which supports the request for leave; such documentation, for example, may include a copy of a meeting announcement for informational briefings sponsored by the military, a document confirming an appointment with a counselor or school official, or a copy of a bill for services for the handling of legal or financial affairs;

(2) The approximate date on which the qualifying exigency commenced or will commence;

(3) If an employee requests leave because of a qualifying exigency for a single, continuous period of time, the beginning and end dates for such absence;

(4) If an employee requests leave because of a qualifying exigency on an intermittent or reduced schedule basis, an estimate of the frequency and duration of the qualifying exigency; and

(5) If the qualifying exigency involves meeting with a third party, appropriate contact information for the individual or entity with whom the employee is meeting (such as the name, title, organization, address, telephone number, fax number, and e-mail address) and a brief description of the purpose of the meeting.

(c) DOL has developed an optional form (Form WH-384) for employees' use in obtaining a certification that meets

FMLA's certification requirements. (See Appendix G to this Part 825.) This optional form reflects certification requirements so as to permit the employee to furnish appropriate information to support his or her request for leave because of a qualifying exigency. Form WH-384, or another form containing the same basic information, may be used by the employer; however, no information may be required beyond that specified in this section.

(d) *Verification.* If an employee submits a complete and sufficient certification to support his or her request for leave because of a qualifying exigency, the employer may not request additional information from the employee. However, if the qualifying exigency involves meeting with a third party, the employer may contact the individual or entity with whom the employee is meeting for purposes of verifying a meeting or appointment schedule and the nature of the meeting between the employee and the specified individual or entity. The employee's permission is not required in order to verify meetings or appointments with third parties, but no additional information may be requested by the employer. An employer also may contact an appropriate unit of the Department of Defense to request verification that a covered military member is on active duty or call to active duty status; no additional information may be requested and the employee's permission is not required.

§ 825.310 Certification for leave taken to care for a covered servicemember (military caregiver leave).

(a) *Required information from health care provider.* When leave is taken to care for a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness, an employer may require an employee to obtain a certification completed by an authorized health care provider of the covered servicemember. For purposes of leave taken to care for a covered servicemember, any one of the following health care providers may complete such a certification:

- (1) A United States Department of Defense ("DOD") health care provider;
- (2) A United States Department of Veterans Affairs ("VA") health care provider;
- (3) A DOD TRICARE network authorized private health care provider; or
- (4) A DOD non-network TRICARE authorized private health care provider.

(b) If the authorized health care provider is unable to make certain military-related determinations outlined

below, the authorized health care provider may rely on determinations from an authorized DOD representative (such as a DOD recovery care coordinator). An employer may request that the health care provider provide the following information:

(1) The name, address, and appropriate contact information (telephone number, fax number, and/or email address) of the health care provider, the type of medical practice, the medical specialty, and whether the health care provider is one of the following:

- (i) A DOD health care provider;
- (ii) A VA health care provider;
- (iii) A DOD TRICARE network authorized private health care provider; or
- (iv) A DOD non-network TRICARE authorized private health care provider.

(2) Whether the covered servicemember's injury or illness was incurred in the line of duty on active duty;

(3) The approximate date on which the serious injury or illness commenced, and its probable duration;

(4) A statement or description of appropriate medical facts regarding the covered servicemember's health condition for which FMLA leave is requested. The medical facts must be sufficient to support the need for leave. Such medical facts must include information on whether the injury or illness may render the covered servicemember medically unfit to perform the duties of the servicemember's office, grade, rank, or rating and whether the member is receiving medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy;

(5) Information sufficient to establish that the covered servicemember is in need of care, as described in § 825.124, and whether the covered servicemember will need care for a single continuous period of time, including any time for treatment and recovery, and an estimate as to the beginning and ending dates for this period of time;

(6) If an employee requests leave on an intermittent or reduced schedule basis for planned medical treatment appointments for the covered servicemember, whether there is a medical necessity for the covered servicemember to have such periodic care and an estimate of the treatment schedule of such appointments;

(7) If an employee requests leave on an intermittent or reduced schedule basis to care for a covered servicemember other than for planned medical treatment (e.g., episodic flare-ups of a medical condition), whether there is a medical necessity for the

covered servicemember to have such periodic care, which can include assisting in the covered servicemember's recovery, and an estimate of the frequency and duration of the periodic care.

(c) *Required information from employee and/or covered servicemember.* In addition to the information that may be requested under § 825.310(b), an employer may also request that such certification set forth the following information provided by an employee and/or covered servicemember:

(1) The name and address of the employer of the employee requesting leave to care for a covered servicemember, the name of the employee requesting such leave, and the name of the covered servicemember for whom the employee is requesting leave to care;

(2) The relationship of the employee to the covered servicemember for whom the employee is requesting leave to care;

(3) Whether the covered servicemember is a current member of the Armed Forces, the National Guard or Reserves, and the covered servicemember's military branch, rank, and current unit assignment;

(4) Whether the covered servicemember is assigned to a military medical facility as an outpatient or to a unit established for the purpose of providing command and control of members of the Armed Forces receiving medical care as outpatients (such as a medical hold or warrior transition unit), and the name of the medical treatment facility or unit;

(5) Whether the covered servicemember is on the temporary disability retired list;

(6) A description of the care to be provided to the covered servicemember and an estimate of the leave needed to provide the care.

(d) DOL has developed an optional form (WH-385) for employees' use in obtaining certification that meets FMLA's certification requirements. (See Appendix H to this Part 825.) This optional form reflects certification requirements so as to permit the employee to furnish appropriate information to support his or her request for leave to care for a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness. WH-385, or another form containing the same basic information, may be used by the employer; however, no information may be required beyond that specified in this section. In all instances the information on the certification must relate only to the serious injury or illness for which the current need for leave exists. An

employer may seek authentication and/or clarification of the certification under § 825.307. However, second and third opinions under § 825.307 are not permitted for leave to care for a covered servicemember. Additionally, recertifications under § 825.308 are not permitted for leave to care for a covered servicemember. An employer may require an employee to provide confirmation of covered family relationship to the seriously injured or ill servicemember pursuant to § 825.122(j) of the FMLA.

(e) An employer requiring an employee to submit a certification for leave to care for a covered servicemember must accept as sufficient certification, in lieu of the Department's optional certification form (WH-385) or an employer's own certification form, "invitational travel orders" ("ITOs") or "invitational travel authorizations" ("ITAs") issued to any family member to join an injured or ill servicemember at his or her bedside. An ITO or ITA is sufficient certification for the duration of time specified in the ITO or ITA. During that time period, an eligible employee may take leave to care for the covered servicemember in a continuous block of time or on an intermittent basis. An eligible employee who provides an ITO or ITA to support his or her request for leave may not be required to provide any additional or separate certification that leave taken on an intermittent basis during the period of time specified in the ITO or ITA is medically necessary. An ITO or ITA is sufficient certification for an employee entitled to take FMLA leave to care for a covered servicemember regardless of whether the employee is named in the order or authorization.

(1) If an employee will need leave to care for a covered servicemember beyond the expiration date specified in an ITO or ITA, an employer may request that the employee have one of the authorized health care providers listed under § 825.310(a) complete the DOL optional certification form (WH-385) or an employer's own form, as requisite certification for the remainder of the employee's necessary leave period.

(2) An employer may seek authentication and clarification of the ITO or ITA under § 825.307. An employer may not utilize the second or third opinion process outlined in § 825.307 or the recertification process under § 825.308 during the period of time in which leave is supported by an ITO or ITA.

(3) An employer may require an employee to provide confirmation of covered family relationship to the seriously injured or ill servicemember

pursuant to § 825.122(j) when an employee supports his or her request for FMLA leave with a copy of an ITO or ITA.

(f) In all instances in which certification is requested, it is the employee's responsibility to provide the employer with complete and sufficient certification and failure to do so may result in the denial of FMLA leave. See § 825.305(d).

§ 825.311 Intent to return to work.

(a) An employer may require an employee on FMLA leave to report periodically on the employee's status and intent to return to work. The employer's policy regarding such reports may not be discriminatory and must take into account all of the relevant facts and circumstances related to the individual employee's leave situation.

(b) If an employee gives unequivocal notice of intent not to return to work, the employer's obligations under FMLA to maintain health benefits (subject to COBRA requirements) and to restore the employee cease. However, these obligations continue if an employee indicates he or she may be unable to return to work but expresses a continuing desire to do so.

(c) It may be necessary for an employee to take more leave than originally anticipated. Conversely, an employee may discover after beginning leave that the circumstances have changed and the amount of leave originally anticipated is no longer necessary. An employee may not be required to take more FMLA leave than necessary to resolve the circumstance that precipitated the need for leave. In both of these situations, the employer may require that the employee provide the employer reasonable notice (*i.e.*, within two business days) of the changed circumstances where foreseeable. The employer may also obtain information on such changed circumstances through requested status reports.

§ 825.312 Fitness-for-duty certification.

(a) As a condition of restoring an employee whose FMLA leave was occasioned by the employee's own serious health condition that made the employee unable to perform the employee's job, an employer may have a uniformly-applied policy or practice that requires all similarly-situated employees (*i.e.*, same occupation, same serious health condition) who take leave for such conditions to obtain and present certification from the employee's health care provider that the employee is able to resume work. The

employee has the same obligations to participate and cooperate (including providing a complete and sufficient certification or providing sufficient authorization to the health care provider to provide the information directly to the employer) in the fitness-for-duty certification process as in the initial certification process. See § 825.305(d).

(b) An employer may seek a fitness-for-duty certification only with regard to the particular health condition that caused the employee's need for FMLA leave. The certification from the employee's health care provider must certify that the employee is able to resume work. Additionally, an employer may require that the certification specifically address the employee's ability to perform the essential functions of the employee's job. In order to require such a certification, an employer must provide an employee with a list of the essential functions of the employee's job no later than with the designation notice required by § 825.300(d), and must indicate in the designation notice that the certification must address the employee's ability to perform those essential functions. If the employer satisfies these requirements, the employee's health care provider must certify that the employee can perform the identified essential functions of his or her job. Following the procedures set forth in § 825.307(a), the employer may contact the employee's health care provider for purposes of clarifying and authenticating the fitness-for-duty certification. Clarification may be requested only for the serious health condition for which FMLA leave was taken. The employer may not delay the employee's return to work while contact with the health care provider is being made. No second or third opinions on a fitness-for-duty certification may be required.

(c) The cost of the certification shall be borne by the employee, and the employee is not entitled to be paid for the time or travel costs spent in acquiring the certification.

(d) The designation notice required in § 825.300(d) shall advise the employee if the employer will require a fitness-for-duty certification to return to work and whether that fitness-for-duty certification must address the employee's ability to perform the essential functions of the employee's job.

(e) An employer may delay restoration to employment until an employee submits a required fitness-for-duty certification unless the employer has failed to provide the notice required in paragraph (d) of this section. If an employer provides the notice required,

an employee who does not provide a fitness-for-duty certification or request additional FMLA leave is no longer entitled to reinstatement under the FMLA. See § 825.313(d).

(f) An employer is not entitled to a certification of fitness to return to duty for each absence taken on an intermittent or reduced leave schedule. However, an employer is entitled to a certification of fitness to return to duty for such absences up to once every 30 days if reasonable safety concerns exist regarding the employee's ability to perform his or her duties, based on the serious health condition for which the employee took such leave. If an employer chooses to require a fitness-for-duty certification under such circumstances, the employer shall inform the employee at the same time it issues the designation notice that for each subsequent instance of intermittent or reduced schedule leave, the employee will be required to submit a fitness-for-duty certification unless one has already been submitted within the past 30 days. Alternatively, an employer can set a different interval for requiring a fitness-for-duty certification as long as it does not exceed once every 30 days and as long as the employer advises the employee of the requirement in advance of the employee taking the intermittent or reduced schedule leave. The employer may not terminate the employment of the employee while awaiting such a certification of fitness to return to duty for an intermittent or reduced schedule leave absence. Reasonable safety concerns means a reasonable belief of significant risk of harm to the individual employee or others. In determining whether reasonable safety concerns exist, an employer should consider the nature and severity of the potential harm and the likelihood that potential harm will occur.

(g) If State or local law or the terms of a collective bargaining agreement govern an employee's return to work, those provisions shall be applied.

(h) Requirements under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as amended, apply. After an employee returns from FMLA leave, the ADA requires any medical examination at an employer's expense by the employer's health care provider be job-related and consistent with business necessity. For example, an attorney could not be required to submit to a medical examination or inquiry just because her leg had been amputated. The essential functions of an attorney's job do not require use of both legs; therefore such an inquiry would not be job related. An employer may require a warehouse

laborer, whose back impairment affects the ability to lift, to be examined by an orthopedist, but may not require this employee to submit to an HIV test where the test is not related to either the essential functions of his or her job or to his/her impairment. If an employee's serious health condition may also be a disability within the meaning of the ADA, the FMLA does not prevent the employer from following the procedures for requesting medical information under the ADA.

§ 825.313 Failure to provide certification.

(a) *Foreseeable leave.* In the case of foreseeable leave, if an employee fails to provide certification in a timely manner as required by § 825.305, then an employer may deny FMLA coverage until the required certification is provided. For example, if an employee has 15 days to provide a certification and does not provide the certification for 45 days without sufficient reason for the delay, the employer can deny FMLA protections for the 30-day period following the expiration of the 15-day time period, if the employee takes leave during such period.

(b) *Unforeseeable leave.* In the case of unforeseeable leave, an employer may deny FMLA coverage for the requested leave if the employee fails to provide a certification within 15 calendar days from receipt of the request for certification unless not practicable due to extenuating circumstances. For example, in the case of a medical emergency, it may not be practicable for an employee to provide the required certification within 15 calendar days. Absent such extenuating circumstances, if the employee fails to timely return the certification, the employer can deny FMLA protections for the leave following the expiration of the 15-day time period until a sufficient certification is provided. If the employee never produces the certification, the leave is not FMLA leave.

(c) *Recertification.* An employee must provide recertification within the time requested by the employer (which must allow at least 15 calendar days after the request) or as soon as practicable under the particular facts and circumstances. If an employee fails to provide a recertification within a reasonable time under the particular facts and circumstances, then the employer may deny continuation of the FMLA leave protections until the employee produces a sufficient recertification. If the employee never produces the recertification, the leave is not FMLA leave. Recertification does not apply to

leave taken for a qualifying exigency or to care for a covered servicemember.

(d) *Fitness-for-duty certification.* When requested by the employer pursuant to a uniformly applied policy for similarly-situated employees, the employee must provide medical certification, at the time the employee seeks reinstatement at the end of FMLA leave taken for the employee's serious health condition, that the employee is fit for duty and able to return to work (see § 825.312(a)) if the employer has provided the required notice (see § 825.300(e)); the employer may delay restoration until the certification is provided. Unless the employee provides either a fitness-for-duty certification or a new medical certification for a serious health condition at the time FMLA leave is concluded, the employee may be terminated. See also § 825.213(a)(3).

Subpart D—Enforcement Mechanisms

§ 825.400 Enforcement, general rules.

(a) The employee has the choice of:

- (1) Filing, or having another person file on his or her behalf, a complaint with the Secretary of Labor, or
- (2) Filing a private lawsuit pursuant to section 107 of FMLA.

(b) If the employee files a private lawsuit, it must be filed within two years after the last action which the employee contends was in violation of the Act, or three years if the violation was willful.

(c) If an employer has violated one or more provisions of FMLA, and if justified by the facts of a particular case, an employee may receive one or more of the following: Wages, employment benefits, or other compensation denied or lost to such employee by reason of the violation; or, where no such tangible loss has occurred, such as when FMLA leave was unlawfully denied, any actual monetary loss sustained by the employee as a direct result of the violation, such as the cost of providing care, up to a sum equal to 26 weeks of wages for the employee in a case involving leave to care for a covered servicemember or 12 weeks of wages for the employee in a case involving leave for any other FMLA qualifying reason. In addition, the employee may be entitled to interest on such sum, calculated at the prevailing rate. An amount equaling the preceding sums may also be awarded as liquidated damages unless such amount is reduced by the court because the violation was in good faith and the employer had reasonable grounds for believing the employer had not violated the Act. When appropriate, the employee may also obtain appropriate equitable relief,

such as employment, reinstatement and promotion. When the employer is found in violation, the employee may recover a reasonable attorney's fee, reasonable expert witness fees, and other costs of the action from the employer in addition to any judgment awarded by the court.

§ 825.401 Filing a complaint with the Federal Government.

(a) A complaint may be filed in person, by mail or by telephone, with the Wage and Hour Division, Employment Standards Administration, U.S. Department of Labor. A complaint may be filed at any local office of the Wage and Hour Division; the address and telephone number of local offices may be found in telephone directories or on the Department's Web site.

(b) A complaint filed with the Secretary of Labor should be filed within a reasonable time of when the employee discovers that his or her FMLA rights have been violated. In no event may a complaint be filed more than two years after the action which is alleged to be a violation of FMLA occurred, or three years in the case of a willful violation.

(c) No particular form of complaint is required, except that a complaint must be reduced to writing and should include a full statement of the acts and/or omissions, with pertinent dates, which are believed to constitute the violation.

§ 825.402 Violations of the posting requirement.

Section 825.300 describes the requirements for covered employers to post a notice for employees that explains the Act's provisions. If a representative of the Department of Labor determines that an employer has committed a willful violation of this posting requirement, and that the imposition of a civil money penalty for such violation is appropriate, the representative may issue and serve a notice of penalty on such employer in person or by certified mail. Where service by certified mail is not accepted, notice shall be deemed received on the date of attempted delivery. Where service is not accepted, the notice may be served by regular mail.

§ 825.403 Appealing the assessment of a penalty for willful violation of the posting requirement.

(a) An employer may obtain a review of the assessment of penalty from the Wage and Hour Regional Administrator for the region in which the alleged violation(s) occurred. If the employer does not seek such a review or fails to do so in a timely manner, the notice of

the penalty constitutes the final ruling of the Secretary of Labor.

(b) To obtain review, an employer may file a petition with the Wage and Hour Regional Administrator for the region in which the alleged violations occurred. No particular form of petition for review is required, except that the petition must be in writing, should contain the legal and factual bases for the petition, and must be mailed to the Regional Administrator within 15 days of receipt of the notice of penalty. The employer may request an oral hearing which may be conducted by telephone.

(c) The decision of the Regional Administrator constitutes the final order of the Secretary.

§ 825.404 Consequences for an employer when not paying the penalty assessment after a final order is issued.

The Regional Administrator may seek to recover the unpaid penalty pursuant to the Debt Collection Act (DCA), 31 U.S.C. 3711 *et seq.*, and, in addition to seeking recovery of the unpaid final order, may seek interest and penalties as provided under the DCA. The final order may also be referred to the Solicitor of Labor for collection. The Secretary may file suit in any court of competent jurisdiction to recover the monies due as a result of the unpaid final order, interest, and penalties.

