

# Your Employee Rights Under the Family and Medical Leave Act

## What is FMLA leave?

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is a federal law that provides eligible employees with **job-protected leave** for qualifying family and medical reasons. The U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division (WHD) enforces the FMLA for most employees.

Eligible employees can take **up to 12 workweeks** of FMLA leave in a 12-month period for:

- The birth, adoption or foster placement of a child with you,
- Your serious mental or physical health condition that makes you unable to work,
- To care for your spouse, child or parent with a serious mental or physical health condition, and
- Certain qualifying reasons related to the foreign deployment of your spouse, child or parent who is a military servicemember.

An eligible employee who is the spouse, child, parent or next of kin of a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness **may take up to 26 workweeks** of FMLA leave in a single 12-month period to care for the servicemember.

You have the right to use FMLA leave in **one block of time**. When it is medically necessary or otherwise permitted, you may take FMLA leave **intermittently in separate blocks of time, or on a reduced schedule** by working less hours each day or week. Read Fact Sheet #28M(c) for more information.

FMLA leave is **not paid leave**, but you may choose, or be required by your employer, to use any employer-provided paid leave if your employer's paid leave policy covers the reason for which you need FMLA leave.

## Am I eligible to take FMLA leave?

You are an **eligible employee** if **all** of the following apply:

- You work for a covered employer,
- You have worked for your employer at least 12 months,
- You have at least 1,250 hours of service for your employer during the 12 months before your leave, and
- Your employer has at least 50 employees within 75 miles of your work location.

Airline flight crew employees have different "hours of service" requirements.

You work for a **covered employer** if **one** of the following applies:

- You work for a private employer that had at least 50 employees during at least 20 workweeks in the current or previous calendar year,
- You work for an elementary or public or private secondary school, or
- You work for a public agency, such as a local, state or federal government agency. Most federal employees are covered by Title II of the FMLA, administered by the Office of Personnel Management.

## How do I request FMLA leave?

Generally, to request FMLA leave you **must**:

- Follow your employer's normal policies for requesting leave,
- Give notice at least 30 days before your need for FMLA leave, or
- If advance notice is not possible, give notice as soon as possible.

You **do not have to share a medical diagnosis** but must provide enough information to your employer so they can determine whether the leave qualifies for FMLA protection. You **must also inform your employer if FMLA leave was previously taken** or approved for the same reason when requesting additional leave.

Your **employer may request certification** from a health care provider to verify medical leave and may request certification of a qualifying exigency.

The FMLA does not affect any federal or state law prohibiting discrimination or supersede any state or local law or collective bargaining agreement that provides greater family or medical leave rights.

State employees may be subject to certain limitations in pursuit of direct lawsuits regarding leave for their own serious health conditions. Most federal and certain congressional employees are also covered by the law but are subject to the jurisdiction of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management or Congress.

## What does my employer need to do?

If you are eligible for FMLA leave, your **employer must**:

- Allow you to take job-protected time off work for a qualifying reason,
- Continue your group health plan coverage while you are on leave on the same basis as if you had not taken leave, and
- Allow you to return to the same job, or a virtually identical job with the same pay, benefits and other working conditions, including shift and location, at the end of your leave.

Your **employer cannot interfere with your FMLA rights** or threaten or punish you for exercising your rights under the law. For example, your employer cannot retaliate against you for requesting FMLA leave or cooperating with a WHD investigation.

After becoming aware that your need for leave is for a reason that may qualify under the FMLA, your **employer must confirm whether you are eligible** or not eligible for FMLA leave. If your employer determines that you are eligible, your **employer must notify you in writing**:

- About your FMLA rights and responsibilities, and
- How much of your requested leave, if any, will be FMLA-protected leave.

## Where can I find more information?

Call **1-866-487-9243** or visit **dol.gov/fmla** to learn more.

If you believe your rights under the FMLA have been violated, you may file a complaint with WHD or file a private lawsuit against your employer in court. **Scan the QR code to learn about our WHD complaint process.**



**WAGE AND HOUR DIVISION**  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR



## FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE ACT

The Smithtown Central School District pursuant to the provisions of the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 implement the Act in the following manner:

Legal Reference: Public Law 103-3

The U.S. Department of Labor's Employment Standards Administration, Wage and Hour Division, administers and enforces FMLA for all private, state and local government employees, and some federal employees.

FMLA entitles eligible employees to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave each year for specified family and medical reasons. An eligible employee's right to FMLA leave begins on February 5, 1994; any leave taken before that date does not count as FMLA leave.

### EMPLOYEE ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for FMLA benefits, an employee must:

- (1) work for the Smithtown Central School District
- (2) have worked for the employer for a total of at least 12 months;
- (3) have worked at least 1,250 hours over the previous 12 months.

### LEAVE ENTITLEMENT

All existing and applicable district forms, notices and approvals must be submitted when applying for leave under this act. A District employee will be granted up to a total of 12 workweeks of unpaid leave during any 12 month period for one or more of the following reasons:

- for the birth or placement of a child for adoption or foster care;
- to care for an immediate family member (spouse, child, or parent) with a serious health condition; or
- to take medical leave when the employee is unable to work because of a serious health condition.

Spouses employed by the Smithtown Central School District are jointly entitled to a combined total of 12 workweeks of family leave for the birth or placement of a child for adoption or foster care, and to