Subpart E—Recordkeeping Requirements

§ 825.500 Recordkeeping requirements.

(a) FMLA provides that covered employers shall make, keep, and preserve records pertaining to their obligations under the Act in accordance with the recordkeeping requirements of section 11(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and in accordance with these regulations. FMLA also restricts the authority of the Department of Labor to require any employer or plan, fund, or program to submit books or records more than once during any 12-month period unless the Department has reasonable cause to believe a violation of FMLA exists or the Department is investigating a complaint. These regulations establish no requirement for the submission of any records unless specifically requested by a Departmental official.

(b) No particular order or form of records is required. These regulations establish no requirement that any employer revise its computerized payroll or personnel records systems to comply. However, employers must keep the records specified by these regulations for no less than three years and make them available for inspection,

copying, and transcription by representatives of the Department of Labor upon request. The records may be maintained and preserved on microfilm or other basic source document of an automated data processing memory provided that adequate projection or viewing equipment is available, that the reproductions are clear and identifiable by date or pay period, and that extensions or transcriptions of the information required herein can be and are made available upon request. Records kept in computer form must be made available for transcription or copying.

(c) Covered employers who have eligible employees must maintain records that must disclose the following:

(1) Basic payroll and identifying employee data, including name, address, and occupation; rate or basis of pay and terms of compensation; daily and weekly hours worked per pay period; additions to or deductions from wages; and total compensation paid.

(2) Dates FMLA leave is taken by FMLA eligible employees (*e.g.*, available from time records, requests for leave, *etc.*, if so designated). Leave must be designated in records as FMLA leave; leave so designated may not include leave required under State law or an employer plan which is not also covered by FMLA.

(3) If FMLA leave is taken by eligible employees in increments of less than one full day, the hours of the leave.

(4) Copies of employee notices of leave furnished to the employer under FMLA, if in writing, and copies of all written notices given to employees as required under FMLA and these regulations (*see* § 825.300(b) through (c)). Copies may be maintained in employee personnel files.

(5) Any documents (including written and electronic records) describing employee benefits or employer policies and practices regarding the taking of paid and unpaid leaves.

(6) Premium payments of employee benefits.

(7) Records of any dispute between the employer and an eligible employee regarding designation of leave as FMLA leave, including any written statement from the employer or employee of the reasons for the designation and for the disagreement.

(d) Covered employers with no eligible employees must maintain the records set forth in paragraph (c)(1) of this section.

(e) Covered employers in a joint employment situation (*see* § 825.106) must keep all the records required by paragraph (c) of this section with respect to any primary employees, and

must keep the records required by paragraph (c)(1) with respect to any secondary employees.

(f) If FMLA-eligible employees are not subject to FLSA's recordkeeping regulations for purposes of minimum wage or overtime compliance (*i.e.*, not covered by or exempt from FLSA), an employer need not keep a record of actual hours worked (as otherwise required under FLSA, 29 CFR 516.2(a)(7)), provided that:

(1) Eligibility for FMLA leave is presumed for any employee who has been employed for at least 12 months; and

(2) With respect to employees who take FMLA leave intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule, the employer and employee agree on the employee's normal schedule or average hours worked each week and reduce their agreement to a written record maintained in accordance with paragraph (b) of this section.

(g) Records and documents relating to certifications, recertifications or medical histories of employees or employees' family members, created for purposes of FMLA, shall be maintained as confidential medical records in separate files/records from the usual personnel files, and if the ADA, as amended, is also applicable, such records shall be maintained in conformance with ADA confidentiality requirements (*see* 29 CFR 1630.14(c)(1)), except that:

(1) Supervisors and managers may be informed regarding necessary restrictions on the work or duties of an employee and necessary accommodations;

(2) First aid and safety personnel may be informed (when appropriate) if the employee's physical or medical condition might require emergency treatment; and

(3) Government officials investigating compliance with FMLA (or other pertinent law) shall be provided relevant information upon request.

Subpart F—Special Rules Applicable to Employees of Schools

§ 825.600 Special rules for school employees, definitions.

(a) Certain special rules apply to employees of "local educational agencies," including public school boards and elementary and secondary schools under their jurisdiction, and private elementary and secondary schools. The special rules do not apply to other kinds of educational institutions, such as colleges and universities, trade schools, and preschools.

(b) Educational institutions are covered by FMLA (and these special

rules) and the Act's 50-employee coverage test does not apply. The usual requirements for employees to be "eligible" do apply, however, including employment at a worksite where at least 50 employees are employed within 75 miles. For example, employees of a rural school would not be eligible for FMLA leave if the school has fewer than 50 employees and there are no other schools under the jurisdiction of the same employer (usually, a school board) within 75 miles.

(c) The special rules affect the taking of intermittent leave or leave on a reduced leave schedule, or leave near the end of an academic term (semester), by instructional employees.

"Instructional employees" are those whose principal function is to teach and instruct students in a class, a small group, or an individual setting. This term includes not only teachers, but also athletic coaches, driving instructors, and special education assistants such as signers for the hearing impaired. It does not include, and the special rules do not apply to, teacher assistants or aides who do not have as their principal job actual teaching or instructing, nor does it include auxiliary personnel such as counselors, psychologists, or curriculum specialists. It also does not include cafeteria workers, maintenance workers, or bus drivers.

(d) Special rules which apply to restoration to an equivalent position apply to all employees of local educational agencies.

§ 825.601 Special rules for school employees, limitations on intermittent leave.

(a) Leave taken for a period that ends with the school year and begins the next semester is leave taken consecutively rather than intermittently. The period during the summer vacation when the employee would not have been required to report for duty is not counted against the employee's FMLA leave entitlement. An instructional employee who is on FMLA leave at the end of the school year must be provided with any benefits over the summer vacation that employees would normally receive if they had been working at the end of the school year.

(1) If an eligible instructional employee needs intermittent leave or leave on a reduced leave schedule to care for a family member with a serious health condition, to care for a covered servicemember, or for the employee's own serious health condition, which is foreseeable based on planned medical treatment, and the employee would be on leave for more than 20 percent of the total number of working days over the

period the leave would extend, the employer may require the employee to choose either to:

(i) Take leave for a period or periods of a particular duration, not greater than the duration of the planned treatment; or

(ii) Transfer temporarily to an available alternative position for which the employee is qualified, which has equivalent pay and benefits and which better accommodates recurring periods of leave than does the employee's regular position.

(2) These rules apply only to a leave involving more than 20 percent of the working days during the period over which the leave extends. For example, if an instructional employee who normally works five days each week needs to take two days of FMLA leave per week over a period of several weeks, the special rules would apply.

Employees taking leave which constitutes 20 percent or less of the working days during the leave period would not be subject to transfer to an alternative position. "Periods of a particular duration" means a block, or blocks, of time beginning no earlier than the first day for which leave is needed and ending no later than the last day on which leave is needed, and may include one uninterrupted period of leave.

(b) If an instructional employee does not give required notice of foreseeable FMLA leave (*see* § 825.302) to be taken intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule, the employer may require the employee to take leave of a particular duration, or to transfer temporarily to an alternative position. Alternatively, the employer may require the employee to delay the taking of leave until the notice provision is met.

§ 825.602 Special rules for school employees, limitations on leave near the end of an academic term.

(a) There are also different rules for instructional employees who begin leave more than five weeks before the end of a term, less than five weeks before the end of a term, and less than three weeks before the end of a term. Regular rules apply except in circumstances when:

(1) An instructional employee begins leave more than five weeks before the end of a term. The employer may require the employee to continue taking leave until the end of the term if—

(i) The leave will last at least three weeks, and

(ii) The employee would return to work during the three-week period before the end of the term.

(2) The employee begins leave during the five-week period before the end of

a term because of the birth of a son or daughter; the placement of a son or daughter for adoption or foster care; to care for a spouse, son, daughter, or parent with a serious health condition; or to care for a covered servicemember. The employer may require the employee to continue taking leave until the end of the term if—

- (i) The leave will last more than two weeks, and
- (ii) The employee would return to work during the two-week period before the end of the term.

(3) The employee begins leave during the three-week period before the end of a term because of the birth of a son or daughter; the placement of a son or daughter for adoption or foster care; to care for a spouse, son, daughter, or parent with a serious health condition; or to care for a covered servicemember. The employer may require the employee to continue taking leave until the end of the term if the leave will last more than five working days.

(b) For purposes of these provisions, “academic term” means the school semester, which typically ends near the end of the calendar year and the end of spring each school year. In no case may a school have more than two academic terms or semesters each year for purposes of FMLA. An example of leave falling within these provisions would be where an employee plans two weeks of leave to care for a family member which will begin three weeks before the end of the term. In that situation, the employer could require the employee to stay out on leave until the end of the term.

§ 825.603 Special rules for school employees, duration of FMLA leave.

(a) If an employee chooses to take leave for “periods of a particular duration” in the case of intermittent or reduced schedule leave, the entire period of leave taken will count as FMLA leave.

(b) In the case of an employee who is required to take leave until the end of an academic term, only the period of leave until the employee is ready and able to return to work shall be charged against the employee’s FMLA leave entitlement. The employer has the option not to require the employee to stay on leave until the end of the school term. Therefore, any additional leave required by the employer to the end of the school term is not counted as FMLA leave; however, the employer shall be required to maintain the employee’s group health insurance and restore the employee to the same or equivalent job including other benefits at the conclusion of the leave.

§ 825.604 Special rules for school employees, restoration to “an equivalent position.”

The determination of how an employee is to be restored to “an equivalent position” upon return from FMLA leave will be made on the basis of “established school board policies and practices, private school policies and practices, and collective bargaining agreements.” The “established policies” and collective bargaining agreements used as a basis for restoration must be in writing, must be made known to the employee prior to the taking of FMLA leave, and must clearly explain the employee’s restoration rights upon return from leave. Any established policy which is used as the basis for restoration of an employee to “an equivalent position” must provide substantially the same protections as provided in the Act for reinstated employees. See § 825.215. In other words, the policy or collective bargaining agreement must provide for restoration to an “equivalent position” with equivalent employment benefits, pay, and other terms and conditions of employment. For example, an employee may not be restored to a position requiring additional licensure or certification.

Subpart G—Effect of Other Laws, Employer Practices, and Collective Bargaining Agreements on Employee Rights Under FMLA

§ 825.700 Interaction with employer’s policies.

(a) An employer must observe any employment benefit program or plan that provides greater family or medical leave rights to employees than the rights established by the FMLA. Conversely, the rights established by the Act may not be diminished by any employment benefit program or plan. For example, a provision of a CBA which provides for reinstatement to a position that is not equivalent because of seniority (e.g., provides lesser pay) is superseded by FMLA. If an employer provides greater unpaid family leave rights than are afforded by FMLA, the employer is not required to extend additional rights afforded by FMLA, such as maintenance of health benefits (other than through COBRA), to the additional leave period not covered by FMLA.

(b) Nothing in this Act prevents an employer from amending existing leave and employee benefit programs, provided they comply with FMLA. However, nothing in the Act is intended to discourage employers from adopting or retaining more generous leave policies.

§ 825.701 Interaction with State laws.

(a) Nothing in FMLA supersedes any provision of State or local law that provides greater family or medical leave rights than those provided by FMLA. The Department of Labor will not, however, enforce State family or medical leave laws, and States may not enforce the FMLA. Employees are not required to designate whether the leave they are taking is FMLA leave or leave under State law, and an employer must comply with the appropriate (applicable) provisions of both. An employer covered by one law and not the other has to comply only with the law under which it is covered. Similarly, an employee eligible under only one law must receive benefits in accordance with that law. If leave qualifies for FMLA leave and leave under State law, the leave used counts against the employee’s entitlement under both laws. Examples of the interaction between FMLA and State laws include:

(1) If State law provides 16 weeks of leave entitlement over two years, an employee needing leave due to his or her own serious health condition would be entitled to take 16 weeks one year under State law and 12 weeks the next year under FMLA. Health benefits maintenance under FMLA would be applicable only to the first 12 weeks of leave entitlement each year. If the employee took 12 weeks the first year, the employee would be entitled to a maximum of 12 weeks the second year under FMLA (not 16 weeks). An employee would not be entitled to 28 weeks in one year.

(2) If State law provides half-pay for employees temporarily disabled because of pregnancy for six weeks, the employee would be entitled to an additional six weeks of unpaid FMLA leave (or accrued paid leave).

(3) If State law provides six weeks of leave, which may include leave to care for a seriously-ill grandparent or a “spouse equivalent,” and leave was used for that purpose, the employee is still entitled to his or her full FMLA leave entitlement, as the leave used was provided for a purpose not covered by FMLA. If FMLA leave is used first for a purpose also provided under State law, and State leave has thereby been exhausted, the employer would not be required to provide additional leave to care for the grandparent or “spouse equivalent.”

(4) If State law prohibits mandatory leave beyond the actual period of pregnancy disability, an instructional employee of an educational agency subject to special FMLA rules may not be required to remain on leave until the

end of the academic term, as permitted by FMLA under certain circumstances. (See Subpart F of this part.)

(b) [Reserved]

§ 825.702 Interaction with Federal and State anti-discrimination laws.

(a) Nothing in FMLA modifies or affects any Federal or State law prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability (e.g., Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended by the Pregnancy Discrimination Act). FMLA's legislative history explains that FMLA is "not intended to modify or affect the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, the regulations concerning employment which have been promulgated pursuant to that statute, or the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 [as amended] or the regulations issued under that act. Thus, the leave provisions of the [FMLA] are wholly distinct from the reasonable accommodation obligations of employers covered under the [ADA], employers who receive Federal financial assistance, employers who contract with the Federal government, or the Federal government itself. The purpose of the FMLA is to make leave available to eligible employees and employers within its coverage, and not to limit already existing rights and protection." S. Rep. No. 103-3, at 38 (1993). An employer must therefore provide leave under whichever statutory provision provides the greater rights to employees. When an employer violates both FMLA and a discrimination law, an employee may be able to recover under either or both statutes (double relief may not be awarded for the same loss; when remedies coincide a claimant may be allowed to utilize whichever avenue of relief is desired (*Laffey v. Northwest Airlines, Inc.*, 567 F.2d 429, 445 (D.C. Cir. 1976), cert. denied, 434 U.S. 1086 (1978))).

(b) If an employee is a qualified individual with a disability within the meaning of the ADA, the employer must make reasonable accommodations, etc., barring undue hardship, in accordance with the ADA. At the same time, the employer must afford an employee his or her FMLA rights. ADA's "disability" and FMLA's "serious health condition" are different concepts, and must be analyzed separately. FMLA entitles eligible employees to 12 weeks of leave in any 12-month period due to their own serious health condition, whereas the ADA allows an indeterminate amount of leave, barring undue hardship, as a reasonable accommodation. FMLA requires employers to maintain employees'

group health plan coverage during FMLA leave on the same conditions as coverage would have been provided if the employee had been continuously employed during the leave period, whereas ADA does not require maintenance of health insurance unless other employees receive health insurance during leave under the same circumstances.

(c)(1) A reasonable accommodation under the ADA might be accomplished by providing an individual with a disability with a part-time job with no health benefits, assuming the employer did not ordinarily provide health insurance for part-time employees. However, FMLA would permit an employee to work a reduced leave schedule until the equivalent of 12 workweeks of leave were used, with group health benefits maintained during this period. FMLA permits an employer to temporarily transfer an employee who is taking leave intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule for planned medical treatment to an alternative position, whereas the ADA allows an accommodation of reassignment to an equivalent, vacant position only if the employee cannot perform the essential functions of the employee's present position and an accommodation is not possible in the employee's present position, or an accommodation in the employee's present position would cause an undue hardship. The examples in the following paragraphs of this section demonstrate how the two laws would interact with respect to a qualified individual with a disability.

(2) A qualified individual with a disability who is also an "eligible employee" entitled to FMLA leave requests 10 weeks of medical leave as a reasonable accommodation, which the employer grants because it is not an undue hardship. The employer advises the employee that the 10 weeks of leave is also being designated as FMLA leave and will count towards the employee's FMLA leave entitlement. This designation does not prevent the parties from also treating the leave as a reasonable accommodation and reinstating the employee into the same job, as required by the ADA, rather than an equivalent position under FMLA, if that is the greater right available to the employee. At the same time, the employee would be entitled under FMLA to have the employer maintain group health plan coverage during the leave, as that requirement provides the greater right to the employee.

(3) If the same employee needed to work part-time (a reduced leave schedule) after returning to his or her same job, the employee would still be

entitled under FMLA to have group health plan coverage maintained for the remainder of the two-week equivalent of FMLA leave entitlement, notwithstanding an employer policy that part-time employees do not receive health insurance. This employee would be entitled under the ADA to reasonable accommodations to enable the employee to perform the essential functions of the part-time position. In addition, because the employee is working a part-time schedule as a reasonable accommodation, the FMLA's provision for temporary assignment to a different alternative position would not apply. Once the employee has exhausted his or her remaining FMLA leave entitlement while working the reduced (part-time) schedule, if the employee is a qualified individual with a disability, and if the employee is unable to return to the same full-time position at that time, the employee might continue to work part-time as a reasonable accommodation, barring undue hardship; the employee would then be entitled to only those employment benefits ordinarily provided by the employer to part-time employees.

(4) At the end of the FMLA leave entitlement, an employer is required under FMLA to reinstate the employee in the same or an equivalent position, with equivalent pay and benefits, to that which the employee held when leave commenced. The employer's FMLA obligations would be satisfied if the employer offered the employee an equivalent full-time position. If the employee were unable to perform the essential functions of that equivalent position even with reasonable accommodation, because of a disability, the ADA may require the employer to make a reasonable accommodation at that time by allowing the employee to work part-time or by reassigning the employee to a vacant position, barring undue hardship.

(d)(1) If FMLA entitles an employee to leave, an employer may not, in lieu of FMLA leave entitlement, require an employee to take a job with a reasonable accommodation. However, ADA may require that an employer offer an employee the opportunity to take such a position. An employer may not change the essential functions of the job in order to deny FMLA leave. See § 825.220(b).

(2) An employee may be on a workers' compensation absence due to an on-the-job injury or illness which also qualifies as a serious health condition under FMLA. The workers' compensation absence and FMLA leave may run concurrently (subject to proper notice and designation by the employer). At

some point the health care provider providing medical care pursuant to the workers' compensation injury may certify the employee is able to return to work in a "light duty" position. If the employer offers such a position, the employee is permitted but not required to accept the position (*see* § 825.220(d)). As a result, the employee may no longer qualify for payments from the workers' compensation benefit plan, but the employee is entitled to continue on unpaid FMLA leave either until the employee is able to return to the same or equivalent job the employee left or until the 12-week FMLA leave entitlement is exhausted. *See* § 825.207(e). If the employee returning from the workers' compensation injury is a qualified individual with a disability, he or she will have rights under the ADA.

(e) If an employer requires certifications of an employee's fitness for duty to return to work, as permitted by FMLA under a uniform policy, it must comply with the ADA requirement that a fitness for duty physical be job-related and consistent with business necessity.

(f) Under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended by the Pregnancy Discrimination Act, an employer should provide the same benefits for women who are pregnant as the employer provides to other employees with short-term disabilities. Because Title VII does not require employees to be employed for a certain period of time to be protected, an employee employed for less than 12 months by the employer (and, therefore, not an "eligible" employee under FMLA) may not be denied maternity leave if the employer normally provides short-term disability benefits to employees with the same tenure who are experiencing other short-term disabilities.

(g) Under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994, 38 U.S.C. 4301-4333 (USERRA), veterans are entitled to receive all rights and benefits of employment that they would have obtained if they had been continuously employed. Therefore, under USERRA, a returning service member would be eligible for FMLA leave if the months and hours that he or she would have worked for the civilian employer during the period of military service, combined with the months employed and the hours actually worked, meet the FMLA eligibility threshold of 12 months and 1,250 hours of employment. *See* § 825.110(b)(2)(i) and (c)(2).

(h) For further information on Federal antidiscrimination laws, including Title

VII and the ADA, individuals are encouraged to contact the nearest office of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

Subpart H—Definitions

§ 825.800 Definitions.

For purposes of this part:
Act or FMLA means the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, Public Law 103-3 (February 5, 1993), 107 Stat. 6 (29 U.S.C. 2601 *et seq.*, as amended).

Active duty or call to active duty status means duty under a call or order to active duty (or notification of an impending call or order to active duty) in support of a contingency operation pursuant to Section 688 of Title 10 of the United States Code, which authorizes ordering to active duty retired members of the Regular Armed Forces and members of the retired Reserve who retired after completing at least 20 years of active service; Section 12301(a) of Title 10 of the United States Code, which authorizes ordering all reserve component members to active duty in the case of war or national emergency; Section 12302 of Title 10 of the United States Code, which authorizes ordering any unit or unassigned member of the Ready Reserve to active duty; Section 12304 of Title 10 of the United States Code, which authorizes ordering any unit or unassigned member of the Selected Reserve and certain members of the Individual Ready Reserve to active duty; Section 12305 of Title 10 of the United States Code, which authorizes the suspension of promotion, retirement or separation rules for certain Reserve components; Section 12406 of Title 10 of the United States Code, which authorizes calling the National Guard into federal service in certain circumstances; chapter 15 of Title 10 of the United States Code, which authorizes calling the National Guard and state military into federal service in the case of insurrections and national emergencies; or any other provision of law during a war or during a national emergency declared by the President or Congress so long as it is in support of a contingency operation. *See also* § 825.126(b)(2).

ADA means the Americans With Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. 12101 *et seq.*, as amended).

Administrator means the Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division, Employment Standards Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, and includes any official of the Wage and Hour Division authorized to perform any of the functions of the Administrator under this part.

COBRA means the continuation coverage requirements of Title X of the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1986, as amended (Pub. L. 99-272, title X, section 10002; 100 Stat. 227; 29 U.S.C. 1161-1168).

Commerce and industry or activity affecting commerce mean any activity, business, or industry in commerce or in which a labor dispute would hinder or obstruct commerce or the free flow of commerce, and include "commerce" and any "industry affecting commerce" as defined in sections 501(1) and 501(3) of the Labor Management Relations Act of 1947, 29 U.S.C. 142(1) and (3).

Contingency operation means a military operation that:

(1) Is designated by the Secretary of Defense as an operation in which members of the armed forces are or may become involved in military actions, operations, or hostilities against an enemy of the United States or against an opposing military force; or

(2) Results in the call or order to, or retention on, active duty of members of the uniformed services under section 688, 12301(a), 12302, 12304, 12305, or 12406 of Title 10 of the United States Code, chapter 15 of Title 10 of the United States Code, or any other provision of law during a war or during a national emergency declared by the President or Congress. *See also* § 825.126(b)(3).

Continuing treatment by a health care provider means any one of the following:

(1) *Incapacity and treatment.* A period of incapacity of more than three consecutive, full calendar days, and any subsequent treatment or period of incapacity relating to the same condition, that also involves:

(i) Treatment two or more times, within 30 days of the first day of incapacity, unless extenuating circumstances exist, by a health care provider, by a nurse under direct supervision of a health care provider, or by a provider of health care services (e.g., physical therapist) under orders of, or on referral by, a health care provider; or

(ii) Treatment by a health care provider on at least one occasion, which results in a regimen of continuing treatment under the supervision of the health care provider.

(iii) The requirement in paragraphs (1)(i) and (ii) of this definition for treatment by a health care provider means an in-person visit to a health care provider. The first in-person treatment visit must take place within seven days of the first day of incapacity.

(iv) Whether additional treatment visits or a regimen of continuing

treatment is necessary within the 30-day period shall be determined by the health care provider.

(v) The term "extenuating circumstances" in paragraph (1)(i) of this definition means circumstances beyond the employee's control that prevent the follow-up visit from occurring as planned by the health care provider. Whether a given set of circumstances are extenuating depends on the facts. *See also* § 825.115(a)(5).

(2) *Pregnancy or prenatal care.* Any period of incapacity due to pregnancy, or for prenatal care. *See also* § 825.120.

(3) *Chronic conditions.* Any period of incapacity or treatment for such incapacity due to a chronic serious health condition. A chronic serious health condition is one which:

(i) Requires periodic visits (defined as at least twice a year) for treatment by a health care provider, or by a nurse under direct supervision of a health care provider;

(ii) Continues over an extended period of time (including recurring episodes of a single underlying condition); and

(iii) May cause episodic rather than a continuing period of incapacity (e.g., asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, etc.).

(4) *Permanent or long-term conditions.* A period of incapacity which is permanent or long-term due to a condition for which treatment may not be effective. The employee or family member must be under the continuing supervision of, but need not be receiving active treatment by, a health care provider. Examples include Alzheimer's, a severe stroke, or the terminal stages of a disease.

(5) *Conditions requiring multiple treatments.* Any period of absence to receive multiple treatments (including any period of recovery therefrom) by a health care provider or by a provider of health care services under orders of, or on referral by, a health care provider, for:

(i) Restorative surgery after an accident or other injury; or

(ii) A condition that would likely result in a period of incapacity of more than three consecutive full calendar days in the absence of medical intervention or treatment, such as cancer (chemotherapy, radiation, etc.), severe arthritis (physical therapy), kidney disease (dialysis).

(6) Absences attributable to incapacity under paragraphs (2) or (3) of this definition qualify for FMLA leave even though the employee or the covered family member does not receive treatment from a health care provider during the absence, and even if the absence does not last more than three

consecutive full calendar days. For example, an employee with asthma may be unable to report for work due to the onset of an asthma attack or because the employee's health care provider has advised the employee to stay home when the pollen count exceeds a certain level. An employee who is pregnant may be unable to report to work because of severe morning sickness.

Covered military member means the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent on active duty or call to active duty status. *See also* § 825.126(b).

Covered servicemember means a current member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy, is otherwise in outpatient status, or is otherwise on the temporary disability retired list, for a serious injury or illness incurred in the line of duty on active duty. *See also* § 825.127(a).

Eligible employee means:

(1) An employee who has been employed for a total of at least 12 months by the employer on the date on which any FMLA leave is to commence, except that an employer need not consider any period of previous employment that occurred more than seven years before the date of the most recent hiring of the employee, *unless*:

(i) The break in service is occasioned by the fulfillment of the employee's National Guard or Reserve military service obligation (the time served performing the military service must be also counted in determining whether the employee has been employed for at least 12 months by the employer, but this section does not provide any greater entitlement to the employee than would be available under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA)); or

(ii) A written agreement, including a collective bargaining agreement, exists concerning the employer's intention to rehire the employee after the break in service (e.g., for purposes of the employee furthering his or her education or for childrearing purposes); and

(2) Who, on the date on which any FMLA leave is to commence, has been employed for at least 1,250-hours of service with such employer during the previous 12-month period, *except that*:

(i) An employee returning from fulfilling his or her National Guard or Reserve military obligation shall be credited with the hours-of-service that would have been performed *but for* the period of military service in determining whether the employee worked the 1,250 hours of service

(accordingly, a person reemployed following military service has the hours that would have been worked for the employer added to any hours actually worked during the previous 12-month period to meet the 1,250-hour requirement);

(ii) To determine the hours that would have been worked during the period of military service, the employee's pre-service work schedule can generally be used for calculations; and

(3) Who is employed in any State of the United States, the District of Columbia or any Territories or possession of the United States.

(4) Excludes any Federal officer or employee covered under subchapter V of chapter 63 of title 5, United States Code.

(5) Excludes any employee of the United States House of Representatives or the United States Senate covered by the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995, 2 U.S.C. 1301.

(6) Excludes any employee who is employed at a worksite at which the employer employs fewer than 50 employees if the total number of employees employed by that employer within 75 miles of that worksite is also fewer than 50.

(7) Excludes any employee employed in any country other than the United States or any Territory or possession of the United States.

Employ means to suffer or permit to work.

Employee has the meaning given the same term as defined in section 3(e) of the Fair Labor Standards Act, 29 U.S.C. 203(e), as follows:

(1) The term "employee" means any individual employed by an employer;

(2) In the case of an individual employed by a public agency, "employee" means—

(i) Any individual employed by the Government of the United States—

(A) As a civilian in the military departments (as defined in section 102 of Title 5, United States Code),

(B) In any executive agency (as defined in section 105 of Title 5, United States Code), excluding any Federal officer or employee covered under subchapter V of chapter 63 of Title 5, United States Code,

(C) In any unit of the legislative or judicial branch of the Government which has positions in the competitive service, excluding any employee of the United States House of Representatives or the United States Senate who is covered by the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995,

(D) In a nonappropriated fund instrumentality under the jurisdiction of the Armed Forces, or

(ii) Any individual employed by the United States Postal Service or the Postal Regulatory Commission; and
 (iii) Any individual employed by a State, political subdivision of a State, or an interstate governmental agency, other than such an individual—

(A) Who is not subject to the civil service laws of the State, political subdivision, or agency which employs the employee; and

(B) Who—

(1) Holds a public elective office of that State, political subdivision, or agency,

(2) Is selected by the holder of such an office to be a member of his personal staff,

(3) Is appointed by such an officeholder to serve on a policymaking level,

(4) Is an immediate adviser to such an officeholder with respect to the constitutional or legal powers of the office of such officeholder, or

(5) Is an employee in the legislative branch or legislative body of that State, political subdivision, or agency and is not employed by the legislative library of such State, political subdivision, or agency.

Employee employed in an instructional capacity. See the definition of *Teacher* in this section.

Employer means any person engaged in commerce or in an industry or activity affecting commerce who employs 50 or more employees for each working day during each of 20 or more calendar workweeks in the current or preceding calendar year, and includes—

(1) Any person who acts, directly or indirectly, in the interest of an employer to any of the employees of such employer;

(2) Any successor in interest of an employer; and

(3) Any public agency.

Employment benefits means all benefits provided or made available to employees by an employer, including group life insurance, health insurance, disability insurance, sick leave, annual leave, educational benefits, and pensions, regardless of whether such benefits are provided by a practice or written policy of an employer or through an “employee benefit plan” as defined in section 3(3) of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, 29 U.S.C. 1002(3). The term does not include non-employment related obligations paid by employees through voluntary deductions such as supplemental insurance coverage. (See § 825.209(a).)

FLSA means the Fair Labor Standards Act (29 U.S.C. 201 *et seq.*).

Group health plan means any plan of, or contributed to by, an employer

(including a self-insured plan) to provide health care (directly or otherwise) to the employer’s employees, former employees, or the families of such employees or former employees.

For purposes of FMLA the term “group health plan” shall not include an insurance program providing health coverage under which employees purchase individual policies from insurers provided that:

(1) No contributions are made by the employer;

(2) Participation in the program is completely voluntary for employees;

(3) The sole functions of the employer with respect to the program are, without endorsing the program, to permit the insurer to publicize the program to employees, to collect premiums through payroll deductions and to remit them to the insurer;

(4) The employer receives no consideration in the form of cash or otherwise in connection with the program, other than reasonable compensation, excluding any profit, for administrative services actually rendered in connection with payroll deduction; and,

(5) The premium charged with respect to such coverage does not increase in the event the employment relationship terminates.

Health care provider means:

(1) The Act defines “health care provider” as:

(i) A doctor of medicine or osteopathy who is authorized to practice medicine or surgery (as appropriate) by the State in which the doctor practices; or

(ii) Any other person determined by the Secretary to be capable of providing health care services.

(2) Others “capable of providing health care services” include only:

(i) Podiatrists, dentists, clinical psychologists, optometrists, and chiropractors (limited to treatment consisting of manual manipulation of the spine to correct a subluxation as demonstrated by X-ray to exist) authorized to practice in the State and performing within the scope of their practice as defined under State law;

(ii) Nurse practitioners, nurse-midwives, clinical social workers and physician assistants who are authorized to practice under State law and who are performing within the scope of their practice as defined under State law;

(iii) Christian Science Practitioners listed with the First Church of Christ, Scientist in Boston, Massachusetts. Where an employee or family member is receiving treatment from a Christian Science practitioner, an employee may not object to any requirement from an employer that the employee or family

member submit to examination (though not treatment) to obtain a second or third certification from a health care provider other than a Christian Science practitioner except as otherwise provided under applicable State or local law or collective bargaining agreement.

(iv) Any health care provider from whom an employer or the employer’s group health plan’s benefits manager will accept certification of the existence of a serious health condition to substantiate a claim for benefits; and

(v) A health care provider listed above who practices in a country other than the United States, who is authorized to practice in accordance with the law of that country, and who is performing within the scope of his or her practice as defined under such law.

(3) The phrase “authorized to practice in the State” as used in this section means that the provider must be authorized to diagnose and treat physical or mental health conditions.

Incapable of self-care means that the individual requires active assistance or supervision to provide daily self-care in several of the “activities of daily living” (ADLs) or “instrumental activities of daily living” (IADLs). Activities of daily living include adaptive activities such as caring appropriately for one’s grooming and hygiene, bathing, dressing and eating. Instrumental activities of daily living include cooking, cleaning, shopping, taking public transportation, paying bills, maintaining a residence, using telephones and directories, using a post office, etc.

Instructional employee: See the definition of *Teacher* in this section.

Intermittent leave means leave taken in separate periods of time due to a single illness or injury, rather than for one continuous period of time, and may include leave of periods from an hour or more to several weeks. Examples of intermittent leave would include leave taken on an occasional basis for medical appointments, or leave taken several days at a time spread over a period of six months, such as for chemotherapy.

Mental disability: See the definition of *Physical or mental disability* in this section.

Next of kin of a covered servicemember means the nearest blood relative other than the covered servicemember’s spouse, parent, son, or daughter, in the following order of priority: Blood relatives who have been granted legal custody of the covered servicemember by court decree or statutory provisions, brothers and sisters, grandparents, aunts and uncles, and first cousins, unless the covered servicemember has specifically designated in writing another blood

relative as his or her nearest blood relative for purposes of military caregiver leave under the FMLA. When no such designation is made, and there are multiple family members with the same level of relationship to the covered servicemember, all such family members shall be considered the covered servicemember's next of kin and may take FMLA leave to provide care to the covered servicemember, either consecutively or simultaneously. When such designation has been made, the designated individual shall be deemed to be the covered servicemember's only next of kin. *See also* § 825.127(b)(3).

Outpatient status means, with respect to a covered servicemember, the status of a member of the Armed Forces assigned to either a military medical treatment facility as an outpatient; or a unit established for the purpose of providing command and control of members of the Armed Forces receiving medical care as outpatients. *See also* § 825.127(a)(2).

Parent means a biological, adoptive, step or foster father or mother, or any other individual who stood in loco parentis to the employee when the employee was a son or daughter as defined below. This term does not include parents "in law."

Parent of a covered servicemember means a covered servicemember's biological, adoptive, step or foster father or mother, or any other individual who stood in loco parentis to the covered servicemember. This term does not include parents "in law." *See also* § 825.127(b)(2).

Person means an individual, partnership, association, corporation, business trust, legal representative, or any organized group of persons, and includes a public agency for purposes of this part.

Physical or mental disability means a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of an individual. Regulations at 29 CFR part 1630, issued by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission under the Americans with

Disabilities Act (ADA), 42 U.S.C. 12101 *et seq.*, as amended, define these terms.

Public agency means the government of the United States; the government of a State or political subdivision thereof; any agency of the United States (including the United States Postal Service and Postal Regulatory Commission), a State, or a political subdivision of a State, or any interstate governmental agency. Under section 101(5)(B) of the Act, a public agency is considered to be a "person" engaged in commerce or in an industry or activity affecting commerce within the meaning of the Act.

Reduced leave schedule means a leave schedule that reduces the usual number of hours per workweek, or hours per workday, of an employee.

Secretary means the Secretary of Labor or authorized representative.

Serious health condition means an illness, injury, impairment or physical or mental condition that involves inpatient care as defined in § 825.114 or continuing treatment by a health care provider as defined in § 825.115. Conditions for which cosmetic treatments are administered (such as most treatments for acne or plastic surgery) are not "serious health conditions" unless inpatient hospital care is required or unless complications develop. Restorative dental or plastic surgery after an injury or removal of cancerous growths are serious health conditions provided all the other conditions of this regulation are met. Mental illness or allergies may be serious health conditions, but only if all the conditions of § 825.113 are met.

Serious injury or illness means an injury or illness incurred by a covered servicemember in the line of duty on active duty that may render the servicemember medically unfit to perform the duties of the member's office, grade, rank, or rating. *See also* § 825.127(a)(1).

Son or daughter means a biological, adopted, or foster child, a stepchild, a legal ward, or a child of a person standing in loco parentis, who is either under age 18, or age 18 or older and "incapable of self-care because of a

mental or physical disability" at the time that FMLA leave is to commence.

Son or daughter of a covered servicemember means a covered servicemember's biological, adopted, or foster child, stepchild, legal ward, or a child for whom the covered servicemember stood in loco parentis, and who is of any age. *See also* § 825.127(b)(1).

Son or daughter on active duty or call to active duty status means the employee's biological, adopted, or foster child, stepchild, legal ward, or a child for whom the employee stood in loco parentis, who is on active duty or call to active duty status, and who is of any age. *See also* § 825.126(b)(1).

Spouse means a husband or wife as defined or recognized under State law for purposes of marriage in the State where the employee resides, including common law marriage in States where it is recognized.

State means any State of the United States or the District of Columbia or any Territory or possession of the United States.

Teacher (or employee employed in an instructional capacity, or instructional employee) means an employee employed principally in an instructional capacity by an educational agency or school whose principal function is to teach and instruct students in a class, a small group, or an individual setting, and includes athletic coaches, driving instructors, and special education assistants such as signers for the hearing impaired. The term does not include teacher assistants or aides who do not have as their principal function actual teaching or instructing, nor auxiliary personnel such as counselors, psychologists, curriculum specialists, cafeteria workers, maintenance workers, bus drivers, or other primarily noninstructional employees.

BILLING CODE 4510-27-P

Interaction between State Laws and the FMLA

State Laws

A number of states (**California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Maine, Minnesota, New Jersey, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin**) and the **District of Columbia** have also enacted family and medical leave laws, some of which provide greater amounts of leave and benefits than those provided by FMLA, and/or provide benefits to employees who are not eligible for FMLA leave. In those situations where an employee is covered by both Federal and state FMLA laws, the employee is entitled to the greater benefit or more generous rights provided under the different parts of each law.

As stated in 29 CFR 825.701

(a) Nothing in FMLA supersedes any provision of State or local law that provides greater family or medical leave rights than those provided by FMLA. The Department of Labor will not, however, enforce State family or medical leave laws, and States may not enforce the FMLA. Employees are not required to designate whether the leave they are taking is FMLA leave or leave under State law, and an employer must comply with the appropriate (applicable) provisions of both. An employer covered by one law and not the other has to comply only with the law under which it is covered. Similarly, an employee eligible under only one law must receive benefits in accordance with that law. If leave qualifies for FMLA leave and leave under State law, the leave used counts against the employee's entitlement under both laws. (See chapter on Regulation Text for the complete text of this section)

For example, if a state only allows an employee to take six weeks of half-pay for a temporary leave for pregnancy, the employee would be entitled to take an additional six weeks of unpaid FMLA or accrued paid leave under the FMLA. Likewise, if an employee should be allowed to follow a shorter notice period outlined under a state law unless the employee is requesting more leave than is allowed by the state. In that case, they would have to abide by FMLA notice requirements.

If an employer is in a state that has their own leave laws, the first thing that they need to **determine is which laws apply**. If for example, the employee is requesting leave under their state law to care for a domestic partner, then only the state regulations would apply as this is not a requirement under federal law. If the employee is taking leave to care for an ailing child then the employer must determine whether the state law or FMLA provides the employee the greater benefit or more generous rights. The same would apply to notice and certification requirements.

If both state law and FMLA apply then the leave runs concurrently. Using the example above, if an employee was taking a six week leave under the state law for a pregnancy, that time would count against both the 12 weeks allowed by the FMLA and the six weeks allowed by state law.

Conversely, **if only one law applies** then the employee can “stack” the leave meaning that if their leave counts under one law and not the other then the employee will still have leave left under the remaining law. This could mean that an employee is entitled to more than 12 weeks of leave in a given year. For example, if an employee takes six weeks off to care for an ailing sibling under state law, that employee would still be entitled to 12 weeks off under the FMLA since the FMLA does not designate time to care for a sibling.

To assist employers in determining which laws to comply with, the following pages compare the provisions of the FMLA with similar state statutes. Unless noted, the comparison only reflects the statutes that have been enacted by the states, not regulations that may have been enacted by the responsible state agency.

California

	FEDERAL ELEMENTS	STATE ELEMENTS
Employer Covered	<p>Private Employers of 50 or more Employees in at least 20 weeks of the current or preceding year</p> <p>Public agencies, including state, local, and Federal Employers</p> <p>Local education agencies covered under special provisions</p>	<p>Anyone who directly employs 50 or more Employees</p> <p>The state and any political or civil subdivision of the state and cities</p> <p>No special provision for education agencies</p>
Employees Eligible	<p>Worked for Employer for at least 12 months - which need not be consecutive; worked at least 1,250 hours for Employer during 12 months preceding leave; and employed at Employer worksite with 50 or more Employees or within 75 miles of Employer worksites with a total of 50 or more Employees</p>	<p>Similar to Federal provision, including worksite proviso</p>
Leave Amount	<p>Up to a total of 12 weeks during a 12-month period; however, leave for birth, adoption, foster care, or to care for a parent with a serious health condition must be shared by spouses working for same Employer</p>	<p>Similar to Federal provision</p> <p>Under separate statute, State Employees may receive up to 12-months leave for pregnancy, childbirth, or adoption, or care for newborn</p> <p>No requirement that spouses share leave. Under separate statute, employers are required to provide a female employee affected by pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical condition the same benefits as provided employees on temporary disability (for a period of 6 weeks or less). An employee also is entitled to take pregnancy leave for a reasonable period of time not to exceed 4 months.</p>
Type of Leave	<p>Unpaid leave for birth, placement of child for adoption or foster care, to provide care for Employee's own parent (including individuals who exercise parental responsibility under state law), child under 18 or a dependant adult child, or spouse with serious health condition, or Employee's own serious health condition</p>	<p>Similar to Federal provision</p>
Serious Health Condition	<p>Illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition involving incapacity or treatment connected with inpatient care in hospital, hospice, or residential medical-care facility; or, continuing treatment by a health care provider involving a period of incapacity: (1) requiring absence of more than 3 consecutive calendar days from work, school, or other activities; (2) due to a chronic or long-term condition for which treatment may be ineffective; (3) absences to receive multiple treatments (including recovery periods) for a condition that if left untreated likely would result in incapacity of more than 3 days; or (4) due to any incapacity related to pregnancy or for prenatal care</p>	<p>Similar to Federal provision</p>
Health Care Provider	<p>Doctors of medicine or osteopathy authorized to practice medicine or surgery; podiatrists, dentists, clinical psychologists, clinical social workers, optometrists, chiropractors (limited to manual manipulation of spine to correct subluxation shown to exist by x-ray), nurse practitioners, and nurse-midwives, if authorized to</p>	<p>Medical physician, surgeon, or osteopathic physician certified by California or licensed in another jurisdiction</p>

	practice under State law and consistent with the scope of their authorization; Christian Science practitioners listed with the First Church of Christ, Scientist in Boston, MA; any provider so recognized by the Employer or its group health plan's benefits manager; and any health provider listed above who practices and is authorized to practice in a country other than the United States	
Intermittent Leave	Permitted for serious health condition when medically necessary. Not permitted for care of newborn or new placement by adoption or foster care unless Employer agrees	Leave may be taken in one or more periods not to exceed 12 weeks
Substitution of Paid Leave	Employees may elect or Employers may require accrued paid leave to be substituted in some cases. No limits on substituting paid vacation or personal leave. An Employee may not substitute paid sick, medical, or family leave for any situation not covered by any Employers' leave plan	For family care and medical leave, Employee may elect, or Employer may require, substitution of accrued vacation leave or other accrued time off or other paid or unpaid time off negotiated with the Employer For Employee's own serious health condition (but not other purposes unless the Employer and Employee agree), Employee may use accrued sick leave
Reinstatement Rights	Must be restored to same position or one equivalent to it in all benefits and other terms and conditions of employment	Similar to Federal provision
Key Employee Exception	Limited exception for salaried Employees if among highest paid 10%, within 75 miles of worksites, restoration would lead to grievous economic harm to Employer, and other conditions met	Similar to Federal provision
Maintenance of Health Benefits During Leave	Health insurance must be continued under same conditions as prior to leave	Similar to Federal provision
Leave Requests	To be made by Employee at least 30 days prior to date leave is to begin where need is known in advance or, where not foreseeable, as soon as practicable If due to a planned medical treatment or for intermittent leave, the Employee, subject to health care provider's approval, shall make a reasonable effort to schedule it in a way that does not unduly disrupt Employer's operation	If need for leave is foreseeable, Employee shall provide reasonable advance notice Similar to Federal provision
Medical Certification May Be Required by Employer for:	Request for leave because of serious health condition To demonstrate Employee's fitness to return to work from medical leave where Employer has a uniformly applied practice or policy to require such certification	Request for leave because of serious health condition Employee's fitness to return to work from medical leave as long as practice of requesting a certificate is uniformly applied
Executive, Administrative, and Professional Employees	Such individuals are entitled to FMLA benefits. However, their use of FMLA leave does not change their status under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), i.e., an Employer does not lose its exemption from the FLSA's minimum wage and overtime requirements.	No specific provision

Connecticut

	FEDERAL ELEMENTS	STATE ELEMENTS
Employer Covered	Private Employers of 50 or more Employees in at least 20 weeks of the current or preceding year	Private sector Employers of 75 or more Employees, determined as of October 1 annually, excepting private

	Public agencies, including state, local, and Federal Employers Local education agencies covered under special provisions	or parochial elementary or secondary schools State agencies covered under separate statute, with similar provisions Local government agencies, including local education agencies, excepted
Employees Eligible	Worked for Employer for at least 12 months - which need not be consecutive; worked at least 1,250 hours for Employer during 12 months preceding leave; and employed at Employer worksite with 50 or more Employees or within 75 miles of Employer worksites with a total of 50 or more Employees	1000 hours service with Employer during 12-month period preceding first day of leave No worksite proviso
Leave Amount	Up to a total of 12 weeks during a 12-month period; however, leave for birth, adoption, foster care, or to care for a parent with a serious health condition must be shared by spouses working for same Employer	Employees of covered Employers may receive 16 weeks of leave in a 24 month period State employees in the state are entitled to a maximum of 24 weeks of medical leave in any two (2) year period in order to serve as an organ or bone marrow donor Similar to Federal provision regarding sharing of leave by spouses
Type of Leave	Unpaid leave for birth, placement of child for adoption or foster care, to provide care for Employee's own parent (including individuals who exercise parental responsibility under state law), child, or spouse with serious health condition, or Employee's own serious health condition	Similar to Federal provision, additionally to provide care to spouse's parent or to serve as an organ or bone marrow donor
Serious Health Condition	Illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition involving incapacity or treatment connected with inpatient care in hospital, hospice, or residential medical-care facility; or, continuing treatment by a health care provider involving a period of incapacity: (1) requiring absence of more than 3 consecutive calendar days from work, school, or other activities; (2) due to a chronic or long-term condition for which treatment may be ineffective; (3) absences to receive multiple treatments (including recovery periods) for a condition that if left untreated likely would result in incapacity of more than 3 days; or (4) due to any incapacity related to pregnancy or for prenatal care	Similar to Federal provision
Health Care Provider	Doctors of medicine or osteopathy authorized to practice medicine or surgery; podiatrists, dentists, clinical psychologists, clinical social workers, optometrists, chiropractors (limited to manual manipulation of spine to correct subluxation shown to exist by x-ray), nurse practitioners, and nurse-midwives, if authorized to practice under State law and consistent with the scope of their authorization; Christian Science practitioners listed with the First Church of Christ, Scientist in Boston, MA; any provider so recognized by the Employer or its group health plan's benefits manager; and any health provider listed above who practices and is authorized to practice in a country other than the United States	Similar to Federal provision
Intermittent Leave	Permitted for serious health condition when medically necessary. Not permitted for care of newborn or new placement by adoption or foster care unless Employer	Similar to Federal provision

	agrees	
Substitution of Paid Leave	Employees may elect or Employers may require accrued paid leave to be substituted in some cases. No limits on substituting paid vacation or personal leave. An Employee may not substitute paid sick, medical, or family leave for any situation not covered by any Employers' leave plan	Similar to Federal provision
Reinstatement Rights	Must be restored to same position or one equivalent to it in all benefits and other terms and conditions of employment	Unlike Federal (which does not require restoration if the Employee is unable to perform an essential function of his job), if upon return from leave, the Employee is medically unable to perform the Employee's original job, the Employee is to be transferred to work suitable to such Employee's physical condition if such work is available
Key Employee Exception	Limited exception for salaried Employees if among highest paid 10%, within 75 miles of worksites, restoration would lead to grievous economic harm to Employer, and other conditions met	No provision
Maintenance of Health Benefits During Leave	Health insurance must be continued under same conditions as prior to leave	No specific provision
Leave Requests	To be made by Employee at least 30 days prior to date leave is to begin where need is known in advance or, where not foreseeable, as soon as practicable. If due to a planned medical treatment or for intermittent leave, the Employee, subject to health care provider's approval, shall make a reasonable effort to schedule it in a way that does not unduly disrupt Employer's operation	Similar to Federal provision
Medical Certification May Be Required by Employer for:	Request for leave because of serious health condition To demonstrate Employee's fitness to return to work from medical leave where Employer has a uniformly applied practice or policy to require such certification	Similar to Federal provisions
Executive, Administrative, and Professional Employees	Such individuals are entitled to FMLA benefits. However, their use of FMLA leave does not change their status under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), i.e., an Employer, does not lose its exemption from the FLSA's minimum wage and overtime requirements.	No specific provision

Hawaii

	FEDERAL ELEMENTS	STATE ELEMENTS
Employer Covered	Private Employers of 50 or more Employees in at least 20 weeks of the current or preceding year Public agencies, including state, local, and Federal Employers Local education agencies covered under special provisions	Until 7/01/02, all business entities (including the State, its political subdivisions, and its instrumentalities) with 100 or more Employees for each working day during each of 20 or more calendar weeks of the current or preceding calendar year (After 7/01/02, employees of the State, its political subdivisions, and its instrumentalities were no longer included under the protections provided by the state statute, but they remain protected under the provisions of the Federal statute)

		No special provision for education agencies
Employees Eligible	Worked for Employer for at least 12 months - which need not be consecutive; worked at least 1,250 hours for Employer during 12 months preceding leave; and employed at Employer worksite with 50 or more Employees or within 75 miles of Employer worksites with a total of 50 or more Employees	Employees who have worked for 6 consecutive months No worksite proviso
Leave Amount	Up to a total of 12 weeks during a 12-month period; however, leave for birth, adoption, foster care, or to care for a parent with a serious health condition must be shared by spouses working for same Employer	Up to 4 weeks during any calendar year No provision requiring spouses to share leave
Type of Leave	Unpaid leave for birth, placement of child for adoption or foster care, to provide care for Employee's own parent (including individuals who exercise parental responsibility under state law), child, or spouse with serious health condition, or Employee's own serious health condition	Similar to Federal provision (except statute does not apply to employee's own health condition or foster care); it additionally includes leave to care for an employee's parent-in-law and grandparent or grandparent-in-law and an employee's reciprocal beneficiary.
Serious Health Condition	Illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition involving incapacity or treatment connected with inpatient care in hospital, hospice, or residential medical-care facility; or, continuing treatment by a health care provider involving a period of incapacity: (1) requiring absence of more than 3 consecutive calendar days from work, school, or other activities; (2) due to a chronic or long-term condition for which treatment may be ineffective; (3) absences to receive multiple treatments (including recovery periods) for a condition that if left untreated likely would result in incapacity of more than 3 days; or (4) due to any incapacity related to pregnancy or for prenatal care	Similar to Federal provision
Health Care Provider	Doctors of medicine or osteopathy authorized to practice medicine or surgery; podiatrists, dentists, clinical psychologists, clinical social workers, optometrists, chiropractors (limited to manual manipulation of spine to correct subluxation shown to exist by x-ray), nurse practitioners, and nurse-midwives, if authorized to practice under State law and consistent with the scope of their authorization; Christian Science practitioners listed with the First Church of Christ, Scientist in Boston, MA; any provider so recognized by the Employer or its group health plan's benefits manager; and any health provider listed above who practices and is authorized to practice in a country other than the United States	Person qualified by the Director of Labor and Industrial Relations to render health care and service and who has a license to the practice of medicine, dentistry, chiropractic, osteopathy, naturopathy, optometry, podiatry
Intermittent Leave	Permitted for serious health condition when medically necessary. Not permitted for care of newborn or new placement by adoption or foster care unless Employer agrees	Permitted for birth, adoption placement, and serious health condition of family member
Substitution of Paid Leave	Employees may elect or Employers may require accrued paid leave to be substituted in some cases. No limits on substituting paid vacation or personal leave. An Employee may not substitute paid sick, medical, or family leave for any situation not covered by any Employers' leave plan	Employer or Employee may elect to substitute Employee accrued paid leave provided sick leave may not be substituted unless such leave is normally granted for such family leave purposes, or upon mutual agreement by Employer and Employee
Reinstatement	Must be restored to same position or one equivalent	Similar to Federal provision

Rights	to it in all benefits and other terms and conditions of employment	
Key Employee Exception	Limited exception for salaried Employees if among highest paid 10%, within 75 miles of worksites, restoration would lead to grievous economic harm to Employer, and other conditions met	No similar provision
Maintenance of Health Benefits During Leave	Health insurance must be continued under same conditions as prior to leave	No specific provision
Leave Requests	To be made by Employee at least 30 days prior to date leave is to begin where need is known in advance or, where not foreseeable, as soon as practicable. If due to a planned medical treatment or for intermittent leave, the Employee, subject to health care provider's approval, shall make a reasonable effort to schedule it in a way that does not unduly disrupt Employer's operation	If foreseeable, to be made by Employee in a manner that is practical and reasonable No similar provision relating to scheduling of medical treatment
Medical Certification May Be Required by Employer for:	Request for leave because of serious health condition To demonstrate Employee's fitness to return to work from medical leave where Employer has a uniformly applied practice or policy to require such certification	Request for leave because of serious health condition; other means of certification for birth or adoption placement No similar provision
Executive, Administrative, and Professional Employees	Such individuals are entitled to FMLA benefits. However, their use of FMLA leave does not change their status under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), i.e., an Employer, does not lose its exemption from the FLSA's minimum wage and overtime requirements.	No similar provision

Maine

	FEDERAL ELEMENTS	STATE ELEMENTS
Employer Covered	Private Employers of 50 or more Employees in at least 20 weeks of the current or preceding year Public agencies, including state, local, and Federal Employers Local education agencies covered under special provisions	Any business entity that employs 15 or more Employees at one location in this State The State, all branches, departments or agencies Any city, town or municipal agency that employs 25 or more Employees Any agent of an Employer, the State or political subdivision No special provision for local education agencies
Employees Eligible	Worked for Employer for at least 12 months - which need not be consecutive; worked at least 1,250 hours for Employer during 12 months preceding leave; and employed at Employer worksite with 50 or more Employees or within 75 miles of Employer worksites with a total of 50 or more Employees	Any Employee employed by same Employer for 12 consecutive months at a permanent worksite with 15 or more Employees

Leave Amount	Up to a total of 12 weeks during a 12-month period; however, leave for birth, adoption, foster care, or to care for a parent with a serious health condition must be shared by spouses working for same Employer	10 weeks during a 2-year period No provision regarding spousal sharing of leave
Type of Leave	Unpaid leave for birth, placement of child for adoption or foster care, to provide care for Employee's own parent (including individuals who exercise parental responsibility under state law), child, or spouse with serious health condition, or Employee's own serious health condition	Similar to Federal provisions, except adoption leave only if child 16 or younger; no foster care provision
Serious Health Condition	Illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition involving incapacity or treatment connected with inpatient care in hospital, hospice, or residential medical-care facility; or, continuing treatment by a health care provider involving a period of incapacity: (1) requiring absence of more than 3 consecutive calendar days from work, school, or other activities; (2) due to a chronic or long-term condition for which treatment may be ineffective; (3) absences to receive multiple treatments (including recovery periods) for a condition that if left untreated likely would result in incapacity of more than 3 days; or (4) due to any incapacity related to pregnancy or for prenatal care	Similar to Federal provisions, but without specificity regarding length of incapacity
Health Care Provider	Doctors of medicine or osteopathy authorized to practice medicine or surgery; podiatrists, dentists, clinical psychologists, clinical social workers, optometrists, chiropractors (limited to manual manipulation of spine to correct subluxation shown to exist by x-ray), nurse practitioners, and nurse-midwives, if authorized to practice under State law and consistent with the scope of their authorization; Christian Science practitioners listed with the First Church of Christ, Scientist in Boston, MA; any provider so recognized by the Employer or its group health plan's benefits manager; and any health provider listed above who practices and is authorized to practice in a country other than the United States	Doctor of medicine or osteopathy who is licensed in State or any other person determined by the Secretary of Labor to be capable of providing health care services; see below regarding certification by practitioner of spiritual healing arts
Intermittent Leave	Permitted for serious health condition when medically necessary. Not permitted for care of newborn or new placement by adoption or foster care unless Employer agrees	No specific provisions
Substitution of Paid Leave	Employees may elect or Employers may require accrued paid leave to be substituted in some cases. No limits on substituting paid vacation or personal leave. An Employee may not substitute paid sick, medical, or family leave for any situation not covered by any Employers' leave plan	If the Employer provides paid family medical leave for fewer than 10 weeks, the additional weeks of leave added to attain the total of 10 weeks may be unpaid
Reinstatement Rights	Must be restored to same position or one equivalent to it in all benefits and other terms and conditions of employment	Similar to Federal provision
Key Employee Exception	Limited exception for salaried Employees if among highest paid 10%, within 75 miles of worksites, restoration would lead to grievous economic harm to Employer, and other conditions met	No specific provision
Maintenance of Health Benefits During Leave	Health insurance must be continued under same conditions as prior to leave	No specific provision
Leave Requests	To be made by Employee at least 30 days prior to date leave is to begin where need is known in advance or, where not foreseeable, as soon as practicable. If due to a planned medical treatment or for intermittent	Made by Employee 30 days in advance unless prevented by medical emergency

	leave, the Employee, subject to health care provider's approval, shall make a reasonable effort to schedule it in a way that does not unduly disrupt Employer's operation	
Medical Certification May Be Required by Employer for:	Request for leave because of serious health condition To demonstrate Employee's fitness to return to work from medical leave where Employer has a uniformly applied practice or policy to require such certification	From physician to verify amount of leave requested by Employee; may be provided by accredited practitioner relying on prayer or spiritual means No provision regarding fitness to return to work
Executive, Administrative, and Professional Employees	Such individuals are entitled to FMLA benefits. However, their use of FMLA leave does not change their status under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), i.e., an Employer, does not lose its exemption from the FLSA's minimum wage and overtime requirements.	No specific provision

Minnesota

	FEDERAL ELEMENTS	STATE ELEMENTS
Employer Covered	Private Employers of 50 or more Employees in at least 20 weeks of the current or preceding year Public agencies, including state, local, and Federal Employers Local education agencies covered under special provisions	Employers of 21 or more Employees located at least at one worksite and includes a corporation, partnership, association, nonprofit organization, group of persons, state, county, town, city, school district, or other governmental subdivision No special provision for education agencies For limited parental leave to attend school conferences and activities, Employer includes any entity with one or more Employees
Employees Eligible	Worked for Employer for at least 12 months - which need not be consecutive; worked at least 1,250 hours for Employer during 12 months preceding leave; and employed at Employer worksite with 50 or more Employees or within 75 miles of Employer worksites with a total of 50 or more Employees	Employed for at least 12 consecutive months prior to leave request Employee worked for Employer for an average number of hours equal to one-half the full-time equivalent position in the Employee's job classification in the preceding 12 months No worksite proviso
Leave Amount	Up to a total of 12 weeks during a 12-month period; however, leave for birth, adoption, foster care, or to care for a parent with a serious health condition must be shared by spouses working for same Employer	Up to 6 weeks for birth or adoption (unless Employee and Employer agree to longer period) May use personal sick leave benefits to attend to a child for a reasonable period of time No provision regarding spousal sharing of leave
Type of Leave	Unpaid leave for birth, placement of child for adoption or foster care, to provide care for Employee's own parent (including individuals who exercise parental responsibility under state law), child, or spouse with serious health condition, or Employee's own serious health condition	For birth or adoption and school and personal sick leave to attend to a child
Serious Health Condition	Illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition involving incapacity or treatment connected with inpatient care in hospital, hospice, or residential medical-care facility; or, continuing treatment by a health care provider involving a period of incapacity: (1) requiring absence of more than 3 consecutive calendar days from work, school,	Except for limited purpose discussed above, no leave for health condition of self or others

	or other activities; (2) due to a chronic or long-term condition for which treatment may be ineffective; (3) absences to receive multiple treatments (including recovery periods) for a condition that if left untreated likely would result in incapacity of more than 3 days; or (4) due to any incapacity related to pregnancy or for prenatal care	
Health Care Provider	Doctors of medicine or osteopathy authorized to practice medicine or surgery; podiatrists, dentists, clinical psychologists, clinical social workers, optometrists, chiropractors (limited to manual manipulation of spine to correct subluxation shown to exist by x-ray), nurse practitioners, and nurse-midwives, if authorized to practice under State law and consistent with the scope of their authorization; Christian Science practitioners listed with the First Church of Christ, Scientist in Boston, MA; any provider so recognized by the Employer or its group health plan's benefits manager; and any health provider listed above who practices and is authorized to practice in a country other than the United States	No provision for leave for serious health condition
Intermittent Leave	Permitted for serious health condition when medically necessary. Not permitted for care of newborn or new placement by adoption or foster care unless Employer agrees	No specific provision
Substitution of Paid Leave	Employees may elect or Employers may require accrued paid leave to be substituted in some cases. No limits on substituting paid vacation or personal leave. An Employee may not substitute paid sick, medical, or family leave for any situation not covered by any Employers' leave plan	Employee may use paid sick leave provided by Employer
Reinstatement Rights	Must be restored to same position or one equivalent to it in all benefits and other terms and conditions of employment	For birth or adoption leave, employee is entitled to return to former position or in a position of comparable duties, hours, and pay. Employee returning from an absence of longer than one month must notify Employer at least 2 weeks prior to return from leave For school and personal sick leave to attend to a child, employees entitled to return to former position
Key Employee Exception	Limited exception for salaried Employees if among highest paid 10%, within 75 miles of worksites, restoration would lead to grievous economic harm to Employer, and other conditions met	No specific provision
Maintenance of Health Benefits During Leave	Health insurance must be continued under same conditions as prior to leave	For birth or adoption leave, employer must make coverage available under any group insurance policy, group subscriber contract or health care plan for Employee and dependents. Employer not required to pay insurance costs
Leave Requests	To be made by Employee at least 30 days prior to date leave is to begin where need is known in advance or, where not foreseeable, as soon as practicable. If due to a planned medical treatment or for intermittent leave, the Employee, subject to health care provider's approval, shall make a reasonable effort to schedule it in a way that does not unduly disrupt Employer's operation	For birth or adoption leave, employer may adopt reasonable policies governing the timing of requests for unpaid leave
Medical Certification May Be Required by Employer for:	Request for leave because of serious health condition To demonstrate Employee's fitness to return to work from medical leave where Employer has a uniformly applied	No specific provision No provision relating to certification of fitness to return

	practice or policy to require such certification	to work
Executive, Administrative, and Professional Employees	Such individuals are entitled to FMLA benefits. However, their use of FMLA leave does not change their status under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), i.e., an Employer, does not lose its exemption from the FLSA's minimum wage and overtime requirements.	No specific provision

New Jersey

	FEDERAL ELEMENTS	STATE ELEMENTS
Employer Covered	Private Employers of 50 or more Employees in at least 20 weeks of the current or preceding year Public agencies, including state, local, and Federal Employers Local education agencies covered under special provisions	Public and private Employers of 50 or more Employees each working day during each of 20 or more calendar workweeks in the then current or immediately preceding calendar year; includes the State, any political subdivision thereof, and all public offices, agencies, boards or bodies No special provision for education agencies
Employees Eligible	Worked for Employer for at least 12 months - which need not be consecutive; worked at least 1,250 hours for Employer during 12 months preceding leave; and employed at Employer worksite with 50 or more Employees or within 75 miles of Employer worksites with a total of 50 or more Employees	12 months with an Employer for not less than 1000 base hours during the immediately preceding 12 months No worksite proviso
Leave Amount	Up to a total of 12 weeks during a 12-month period; however, leave for birth, adoption, foster care, or to care for a parent with a serious health condition must be shared by spouses working for same Employer	12 weeks in any 24-month period No provision requiring spouses to share leave
Type of Leave	Unpaid leave for birth, placement of child for adoption or foster care, to provide care for Employee's own parent (including individuals who exercise parental responsibility under state law), child, or spouse with serious health condition, or Employee's own serious health condition	Birth, adoption placement, serious health condition of child, parent, parent-in-law, or spouse, but not for an employee's own health condition.
Serious Health Condition	Illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition involving incapacity or treatment connected with inpatient care in hospital, hospice, or residential medical-care facility; or, continuing treatment by a health care provider involving a period of incapacity: (1) requiring absence of more than 3 consecutive calendar days from work, school, or other activities; (2) due to a chronic or long-term condition for which treatment may be ineffective; (3) absences to receive multiple treatments (including recovery periods) for a condition that if left untreated likely would result in incapacity of more than 3 days; or (4) due to any incapacity related to pregnancy or for prenatal care	Similar to Federal provision
Health Care Provider	Doctors of medicine or osteopathy authorized to practice medicine or surgery; podiatrists, dentists, clinical psychologists, clinical social workers, optometrists, chiropractors (limited to manual manipulation of spine to correct subluxation shown to exist by x-ray), nurse practitioners, and nurse-midwives, if authorized to practice under State law and consistent with the scope of their authorization; Christian Science practitioners listed with the First Church of Christ, Scientist in Boston, MA; any provider so recognized by the Employer or its group	No specific provision

	health plan's benefits manager; and any health provider listed above who practices and is authorized to practice in a country other than the United States	
Intermittent Leave	Permitted for serious health condition when medically necessary. Not permitted for care of newborn or new placement by adoption or foster care unless Employer agrees	Similar to Federal provision
Substitution of Paid Leave	Employees may elect or Employers may require accrued paid leave to be substituted in some cases. No limits on substituting paid vacation or personal leave. An Employee may not substitute paid sick, medical, or family leave for any situation not covered by any Employers' leave plan	Family leave required by this Act may be paid, unpaid, or a combination of paid and unpaid leave. If an employer provides paid family leave for fewer than 12 weeks, the additional weeks of leave added to attain the 12-workweek total required by this Act may be unpaid.
Reinstatement Rights	Must be restored to same position or one equivalent to it in all benefits and other terms and conditions of employment	Similar to Federal provision
Key Employee Exception	Limited exception for salaried Employees if among highest paid 10%, within 75 miles of worksites, restoration would lead to grievous economic harm to Employer, and other conditions met	Similar to Federal provision, except limited to Employees who are among the highest paid 5% or the seven highest paid Employees, whichever is greater
Maintenance of Health Benefits During Leave	Health insurance must be continued under same conditions as prior to leave	Similar to Federal provision
Leave Requests	To be made by Employee at least 30 days prior to date leave is to begin where need is known in advance or, where not foreseeable, as soon as practicable. If due to a planned medical treatment or for intermittent leave, the Employee, subject to health care provider's approval, shall make a reasonable effort to schedule it in a way that does not unduly disrupt Employer's operation	Employee shall provide the employer notice of the expected leave in a manner which is reasonable and practicable
Medical Certification May Be Required by Employer for:	Request for leave because of serious health condition To demonstrate Employee's fitness to return to work from medical leave where Employer has a uniformly applied practice or policy to require such certification	Request may be made for circumstances of birth, adoption placement or because of serious health condition of family member. No provision relating to certification of fitness to return to work.
Executive, Administrative, and Professional Employees	Such individuals are entitled to FMLA benefits. However, their use of FMLA leave does not change their status under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), i.e., an Employer, does not lose its exemption from the FLSA's minimum wage and overtime requirements.	No specific provision

Oregon

	FEDERAL ELEMENTS	STATE ELEMENTS
Employer Covered	Private Employers of 50 or more Employees in at least 20 weeks of the current or preceding year Public agencies, including state, local, and Federal Employers Local education agencies covered under special provisions	Employers with 25 or more Employees in the State of Oregon for each working day during each of 20 or more calendar workweeks of the current or preceding year, but excepting employers meeting certain conditions and providing family leave at least as generous as required by statute Special provisions for teachers

Employees Eligible	Worked for Employer for at least 12 months - which need not be consecutive; worked at least 1,250 hours for Employer during 12 months preceding leave; and employed at Employer worksite with 50 or more Employees or within 75 miles of Employer worksites with a total of 50 or more Employees	Have worked average of 25 or more hours/week and employed 180 days for an Employer immediately preceding commencement of leave in order to qualify for family leave. The only requirement for parental leave is to have been employed for 180 days immediately preceding the commencement of leave. No worksite proviso
Leave Amount	Up to a total of 12 weeks during a 12-month period; however, leave for birth, adoption, foster care, or to care for a parent with a serious health condition must be shared by spouses working for same Employer	12 weeks within any one-year period. Additional leave may be available in some circumstances. See below.
Type of leave	Unpaid leave for birth, placement of child for adoption or foster care, to provide care for Employee's own parent (including individuals who exercise parental responsibility under state law), child, or spouse with serious health condition, or Employee's own serious health condition	"Family leave" to care for an infant or newly adopted child under 18 years of age, or for an adopted or foster child older than 18 years of age if the child is incapable of self-care, a family member with a serious health condition because of a mental or physical disability, to recover from the Employee's own serious health condition, to care for the Employee's child who is suffering from an illness, injury, or condition that is not a serious health condition, but requires home care. A female Employee may take a total of 12 weeks of additional leave within any one-year period for an illness, injury or condition related to pregnancy or childbirth that disables the Employee from performing any available job duties An Employee who takes 12 weeks of "parental leave" (see above) may take an additional 12 weeks to care for a child of the Employee who is suffering from an illness, injury or condition that is not a serious health condition but that requires home care Two family members of the same Employer may not take concurrent family leave except under limited circumstances. Teachers have special rules
Serious Health Condition	Illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition involving incapacity or treatment connected with inpatient care in hospital, hospice, or residential medical-care facility; or, continuing treatment by a health care provider involving a period of incapacity: (1) requiring absence of more than 3 consecutive calendar days from work, school, or other activities; (2) due to a chronic or long-term condition for which treatment may be ineffective; (3) absences to receive multiple treatments (including recovery periods) for a condition that if left untreated likely would result in incapacity of more than 3 days; or (4) due to any incapacity related to pregnancy or for prenatal care	Illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that requires inpatient care in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical care facility Illness, disease, or condition that in the medical judgment of the treating health care provider poses an imminent danger of death, is terminal in prognosis with a reasonable possibility of death in the near future, or requires constant care; or any period of disability due to pregnancy, or period of absence for prenatal care
Health Care Provider	Doctors of medicine or osteopathy authorized to practice medicine or surgery; podiatrists, dentists, clinical psychologists, clinical social workers, optometrists, chiropractors (limited to manual manipulation of spine to correct subluxation shown to	Similar to federal provision, but does not include language extending recognition to any provider recognized as such by the Employer or its group health plan's benefits manager, includes naturopaths and direct entry midwives. Also includes persons who are primarily responsible for

	exist by x-ray), nurse practitioners, and nurse-midwives, if authorized to practice under State law and consistent with the scope of their authorization; Christian Science practitioners listed with the First Church of Christ, Scientist in Boston, MA; any provider so recognized by the Employer or its group health plan's benefits manager; and any health provider listed above who practices and is authorized to practice in a country other than the United States	treatment of an eligible employed solely through spiritual means, including but not limited to a Christian science practitioner.
Intermittent Leave	Permitted for serious health condition when medically necessary. Not permitted for care of newborn or new placement by adoption or foster care unless Employer agrees	Similar to Federal provision
Substitution of Paid Leave	Employees may elect or Employers may require accrued paid leave to be substituted in some cases. No limits on substituting paid vacation or personal leave. An Employee may not substitute paid sick, medical, or family leave for any situation not covered by any Employers' leave plan	Employee may use any paid accrued vacation or sick leave offered by Employer
Reinstatement Rights	Must be restored to same position or one equivalent to it in all benefits and other terms and conditions of employment	Employee must be restored to same position – if it still exists; if not, Employee must be restored to any available equivalent position with all terms and conditions at a job located within 20 miles of the site of the employee's former position.
Key Employee Exception	Limited exception for salaried Employees if among highest paid 10%, within 75 miles of worksites, restoration would lead to grievous economic harm to Employer, and other conditions met	No provision
Maintenance of Health Benefits During Leave	Health insurance must be continued under same conditions as prior to leave	No requirement for continuation of benefits unless required by agreement or policy
Leave Requests	If due to a planned medical treatment or for intermittent leave, the Employee, subject to health care provider's approval, shall make a reasonable effort to schedule it in a way that does not unduly disrupt Employer's operation To be made by Employee at least 30 days prior to date leave is to begin where need is known in advance or, where not foreseeable, as soon as practicable.	Similar to Federal provision, but where 30 day notice not possible, oral request must be made within 24 hours of leave commencement followed by written notice within 3 days after return to work
Medical Certification May Be Required by Employer for:	To demonstrate Employee's fitness to return to work from medical leave where Employer has a uniformly applied practice or policy to require such certification Request for leave because of serious health condition	Employer may require certification for family leave taken in relation to a family member with a serious health condition, the employee's own serious health condition, or a child suffering from an illness, injury, or condition that is not a serious health condition but requires home care Employer may require certification that the Employee is able to resume work
Executive, Administrative, and Professional Employees	Such individuals are entitled to FMLA benefits. However, their use of FMLA leave does not change their status under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), i.e., an Employer, does not lose its exemption from the FLSA's minimum wage and overtime requirements	Similar to Federal provision when FMLA applies, but not in cases when only OFLA applies.

Rhode Island

	FEDERAL ELEMENTS	STATE ELEMENTS
Employer Covered	Private Employers of 50 or more Employees in at least 20 weeks of the current or preceding year Public agencies, including state, local, and Federal Employers Local education agencies covered under special provisions	Private Employers of 50 or more Employees Any State agency. Any city, town, or municipal agency that employs 30 or more Employees No special provision for education agencies
Employees Eligible	Worked for Employer for at least 12 months - which need not be consecutive; worked at least 1,250 hours for Employer during 12 months preceding leave; and employed at Employer worksite with 50 or more Employees or within 75 miles of Employer worksites with a total of 50 or more Employees	Any full-time Employees working on average 30 or more hours per week for 12 consecutive months (1560 hours) No worksite proviso
Leave Amount	Up to a total of 12 weeks during a 12-month period; however, leave for birth, adoption, foster care, or to care for a parent with a serious health condition must be shared by spouses working for same Employer	13 consecutive weeks in any 2 calendar years
Type of Leave	Unpaid leave for birth, placement of child for adoption or foster care, to provide care for Employee's own parent (including individuals who exercise parental responsibility under state law), child, or spouse with serious health condition, or Employee's own serious health condition	Similar to federal provision, but includes care for parents-in-law
Serious Health Condition	Illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition involving incapacity or treatment connected with inpatient care in hospital, hospice, or residential medical-care facility; or, continuing treatment by a health care provider involving a period of incapacity: (1) requiring absence of more than 3 consecutive calendar days from work, school, or other activities; (2) due to a chronic or long-term condition for which treatment may be ineffective; (3) absences to receive multiple treatments (including recovery periods) for a condition that if left untreated likely would result in incapacity of more than 3 days; or (4) due to any incapacity related to pregnancy or for prenatal care	Similar to Federal provision, but no specific provision regarding prenatal care
Health Care Provider	Doctors of medicine or osteopathy authorized to practice medicine or surgery; podiatrists, dentists, clinical psychologists, clinical social workers, optometrists, chiropractors (limited to manual manipulation of spine to correct subluxation shown to exist by x-ray), nurse practitioners, and nurse-midwives, if authorized to practice under State law and consistent with the scope of their authorization; Christian Science practitioners listed with the First Church of Christ, Scientist in Boston, MA; any provider so recognized by the Employer or its group health plan's benefits manager; and any health provider listed above who practices and is authorized to practice in a country other than the United States	No specific definition
Intermittent Leave	Permitted for serious health condition when medically necessary. Not permitted for care of newborn or new placement by adoption or foster care unless Employer agrees	No specific provision
Substitution of Paid Leave	Employees may elect or Employers may require accrued paid leave to be substituted in some cases. No limits on	Paid leave may be substituted

	substituting paid vacation or personal leave. An Employee may not substitute paid sick, medical, or family leave for any situation not covered by any Employers' leave plan	
Reinstatement Rights	Must be restored to same position or one equivalent to it in all benefits and other terms and conditions of employment	Similar to Federal provision
Key Employee Exception	Limited exception for salaried Employees if among highest paid 10%, within 75 miles of worksites, restoration would lead to grievous economic harm to Employer, and other conditions met	Similar to Federal provision
Maintenance of Health Benefits During Leave	Health insurance must be continued under same conditions as prior to leave	Health benefits must be maintained for duration of leave; Employee to pay total cost of premium prior to commencement of leave with payment to be returned by Employer within 10 days of return to work
Leave Requests	If due to a planned medical treatment or for intermittent leave, the Employee, subject to health care provider's approval, shall make a reasonable effort to schedule it in a way that does not unduly disrupt Employer's operation	Employee shall give at least 30 days notice unless prevented by medical emergency No provision relating to scheduling
Medical Certification May Be Required by Employer for:	To be made by Employee at least 30 days prior to date leave is to begin where need is known in advance or, where not foreseeable, as soon as practicable. To demonstrate Employee's fitness to return to work from medical leave where Employer has a uniformly applied practice or policy to require such certification	For leave where Employee is under physician's care No provision relating to certification for return of Employee to work
Executive, Administrative, and Professional Employees	Request for leave because of serious health condition Such individuals are entitled to FMLA benefits. However, their use of FMLA leave does not change their status under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), i.e., an Employer, does not lose its exemption from the FLSA's minimum wage and overtime requirements.	No specific provision

Vermont

	FEDERAL ELEMENTS	STATE ELEMENTS
Employer Covered	Private Employers of 50 or more Employees in at least 20 weeks of the current or preceding year Public agencies, including state, local, and Federal Employers Local education agencies covered under special provisions	Private and public Employers of 10 or more for purposes of parental leave Private and public Employers of 15 or more for purposes of family leave No special provision for education agencies
Employees Eligible	Worked for Employer for at least 12 months - which need not be consecutive; worked at least 1,250 hours for Employer during 12 months preceding leave; and employed at Employer worksite with 50 or more Employees or within 75 miles of Employer worksites with a total of 50 or more Employees	Employees worked an average of 30 hours per week for one year No worksite proviso
Leave Amount	Up to a total of 12 weeks during a 12-month period; however, leave for birth, adoption, foster care, or to care for a parent with a serious health condition must be shared by spouses working for same Employer	12 weeks in a 12-month period for family or parental leave, i.e., serious illness of the Employee or the Employee's child, stepchild or ward of the Employee who lives with the Employee, parent, spouse, or parent of Employee's spouse; birth of the Employee's child or adoption

		<p>placement.</p> <p>Additionally, Employees are allowed "short-time family leave," 4 hours in any 30-day period and not to exceed 24 hours in any 12-month period in order to respond to a medical emergency involving the Employee's child or ward who lives with the Employee or the Employee's parent, spouse, or parent-in-law. This leave may also be used for certain preschool or school activities, routine medical and dental appointments, or other professional services related to their well-being.</p> <p>No provision requiring spouses to share leave</p> <p>Employee permitted to waive any or all rights by informed, voluntary agreement with Employer</p>
Type of Leave	Unpaid leave for birth, placement of child for adoption or foster care, to provide care for Employee's own parent (including individuals who exercise parental responsibility under state law), child, or spouse with serious health condition, or Employee's own serious health condition	Similar to Federal provision, additionally including care for parents-in-law
Serious Health Condition	Illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition involving incapacity or treatment connected with inpatient care in hospital, hospice, or residential medical-care facility; or, continuing treatment by a health care provider involving a period of incapacity: (1) requiring absence of more than 3 consecutive calendar days from work, school, or other activities; (2) due to a chronic or long-term condition for which treatment may be ineffective; (3) absences to receive multiple treatments (including recovery periods) for a condition that if left untreated likely would result in incapacity of more than 3 days; or (4) due to any incapacity related to pregnancy or for prenatal care	An accident, serious illness, disease, or mental condition that 1) poses imminent danger of death, 2) requires inpatient care in a hospital, or 3) requires continuing in-home care under the direction of a physician
Health Care Provider	Doctors of medicine or osteopathy authorized to practice medicine or surgery; podiatrists, dentists, clinical psychologists, clinical social workers, optometrists, chiropractors (limited to manual manipulation of spine to correct subluxation shown to exist by x-ray), nurse practitioners, and nurse-midwives, if authorized to practice under State law and consistent with the scope of their authorization; Christian Science practitioners listed with the First Church of Christ, Scientist in Boston, MA; any provider so recognized by the Employer or its group health plan's benefits manager; and any health provider listed above who practices and is authorized to practice in a country other than the United States	No specific provision
Intermittent Leave	Permitted for serious health condition when medically necessary. Not permitted for care of newborn or new placement by adoption or foster care unless Employer agrees	No specific provision, but short-term family leave (discussed above) requires Employees to make reasonable attempt to schedule appointments outside regular work hours and to provide earliest possible notice
Substitution of Paid Leave	Employees may elect or Employers may require accrued paid leave to be substituted in some cases. No limits on substituting paid vacation or personal leave. An Employee may not substitute paid sick, medical, of	Employee has option of using accrued sick, vacation, or other paid leave, not to exceed 6 weeks

	family leave for any situation not covered by any Employers' leave plan	
Reinstatement Rights	Must be restored to same position or one equivalent to it in all benefits and other terms and conditions of employment	Similar to Federal provision
Key Employee Exception	Limited exception for salaried Employees if among highest paid 10%, within 75 miles of worksites, restoration would lead to grievous economic harm to Employer, and other conditions met	Employer not required to offer Employee return to work if Employee performed unique services and hiring a permanent replacement during the leave after giving reasonable notice to the Employee of intent to do so was only alternative available to Employer to prevent substantial and grievous economic injury
Maintenance of Health Benefits During Leave	Health insurance must be continued under same conditions as prior to leave	Employer is to continue all employment benefits; Employee may be required to pay entire cost of benefits during the leave at existing Employee rate of contribution.
Leave Requests	To be made by Employee at least 30 days prior to date leave is to begin where need is known in advance or, where not foreseeable, as soon as practicable. If due to a planned medical treatment or for intermittent leave, the Employee, subject to health care provider's approval, shall make a reasonable effort to schedule it in a way that does not unduly disrupt Employer's operation	Made by Employee with reasonable notice. For adoption placement or birth, Employer may not require more than 6 weeks advance notice
Medical Certification May Be Required by Employer for:	Request for leave because of serious health condition To demonstrate Employee's fitness to return to work from medical leave where Employer has a uniformly applied practice or policy to require such certification	Employer may request certification from a physician for serious illness. No specific provision relating to Employee certification for return to work
Executive, Administrative, and Professional Employees	Such individuals are entitled to FMLA benefits. However, their use of FMLA leave does not change their status under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), i.e., an Employer, does not lose its exemption from the FLSA's minimum wage and overtime requirements.	No specific provision

Washington

Special Note: The State of Washington enacted legislation in 2006 that affected certain components in the previously shown comparison table that displayed similarities and differences that existed between Federal and State FMLA standards in the State of Washington. These changes are under review. A new comparison table will be inserted in this space when possible. In the meantime, to review information about the State of Washington FMLA, please go to the following web site.

<http://www.lni.wa.gov/WorkplaceRights/LeaveBenefits/FamilyCare/>

	FEDERAL ELEMENTS	STATE ELEMENTS
Employer Covered	Private Employers of 50 or more Employees in at least 20 weeks of the current or preceding year Public agencies, including state, local, and Federal Employers Local education agencies covered under special	Similar to Federal provision The Washington State Human Rights Commission (WSHRC) regulations against discrimination requires employers with 8 or more employees to provide a woman with a leave of absence for the period of time that she is sick or temporarily disabled because of pregnancy or

	provisions	childbirth.
Employees Eligible	Worked for Employer for at least 12 months - which need not be consecutive; worked at least 1,250 hours for Employer during 12 months preceding leave; and employed at Employer worksite with 50 or more Employees or within 75 miles of Employer worksites with a total of 50 or more Employees	Similar to Federal provision
Leave Amount	Up to a total of 12 weeks during a 12-month period; however, leave for birth, adoption, foster care, or to care for a parent with a serious health condition must be shared by spouses working for same Employer	Similar to Federal provision The amount of disability leave for pregnancy is that which is medically necessary to address any disability due to pregnancy or childbirth, based on the woman's individual condition. Leave for pregnant women is in addition to their other benefits for family leave purposes.
Type of Leave	Unpaid leave for birth, placement of child for adoption or foster care, to provide care for Employee's own parent (including individuals who exercise parental responsibility under state law), child, or spouse with serious health condition, or Employee's own serious health condition	Similar to Federal provision
Serious Health Condition	Illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition involving incapacity or treatment connected with inpatient care in hospital, hospice, or residential medical-care facility; or, continuing treatment by a health care provider involving a period of incapacity: (1) requiring absence of more than 3 consecutive calendar days from work, school, or other activities; (2) due to a chronic or long-term condition for which treatment may be ineffective; (3) absences to receive multiple treatments (including recovery periods) for a condition that if left untreated likely would result in incapacity of more than 3 days; or (4) due to any incapacity related to pregnancy or for prenatal care	Similar to Federal provision
Health Care Provider	Doctors of medicine or osteopathy authorized to practice medicine or surgery; podiatrists, dentists, clinical psychologists, clinical social workers, optometrists, chiropractors (limited to manual manipulation of spine to correct subluxation shown to exist by x-ray), nurse practitioners, and nurse-midwives, if authorized to practice under State law and consistent with the scope of their authorization; Christian Science practitioners listed with the First Church of Christ, Scientist in Boston, MA; any provider so recognized by the Employer or its group health plan's benefits manager; and any health provider listed above who practices and is authorized to practice in a country other than the United States	A person licensed as a physician under chapter 18.71 RCW or an osteopathic physician and surgeon under chapter 18.57 RCW; (b) a person licensed as an advanced registered nurse practitioner under chapter 18.79 RCW; or (c) any other person determined by the director to be capable of providing health care services.
Intermittent Leave	Permitted for serious health condition when medically necessary. Not permitted for care of newborn or new placement by adoption or foster care unless Employer agrees	An employee may take intermittent or reduced-schedule leave after the birth or placement of a child only if the employer agrees; however, if the employee or child has a serious health condition, agreement of the employer is not required for intermittent or reduced-schedule leave.
Substitution of	Employees may elect or Employers may require	

Paid Leave	accrued paid leave to be substituted in some cases. No limits on substituting paid vacation or personal leave. An Employee may not substitute paid sick, medical, or family leave for any situation not covered by any Employers' leave plan	
Reinstatement Rights	Must be restored to same position or one equivalent to it in all benefits and other terms and conditions of employment	Similar to Federal provision
Key Employee Exception	Limited exception for salaried Employees if among highest paid 10%, within 75 miles of worksites, restoration would lead to grievous economic harm to Employer, and other conditions met	Similar to Federal provision
Maintenance of Health Benefits During Leave	Health insurance must be continued under same conditions as prior to leave	Similar to Federal provision
Leave Requests	To be made by Employee at least 30 days prior to date leave is to begin where need is known in advance or, where not foreseeable, as soon as practicable. If due to a planned medical treatment or for intermittent leave, the Employee, subject to health care provider's approval, shall make a reasonable effort to schedule it in a way that does not unduly disrupt Employer's operation	Similar to Federal provision
Medical Certification May Be Required by Employer for:	Request for leave because of serious health condition To demonstrate Employee's fitness to return to work from medical leave where Employer has a uniformly applied practice or policy to require such certification	Similar to Federal provision
Executive, Administrative, and Professional Employees	Such individuals are entitled to FMLA benefits. However, their use of FMLA leave does not change their status under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), i.e., an Employer, does not lose its exemption from the FLSA's minimum wage and overtime requirements.	No specific provision

Wisconsin

	FEDERAL ELEMENTS	STATE ELEMENTS
Employer Covered	Private Employers of 50 or more Employees in at least 20 weeks of the current or preceding year Public agencies, including state, local, and Federal Employers Local education agencies covered under special provisions	Private and public Employers with at least 50 individuals on a permanent basis No special provision for education agencies
Employees Eligible	Worked for Employer for at least 12 months - which need not be consecutive; worked at least 1,250 hours for Employer during 12 months preceding leave; and employed at Employer worksite with 50 or more Employees or within 75 miles of Employer worksites with a total of 50 or more Employees	Have worked for Employer for at least 52 consecutive weeks and at least 1000 hours in preceding 52 weeks No worksite proviso
Leave Amount	Up to a total of 12 weeks during a 12-month period; however, leave for birth, adoption, foster care, or to care for a parent with a serious health condition must be	During a 12-month period: 1. 6 weeks for a birth or adoption

	shared by spouses working for same Employer	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. 2 weeks for serious health condition of parent, step-parent, child or spouse 3. 2 weeks for Employee's own serious health condition 4. Employee may not take more than 8 weeks in a year for any combination of the above leave <p>No provision requiring spouses to share leave</p>
Type of Leave	Unpaid leave for birth, placement of child for adoption or foster care, to provide care for Employee's own parent (including individuals who exercise parental responsibility under state law), child, or spouse with serious health condition, or Employee's own serious health condition	Birth, adoption, serious health condition of Employee, parent, parent-in-law, child or spouse
Serious Health Condition	Illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition involving incapacity or treatment connected with inpatient care in hospital, hospice, or residential medical-care facility; or, continuing treatment by a health care provider involving a period of incapacity: (1) requiring absence of more than 3 consecutive calendar days from work, school, or other activities; (2) due to a chronic or long-term condition for which treatment may be ineffective; (3) absences to receive multiple treatments (including recovery periods) for a condition that if left untreated likely would result in incapacity of more than 3 days; or (4) due to any incapacity related to pregnancy or for prenatal care	A disabling physical or mental illness, injury, impairment or condition involving inpatient care in a hospital, nursing home or hospice; or outpatient care that requires continuing treatment or supervision by a health care provider
Health Care Provider	Doctors of medicine or osteopathy authorized to practice medicine or surgery; podiatrists, dentists, clinical psychologists, clinical social workers, optometrists, chiropractors (limited to manual manipulation of spine to correct subluxation shown to exist by x-ray), nurse practitioners, and nurse-midwives, if authorized to practice under State law and consistent with the scope of their authorization; Christian Science practitioners listed with the First Church of Christ, Scientist in Boston, MA; any provider so recognized by the Employer or its group health plan's benefits manager; and any health provider listed above who practices and is authorized to practice in a country other than the United States	Similar to Federal provision, but also including licensed or certified physician, physician assistant, respiratory care practitioner, physical therapist, dietician, athletic trainer, occupational therapist, pharmacist, acupuncturist, social worker.
Intermittent Leave	Permitted for serious health condition when medically necessary. Not permitted for care of newborn or new placement by adoption or foster care unless Employer agrees	Employee may schedule medical leave as medically necessary and partial absences for family leave in a manner that does not unduly disrupt the Employer's operations
Substitution of Paid Leave	Employees may elect or Employers may require accrued paid leave to be substituted in some cases. No limits on substituting paid vacation or personal leave. An Employee may not substitute paid sick, medical, or family leave for any situation not covered by any Employers' leave plan	Employee may elect to substitute accrued paid or unpaid leave
Reinstatement Rights	Must be restored to same position or one equivalent to it in all benefits and other terms and conditions of employment	Similar to Federal provision
Key Employee Exception	Limited exception for salaried Employees if among highest paid 10%, within 75 miles of worksites, restoration would lead to grievous economic harm to Employer, and other conditions met	No specific provision
Maintenance of Health Benefits	Health insurance must be continued under same conditions as prior to leave	Similar to Federal provision

During Leave		
Leave Requests	To be made by Employee at least 30 days prior to date leave is to begin where need is known in advance or, where not foreseeable, as soon as practicable. If due to a planned medical treatment or for intermittent leave, the Employee, subject to health care provider's approval, shall make a reasonable effort to schedule it in a way that does not unduly disrupt Employer's operation	Made by an Employee in advance in a reasonable and practicable manner; similar to Federal provision insofar as an Employee is required to make a reasonable effort to schedule medical treatment
Medical Certification May Be Required by Employer for:	Request for leave because of serious health condition To demonstrate Employee's fitness to return to work from medical leave where Employer has a uniformly applied practice or policy to require such certification	Employer may request certification for serious health condition No provision relating to certification of fitness to return to work
Executive, Administrative, and Professional Employees	Such individuals are entitled to FMLA benefits. However, their use of FMLA leave does not change their status under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), i.e., an Employer, does not lose its exemption from the FLSA's minimum wage and overtime requirements.	No specific provision

District of Columbia

	FEDERAL ELEMENTS	STATE ELEMENTS
Employer Covered	Private Employers of 50 or more Employees in at least 20 weeks of the current or preceding year Public agencies, including state, local, and Federal Employers Local education agencies covered under special provisions	Any individual, firm, association, corporation, the D.C. government, receiver or trustee of any individual, firm, association, or corporation, or the legal representative of a deceased Employer who uses the services of an individual for pay in the District Local education agencies subject to special provisions
Employees Eligible	Worked for Employer for at least 12 months - which need not be consecutive; worked at least 1,250 hours for Employer during 12 months preceding leave; and employed at Employer worksite with 50 or more Employees or within 75 miles of Employer worksites with a total of 50 or more Employees	Have worked for one year with same Employer without a break in service except for regular holidays, sick or personal leave granted by Employer with at least 1000 hours service during the past 12-month period prior to leave request No worksite proviso
Leave Amount	Up to a total of 12 weeks during a 12-month period; however, leave for birth, adoption, foster care, or to care for a parent with a serious health condition must be shared by spouses working for same Employer	16 weeks during 24-month period for family leave (care for family member); 16 weeks for medical leave (employee's own serious health condition) Leave rights for birth or placement expire 12 months after birth of child or placement Leave must be shared by family members working for the same Employer
Type of Leave	Unpaid leave for birth, placement of child for adoption or foster care, to provide care for Employee's own parent (including individuals who exercise parental responsibility under state law), child, or spouse with serious health condition, or Employee's own serious health condition	Similar to Federal provisions, but applied in terms of "family membership," defined to include a person to whom the employee is related by blood, legal custody, or marriage, sharing mutual residence and committed relationship with the Employee. Also includes a child who lives with an employee and for whom the employee permanently assumes and discharges parental responsibility.

Serious Health Condition	Illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition involving incapacity or treatment connected with inpatient care in hospital, hospice, or residential medical-care facility; or, continuing treatment by a health care provider involving a period of incapacity: (1) requiring absence of more than 3 consecutive calendar days from work, school, or other activities; (2) due to a chronic or long-term condition for which treatment may be ineffective; (3) absences to receive multiple treatments (including recovery periods) for a condition that if left untreated likely would result in incapacity of more than 3 days; or (4) due to any incapacity related to pregnancy or for prenatal care	Similar to Federal provisions
Health Care Provider	Doctors of medicine or osteopathy authorized to practice medicine or surgery; podiatrists, dentists, clinical psychologists, clinical social workers, optometrists, chiropractors (limited to manual manipulation of spine to correct subluxation shown to exist by x-ray), nurse practitioners, and nurse-midwives, if authorized to practice under State law and consistent with the scope of their authorization; Christian Science practitioners listed with the First Church of Christ, Scientist in Boston, MA; any provider so recognized by the Employer or its group health plan's benefits manager; and any health provider listed above who practices and is authorized to practice in a country other than the United States	Any person licensed under Federal, State, or District of Columbia law to provide health care services
Intermittent Leave	Permitted for serious health condition when medically necessary. Not permitted for care of newborn or new placement by adoption or foster care unless Employer agrees	Intermittent leave may be taken when a family member or the Employee himself or herself has a serious health condition
Substitution of Paid Leave	Employees may elect or Employers may require accrued paid leave to be substituted in some cases. No limits on substituting paid vacation or personal leave. An Employee may not substitute paid sick, medical, or family leave for any situation not covered by any Employers' leave plan	Employee may elect accrued paid family, vacation, personal, or compensatory leave to be substituted, plus the Employee may utilize program run by Employer to use paid leave of another Employee under certain conditions that have been met
Reinstatement Rights	Must be restored to same position or one equivalent to it in all benefits and other terms and conditions of employment	Similar to Federal provision, with the addition that if the Employee accepted alternative employment with Employer throughout the duration of the serious health condition, the Employee shall be returned to his or her original employment upon their return from leave
Key Employee Exception	Limited exception for salaried Employees if among highest paid 10%, within 75 miles of worksites, restoration would lead to grievous economic harm to Employer, and other conditions met	Similar to Federal provision but for Employers with less than 50 Employees, Employment restoration may be denied to a salaried Employee if the Employee is among the 5 highest paid Employees of an Employer
Maintenance of Health Benefits During Leave	Health insurance must be continued under same conditions as prior to leave	Similar to Federal provision
Leave Requests	To be made by Employee at least 30 days prior to date leave is to begin where need is known in advance or, where not foreseeable, as soon as practicable. If due to a planned medical treatment or for intermittent leave, the Employee, subject to health care provider's approval, shall make a reasonable effort to schedule it in a way that does not unduly disrupt Employer's	Similar to Federal provision in that the Employee shall provide reasonable prior notice Similar to Federal provision

	operation	
Medical Certification May Be Required by Employer for:	Request for leave because of serious health condition To demonstrate Employee's fitness to return to work from medical leave where Employer has a uniformly applied practice or policy to require such certification	Similar to Federal provision No provision relating to certification of fitness to return to work
Executive, Administrative, and Professional Employees	Such individuals are entitled to FMLA benefits. However, their use of FMLA leave does not change their status under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), i.e., an Employer, does not lose its exemption from the FLSA's minimum wage and overtime requirements.	No provision regarding effect on exempt status under the District of Columbia minimum wage and overtime law

Employer Notice Requirements

Employer Notice Requirements

The final rule adopts a consolidated format and makes additional changes to clarify employer obligations to provide notice to employees as outlined below. The Department continues to believe that a key component of making the FMLA a success is effective communication between employees and employers. Enhanced communication increases employee awareness of rights and responsibilities and facilitates the smooth administration of the FMLA. The Department anticipates that this consolidated format and the notice requirements will further this goal.

The revised regulations expand employer notice obligations into five basic notices:

- Standard FMLA "General Notice" poster notifying employees of FMLA rights.
- General Notice to all employees, either in an employee handbook or by distributing a copy.
- "Eligibility Notice" to inform employee requesting leave whether he or she is eligible for FMLA leave and has leave available and, if not, why not.
- "Rights and Responsibilities Notice" must provide the employee with information regarding health benefit payments, whether medical certification is required, and the employee's right to use paid leave,
- "Designation Notice," advising the employee whether the leave will be designated as FMLA leave and whether a "fitness to return to work" certification will be required (employer must list the employee's "essential job functions." if certification will be required)

According to § 825.300(e) the consequences of failing to provide the notices outlined in the regulations may:

Constitute an interference with, restraint, or denial of the exercise of an employee's FMLA rights. An employer may be liable for compensation and benefits lost by reason of the violation or other actual monetary losses sustained as a direct result of the violation, and for appropriate equitable or other relief, including employment, reinstatement, promotion, or any other relief tailored to the harm suffered.

Sample notices are attached to the new regulations as appendices. If a "significant part" (which is not defined) of the employer's work force is comprised of employees who are not literate in English, the employer must provide the notices in a language in which the employees are literate.

The revised regulations maintain the basic rules for employee notice obligations. The regulations outline that an employee must abide by the employer's normal notice of absence requirements (which may require written notice), provided that it is practical for the employee to do so based on the specific circumstances. Employees still do not need to "apply" for FMLA leave or even mention the FMLA; rather, it is up to the employer to determine whether the leave qualifies and to "inquire further" if the employee has furnished sufficient notice of circumstances that may qualify.

Quick Reference Guide

Type of Notice	Description	Trigger / Timing
General Notice	<p>The poster and the text must be large enough to be easily read and contain fully legible text. Must also provide notice in handbook or distributing a copy. Distribution may be done electronically.</p> <p>When appropriate, the employer must provide the notice in a language the employees can read.</p>	<p>Every covered employer must post and keep posted on its premises, in conspicuous places where employees are employed, a notice explaining the Act's provisions, whether or not it has any "eligible" employees.</p> <p>*Use Appendix C of Regulations</p>
Eligibility Notice	<p>When an employee requests leave or the employer becomes aware that the employee may need to take leave, the employer must notify the employee of the employee's eligibility. If the employee is not eligible, the notice must state at least one reason why the employee is not eligible. May be verbal or in written.</p>	<p>Within 5 business days of the employee's request to take leave.</p> <p>*Use Appendix D of Regulations</p>
Notice of Rights and Responsibilities	<p>Notice informing the employee:</p> <p>That leave is designated and counted against FMLA entitlement</p> <p>Any medical certification requirements and consequences for failing to meet them.</p> <p>Employee's right to substitute paid leave and whether the employer will require substitution.</p> <p>Whether the employee will be required to make any health insurance premium payments and the procedure to do so.</p> <p>Employee's status as key employee.</p> <p>Employee's right to maintenance and benefits during leave and rights to job restoration.</p> <p>Employee's potential liability for health insurance premiums paid by employer if the employee fails to return</p>	<p>Provided at the same time as the eligibility notice. Within 5 business days of the employee's request to take leave.</p> <p>*Use Appendix D of Regulations</p>
Designation Notice	<p>Notifies the employee if leave will be counted toward their 12 week entitlement and employee requirements for fitness-for-duty certificates prior to re-employment.</p>	<p>Within 5 business days of the employee's request to take leave.</p> <p>*Use Appendix E of Regulations</p>

Notice of Request for Medical Certification	Employer request that employee provide a certification issued by the health care provider of the necessity of such leave of the employee taking leave or that of the family member for which they are caring. Also applies to employee taking leave to care for a covered servicemember.	At the time employee gives notice or within 5 business days thereafter.
Notification of Proof of Active Duty Order	The first time an employee requests leave because of a qualifying exigency arising out of the active duty or call to active duty status of a covered military member an employer may require the employee to provide a copy of the covered military member's active duty orders or other documentation issued by the military which indicates the dates of the service.	At the time that employee gives notice of leave or within 5 business days thereafter. Employee must provide the requested certification to the employer within 15 calendar days.
Notice of incomplete or insufficient certification	The employer may advise an employee whenever the employer finds a certification incomplete or insufficient and shall state in writing what additional information is necessary to make the certification complete and sufficient.	As soon as certificate is deemed incomplete or insufficient by the employer. Employer must provide the employee with seven calendar days to cure any such deficiency.
Notice of Clarification and Authentication	The employer may contact the employee's health care provider, with the employee's permission, for purposes of clarification and verifying the authenticity of the medical certification.	Employer must have given employee an opportunity to cure any deficiencies as set forth above. If the employee chooses not to provide the employer with authorization allowing the employer to clarify the certification with the health care provider and does not otherwise clarify the certification the employer may deny the FMLA leave.
Notice for Second Opinion	If the employer questions the adequacy and/or validity of an opinion medical certification, the employer may require the employee to obtain a second medical opinion. If the second opinion is the same as the first, the certification is confirmed.	The employer is required to provide the employee with a copy of the second medical opinion where applicable upon request by the employee within 5 business days unless extenuating circumstances prevent such action.
Notice for a Third Opinion	If the second opinion differs from the first, the employer may get a third opinion. The health care provider must be mutually agreed upon. The employer pays for the third opinion. The third opinion is final and binding.	The employer is required to provide the employee with a copy of the third medical opinion where applicable upon request by the employee within 5 business days unless extenuating circumstances prevent such action.
Notice of Recertification	Additional requests for Medical Certification.	An employer may request recertification no more often

		<p>than every 30 days and only in connection with an absence by the employee.</p> <p>If the medical certification indicates that the minimum duration of the condition is more than 30 days, an employer must wait until that minimum duration expires before requesting a recertification.</p> <p>Can request it in less than 30 days if employee requests an extension of leave, circumstances described by previous certification have changed significantly or employer receives info casting doubt upon reason for leave.</p>
<p>Notice of Discontinuation of Coverage</p>	<p>If an employee's premium payment is more than 30 days late, absent other company policies, the employer may drop the employee from coverage of the group health benefit plan.</p>	<p>Employer must provide the employee with at least 15 days written notice before the date coverage is to cease.</p>

See the following sample notices that may be used to comply with employer notice requirements. The Department of Labor has added them as appendices to the revised FMLA regulations.

Appendix C to Part 825—Notice to Employees Of Rights Under FMLA (WH Publication 1420)

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

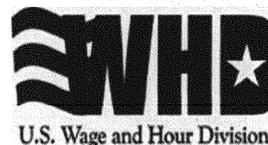
An employee may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Labor or may bring a private lawsuit against an employer.

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 | Employment Standards Administration | Wage and Hour Division

WHD Publication 1420 (Rev. XX-XXXX)

Notice of Eligibility and Rights & Responsibilities
(Family and Medical Leave Act)

U.S. Department of Labor
Employment Standards Administration
Wage and Hour Division



OMB Control Number: 1215-0181
Expires: 12/31/2011

In general, to be eligible an employee must have worked for an employer for at least 12 months, have worked at least 1,250 hours in the 12 months preceding the leave, and work at a site with at least 50 employees within 75 miles. While use of this form by employers is optional, a fully completed Form WH-381 provides employees with the information required by 29 C.F.R. § 825.300(b), which must be provided within five business days of the employee notifying the employer of the need for FMLA leave. Part B provides employees with information regarding their rights and responsibilities for taking FMLA leave, as required by 29 C.F.R. § 825.300(b), (c).

[Part A – NOTICE OF ELIGIBILITY]

TO: _____
Employee

FROM: _____
Employer Representative

DATE: _____

On _____, you informed us that you needed leave beginning on _____ for:

- _____ The birth of a child, or placement of a child with you for adoption or foster care;
- _____ Your own serious health condition;
- _____ Because you are needed to care for your _____ spouse; _____ child; _____ parent due to his/her serious health condition.
- _____ Because of a qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that your _____ spouse; _____ son or daughter; _____ parent is on active duty or call to active duty status in support of a contingency operation as a member of the National Guard or Reserves.
- _____ Because you are the _____ spouse; _____ son or daughter; _____ parent; _____ next of kin of a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness.

This Notice is to inform you that you:

- _____ Are eligible for FMLA leave (See Part B below for Rights and Responsibilities)
- _____ Are **not** eligible for FMLA leave, because (only one reason need be checked, although you may not be eligible for other reasons):
 - _____ You have not met the FMLA’s 12-month length of service requirement. As of the first date of requested leave, you will have worked approximately _____ months towards this requirement.
 - _____ You have not met the FMLA’s 1,250-hours-worked requirement.
 - _____ You do not work and/or report to a site with 50 or more employees within 75-miles.

If you have any questions, contact _____ or view the FMLA poster located in _____.

[PART B-RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR TAKING FMLA LEAVE]

As explained in Part A, you meet the eligibility requirements for taking FMLA leave and still have FMLA leave available in the applicable 12-month period. **However, in order for us to determine whether your absence qualifies as FMLA leave, you must return the following information to us by _____.** (If a certification is requested, employers must allow at least 15 calendar days from receipt of this notice; additional time may be required in some circumstances.) If sufficient information is not provided in a timely manner, your leave may be denied.

- _____ Sufficient certification to support your request for FMLA leave. A certification form that sets forth the information necessary to support your request _____ is/ _____ is not enclosed.
- _____ Sufficient documentation to establish the required relationship between you and your family member.
- _____ Other information needed: _____

_____ No additional information requested

If your leave does qualify as FMLA leave you will have the following responsibilities while on FMLA leave (only checked blanks apply):

Contact _____ at _____ to make arrangements to continue to make your share of the premium payments on your health insurance to maintain health benefits while you are on leave. You have a minimum 30-day (or, indicate longer period, if applicable) grace period in which to make premium payments. If payment is not made timely, your group health insurance may be cancelled, provided we notify you in writing at least 15 days before the date that your health coverage will lapse, or, at our option, we may pay your share of the premiums during FMLA leave, and recover these payments from you upon your return to work.

You will be required to use your available paid _____ sick, _____ vacation, and/or _____ other leave during your FMLA absence. This means that you will receive your paid leave and the leave will also be considered protected FMLA leave and counted against your FMLA leave entitlement.

Due to your status within the company, you are considered a "key employee" as defined in the FMLA. As a "key employee," restoration to employment may be denied following FMLA leave on the grounds that such restoration will cause substantial and grievous economic injury to us. We _____ have/_____ have not determined that restoring you to employment at the conclusion of FMLA leave will cause substantial and grievous economic harm to us.

While on leave you will be required to furnish us with periodic reports of your status and intent to return to work every _____. (Indicate interval of periodic reports, as appropriate for the particular leave situation).

If the circumstances of your leave change, and you are able to return to work earlier than the date indicated on the reverse side of this form, you will be required to notify us at least two workdays prior to the date you intend to report for work.

If your leave does qualify as FMLA leave you will have the following rights while on FMLA leave:

- You have a right under the FMLA for up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave in a 12-month period calculated as:
 - _____ the calendar year (January – December).
 - _____ a fixed leave year based on _____.
 - _____ the 12-month period measured forward from the date of your first FMLA leave usage.
 - _____ a "rolling" 12-month period measured backward from the date of any FMLA leave usage.

- You have a right under the FMLA for up to 26 weeks of unpaid leave in a single 12-month period to care for a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness. This single 12-month period commenced on _____.

- Your health benefits must be maintained during any period of unpaid leave under the same conditions as if you continued to work.
- You must be reinstated to the same or an equivalent job with the same pay, benefits, and terms and conditions of employment on your return from FMLA-protected leave. (If your leave extends beyond the end of your FMLA entitlement, you do not have return rights under FMLA.)
- If you do not return to work following FMLA leave for a reason other than: 1) the continuation, recurrence, or onset of a serious health condition which would entitle you to FMLA leave; 2) the continuation, recurrence, or onset of a covered servicemember's serious injury or illness which would entitle you to FMLA leave; or 3) other circumstances beyond your control, you may be required to reimburse us for our share of health insurance premiums paid on your behalf during your FMLA leave.
- If we have not informed you above that you must use accrued paid leave while taking your unpaid FMLA leave entitlement, you have the right to have _____ sick, _____ vacation, and/or _____ other leave run concurrently with your unpaid leave entitlement, provided you meet any applicable requirements of the leave policy. Applicable conditions related to the substitution of paid leave are referenced or set forth below. If you do not meet the requirements for taking paid leave, you remain entitled to take unpaid FMLA leave.

_____ For a copy of conditions applicable to sick/vacation/other leave usage please refer to _____ available at: _____.

_____ Applicable conditions for use of paid leave: _____

Once we obtain the information from you as specified above, we will inform you, within 5 business days, whether your leave will be designated as FMLA leave and count towards your FMLA leave entitlement. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact:

_____ at _____.

PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT NOTICE AND PUBLIC BURDEN STATEMENT

It is mandatory for employers to provide employees with notice of their eligibility for FMLA protection and their rights and responsibilities. 29 U.S.C. § 2617; 29 C.F.R. § 825.300(b), (c). It is mandatory for employers to retain a copy of this disclosure in their records for three years. 29 U.S.C. § 2616; 29 C.F.R. § 825.500. Persons are not required to respond to this collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The Department of Labor estimates that it will take an average of 10 minutes for respondents to complete this collection of information, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. If you have any comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, send them to the Administrator, Wage and Hour Division, U.S. Department of Labor, Room S-3502, 200 Constitution Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20210. **DO NOT SEND THE COMPLETED FORM TO THE WAGE AND HOUR DIVISION.**

Designation Notice
(Family and Medical Leave Act)

U.S. Department of Labor
Employment Standards Administration
Wage and Hour Division



OMB Control Number: 1215-0181
Expires: 12/31/2011

Leave covered under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) must be designated as FMLA-protected and the employer must inform the employee of the amount of leave that will be counted against the employee's FMLA leave entitlement. In order to determine whether leave is covered under the FMLA, the employer may request that the leave be supported by a certification. If the certification is incomplete or insufficient, the employer must state in writing what additional information is necessary to make the certification complete and sufficient. While use of this form by employers is optional, a fully completed Form WH-382 provides an easy method of providing employees with the written information required by 29 C.F.R. §§ 825.300(c), 825.301, and 825.305(c).

To: _____

Date: _____

We have reviewed your request for leave under the FMLA and any supporting documentation that you have provided. We received your most recent information on _____ and decided:

Your FMLA leave request is approved. All leave taken for this reason will be designated as FMLA leave.

The FMLA requires that you notify us as soon as practicable if dates of scheduled leave change or are extended, or were initially unknown. Based on the information you have provided to date, we are providing the following information about the amount of time that will be counted against your leave entitlement:

Provided there is no deviation from your anticipated leave schedule, the following number of hours, days, or weeks will be counted against your leave entitlement: _____

Because the leave you will need will be unscheduled, it is not possible to provide the hours, days, or weeks that will be counted against your FMLA entitlement at this time. You have the right to request this information once in a 30-day period (if leave was taken in the 30-day period).

Please be advised (check if applicable):

You have requested to use paid leave during your FMLA leave. Any paid leave taken for this reason will count against your FMLA leave entitlement.

We are requiring you to substitute or use paid leave during your FMLA leave.

You will be required to present a fitness-for-duty certificate to be restored to employment. If such certification is not timely received, your return to work may be delayed until certification is provided. A list of the essential functions of your position is is not attached. If attached, the fitness-for-duty certification must address your ability to perform these functions.

Additional information is needed to determine if your FMLA leave request can be approved:

The certification you have provided is not complete and sufficient to determine whether the FMLA applies to your leave request. You must provide the following information no later than _____, unless it is not practicable under the particular circumstances despite your diligent good faith efforts, or your leave may be denied.
(Provide at least seven calendar days)

(Specify information needed to make the certification complete and sufficient)

We are exercising our right to have you obtain a second or third opinion medical certification at our expense, and we will provide further details at a later time.

Your FMLA Leave request is Not Approved.

The FMLA does not apply to your leave request.

You have exhausted your FMLA leave entitlement in the applicable 12-month period.

PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT NOTICE AND PUBLIC BURDEN STATEMENT

It is mandatory for employers to inform employees in writing whether leave requested under the FMLA has been determined to be covered under the FMLA. 29 U.S.C. § 2617; 29 C.F.R. §§ 825.300(d), (e). It is mandatory for employers to retain a copy of this disclosure in their records for three years. 29 U.S.C. § 2616; 29 C.F.R. § 825.500. Persons are not required to respond to this collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The Department of Labor estimates that it will take an average of 10 – 30 minutes for respondents to complete this collection of information, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. If you have any comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, send them to the Administrator, Wage and Hour Division, U.S. Department of Labor, Room S-3502, 200 Constitution Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20210. **DO NOT SEND THE COMPLETED FORM TO THE WAGE AND HOUR DIVISION.**

Form WH-382 January 2009

Sample Policies

Sample 1 (Incorporates State of California leave laws as well as FMLA)

Leaves of Absence

[Company Name]'s Leave of Absence Policy is designed to ensure that all leaves of absence are administered in a manner that conforms to all applicable federal and state laws.

Leaves are to be approved by proper management following consultation with the Human Resources Department. When unpaid time-off exceeds three (3) consecutive business days, the employee must request a leave of absence.

You are expected to give thirty (30) days notice, if at all possible, when requesting leave. Leave requests should be documented on a Leave of Absence Request and signed by both you and your supervisor.

If you are capable of returning to work prior to the scheduled end of the leave, you are expected to give the Company two (2) days advance notice so that we may prepare for your return (unless otherwise indicated within this policy).

If you fail to report for work at the end of a leave and fail to obtain authorization for an extension of a leave, you will be considered to have voluntarily resigned.

Managing “Concurrent” Leaves

A number of federal and state laws regulate temporary leaves from the workplace. In circumstances where these regulations “overlap” one another, leaves will run concurrently with one another.

- **FMLA Leave**
12 week period concurrent with CFRA Leave (if qualified)
- **CFRA Leave**
12 week period concurrent with FMLA Leave
- **PDL Leave**
4 month period concurrent with FMLA Leave (if qualified) followed by a 12 week period of CFRA Leave (if qualified)
- **Workers’ Compensation Disability Leave**
12 week period of FMLA Leave (if qualified) concurrent with CFRA Leave (if qualified) followed by continuing Workers’ Compensation Disability Leave

Personal Leave

A Personal Leave may be granted for purposes deemed reasonable and/or necessary by management, at the sole discretion of management, and only in the event that an employee is not entitled to any other Company offered leave of absence that is applicable and listed within this policy.

You are eligible to request and receive, upon supervisor approval, a Personal Leave of Absence regardless of your length of employment. Proper documentation may be required to determine the appropriateness of the leave.

Personal Leaves may be granted for up to four (4) weeks and may, in unusual circumstances, be extended for an additional four (4) weeks. A Personal Leave may not exceed eight (8) weeks.

You may, upon request, utilize any accrued vacation during your leave. However, all time off will be classified as Personal Leave for the purpose of calculating total leave time.

If you normally pay a portion of the premiums for your group medical, dental and/or vision coverage through payroll deduction, the contributions due during your leave will be deducted from your normal pay upon your return. If you fail to return to work at the end of your leave, all contributions due will become payable immediately.

Holiday pay will be suspended throughout the duration of the leave. Vacation and sick accrual, if applicable, will continue as normal throughout the leave.

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) Leave

Under the requirements of the Family and Medical Leave Act, eligible employees may take up to twelve (12) weeks of unpaid, job protected leave for certain family and medical reasons.

You may be eligible for FMLA Leave if you have worked for the Company for at least twelve (12) months (does not have to be continuous) and for 1,250 hours over the previous twelve (12) months.

Eligible employees are entitled to up to twelve (12) weeks of unpaid leave each twelve (12) months (calculated in "rolling months" at the start of each leave period) for one of the following reasons: the birth, adoption or foster care of a child; to care for a spouse, son, daughter, or parent with a serious health condition; or for your own serious health condition. Leave for birth, adoption or foster care must conclude within twelve (12) months of the birth or placement of the child.

A serious health condition includes an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves either inpatient care (i.e. an overnight stay in a hospital, hospice, or residential care facility), or continuing treatment by a healthcare provider. When leave is taken for the purpose of a serious health condition, the Company will require you to provide certification (within 15 days of notification) of the condition and the fact that you are unable to perform job functions, or certification of the fact that you are needed to care for a family member. Re-certification will also be required upon request. The Company reserves the right to seek a second or third opinion at its expense. Failure to provide certification may lead to a delay or refusal to grant the leave. You are also required to submit a fitness for duty certificate at the conclusion of your leave.

If both spouses are employed for the Company, they are entitled to a combined total of twelve (12) weeks of leave for the birth, adoption, or foster care placement of a single child, or to care for a parent with a serious health condition.

FMLA Leave may be taken intermittently, whenever it is medically necessary, to care for a seriously ill family member or because you are seriously ill and unable to work. If you request intermittent leave, you may be required to transfer temporarily to an alternative position (with equivalent pay and benefits) in order to better accommodate repeated periods of absence.

You may, upon request, utilize any accrued vacation or sick time during your leave.

If you normally pay a portion of the premiums for your group medical, dental and/or vision coverage through payroll deduction, the contributions due during your leave will be deducted from your normal pay upon your return. If you fail to return to work at the end of your leave, all contributions due will become payable immediately (unless you are unable to return due to a serious health condition).

Holiday pay will be suspended throughout the duration of the leave. Vacation and sick accrual, if applicable, will continue as normal throughout the leave.

Upon return to work, the Company will reinstate you to your former position or an equivalent position with equivalent benefits, pay, and other terms of employment. However, you will have no greater right to reinstatement than if you had been continuously employed during the leave period. Changes in hours, schedules, duties, jobs, benefits, pay, and the like may occur due to business needs.

If you are considered a key employee (within the highest-paid 10 percent of the workforce) and restoration of employment would cause substantial and grievous economic injury to the Company, there is no obligation to restore you to your previous position. In such circumstances, you will be notified and, if the leave has begun, you will be given the option of returning to work.

The Company will reasonably accommodate any employee with a disability, released to return to work, in accordance with applicable laws.

Military Family Leave

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 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.

Sample 2

Basic Family and Medical Leave Entitlement

The Family and Medical Leave Act entitles full-time employees to take up to 12 weeks of Leave Without Pay during any 12-month period to care for family members with serious health conditions and reasons listed below. Part-time employees are entitled to take a prorated amount of time in proportion to the number of hours in the employee's regularly scheduled administrative workweek. The 12 administrative workweeks of leave will be calculated on an hourly basis and will equal 12 times the average number of hours in the employee's regularly scheduled administrative workweek. FMLA may be taken for one of the following reasons:

1. the birth of an employee's son or daughter, and the care of such son or daughter;
2. the placement of an employee's son or daughter for adoption or foster care;
3. the incapacitation due to pregnancy;
4. the care of an employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent of the employee, if such spouse, son, daughter, or parent has a serious health condition; or
5. an employee's serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform any one or more of the essential functions of his or her position.

For FMLA, the definition of a family member is more limited than in other family leave regulations. Family members are defined as spouses, children (including adopted, foster, step, and legal wards), and parents. A son or daughter means a biological, adopted, or foster child; a step child; or a legal ward. A spouse is an individual who is a husband or wife pursuant to a marriage that is a legal union between one man and one woman, including common law marriage between one man and one woman in States where it is recognized. A serious health condition means an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves:

- i. Inpatient care (i.e., an overnight stay) in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical care facility, including any period of incapacity or any subsequent treatment in connection with such inpatient care; or
- ii. Continuing treatment by a health care provider that includes (but is not limited to) examinations to determine if there is a serious health condition and evaluations of such health conditions, if necessary. These treatments may include incapacitation due to pregnancy, recurring episodic illnesses such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, and other illnesses. The incapacitation could include long-term care for individual who suffer from Alzheimer's, severe stroke, or terminal stages of a disease. It could also include physical therapy for arthritis, chemotherapy/radiation, and dialysis for kidney disease.
- iii. A serious illness is not the common cold, flu, earaches, upset stomach, minor ulcers, headaches (other than migraines), routine dental or orthodontia problems, or periodontal disease.

Eligibility

Employees who are eligible for sick and annual leave, and have at least 12 months of federal service are eligible for FMLA unless they have appointments of one year or less, or are hourly employees with intermittent work schedules. Such hourly or short-term employees may, however, be covered under Title I of the FMLA, which primarily covers private sector employees. (Please consult with Human Resources about entitlement eligibility).

Military Family Leave Entitlement

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 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.

Notice for FMLA

Managers are responsible for informing their employees of their entitlement to take FMLA, and their responsibilities and obligations for use of this leave. Managers should be aware of employee's situations for which FMLA might apply, and advise employees accordingly.

Employee's Responsibilities

Employees must request the use of FMLA in advance and provide proper documentation for leave. This company does not place an employee in this leave status without a written request from the employee.

If leave taken is foreseeable based on an expected birth, placement for adoption or foster care, or planned medical treatment, the employee shall provide a 30-day notice to the HR department or their supervisor of his or her intent to take leave. If the date of birth, placement, or medical treatment requires leave to begin within 30 days, the employee shall provide such notice as is practicable. If the leave is foreseeable based on a planned medical treatment, the employee shall consult with the agency and make a reasonable effort to schedule medical treatments, to avoid disrupting the operations of the agency, subject to the approval of the health care provider.

If the need for leave is foreseeable and the employee fails to give 30 days' notice with no reasonable excuse for the delay of notification, the agency may delay the taking of the leave until 30 days after the date the employee provides notice of the need to be absent.

If the need for leave is not foreseeable and the employee cannot provide 30 days' notice of his or her need for leave, the employee shall provide notice within a reasonable period of time appropriate to the circumstances involved.

Leave Entitlement

Employees may take only the leave necessary to manage the circumstances that prompted the leave request. The company cannot subtract FMLA leave from an employee's entitlement unless the agency obtains confirmation from the employee to invoke entitlement to this leave.

Employees may substitute annual leave or sick leave for FMLA in advance. Supervisors should consider employee's use of sick leave for general family reasons and for seriously ill family members. If the employee substitutes paid leave for Leave Without Pay, the time off counts against the employee's FMLA entitlement, even though it is charged to a paid leave. If the employee simply requests and is granted annual and/or sick leave for an illness, and does not invoke FMLA, that time off does not count against FMLA entitlement.

An employee may retroactively substitute paid leave for leave without pay previously taken if the employee, or his or her personal representative, is physically or mentally incapable of invoking the employee's entitlement to FMLA leave during the entire period in which the employee was absent from work for the FMLA-qualifying purpose. If the employee or his or her personal representative was incapable of invoking FMLA, the employee may retroactively invoke his or her entitlement to FMLA leave within two workdays after returning to work. The incapacity (of the employee and/or representative) must be documented with medical certification from a health care provider.

Medical Certification

Employees must provide medical certification of a serious health condition or legal documentation for adoption no later than 15 workdays after the employee applies for FMLA. If despite the employee's good faith effort and diligence to acquire medical certification of a serious health condition within the 15 day timeframe, the employee must provide the certification within a reasonable timeframe but not later than 30 calendar days after the date the medical certification was requested. Employees who do not provide medical certification signed by the health care provider that includes all requested information are not entitled to FMLA leave.

The required medical certification is a written medical certification issued by the health care provider of the employee or of the eligible family member. The certification should include the

date the serious health condition began; the probable duration of the serious health condition; a general statement as to the incapacitation, examination, or treatment that may be required by a health care provider; the requirement that the eligible patient needs psychological comfort and/or physical care; or needs assistance for basic care. The health care provider must certify that he or she will provide care for the eligible patient and an estimate of the amount of time needed for this care.

While the employee is obtaining the requested medical certification, or if the company questions the validity of the original certification provided by the employee, and the medical treatment is required to begin, the company shall grant provisional leave pending timely final written medical certification.

Substitution of Paid Leave

An employee may elect to substitute paid leave for any or all of the period of leave without pay for FMLA. An employee may elect to substitute the following paid leave:

- accrued or accumulated annual or sick leave, consistent with current law and regulations governing granting and use of annual or sick leave;
- advanced annual or sick leave approved under the same terms and conditions that apply to any other agency employee who request advanced annual or sick leave; and
- leave made available to an employee under the Leave Transfer Program.

Leave Accounting

FMLA for serious health conditions of an employee or family member may be taken either as one continuous period of time or intermittently from one-half hour to several weeks, or on a reduced schedule. Leave is counted hour for hour. FMLA may be taken intermittently for birth or adoption, or placement of a son or daughter only if the employee and the company both agree to such an arrangement.

Placement of Employee while on FMLA

If an employee takes leave intermittently or on a reduced schedule, the Company may place the employee temporarily in an available alternative position for which the employee is qualified and that can better accommodate recurring periods of leave. The alternative position must be an equivalent grade or pay level, and in the same commuting area.

Upon return from FMLA leave, an employee shall be returned to the same position which he/she held when the leave began; or an equivalent position with equivalent benefits, pay, status, and other terms and conditions of employment.

Reporting Requirements

The Company may require an employee to report periodically on his or her status, and intention to return to work following the FMLA leave. Also, as a condition to returning to work after the Company requires certification from the employee's health care provider that the employee is able to perform the essential functions of his or her position. The Company should advise the employee of any such requirements before the leave begins, and will pay the expenses for any such certification.

Sample 3

This company's Family and Medical leave policy follows the requirements outlined under state and federal law. Employees are eligible for FMLA Leave if they have worked for the Company for at least twelve (12) months (does not have to be continuous) and for 1,250 hours over the previous twelve (12) months. Employees who qualify can request leave of up to 12 weeks. See Human Resources for questions regarding eligibility.

Eligible employees must provide written notice of leave at least 30 days before leave is to commence whenever possible. When leave is needed for a medical emergency and 30 days notice is not feasible, the employee must give as much notice as possible.

Employees who are granted FMLA leave will be informed in writing their eligibility as well as their rights and responsibilities and the consequences for failing to meet these requirements. Employees will also be notified of the terms and conditions of their health and additional benefits while on leave. Granted leave will be credited to the allotted 12-week family and medical leave as allowed by law. Following approved leave, employees will be reinstated to their former position or that of an equivalent position, subject to exceptions outlined in the FMLA.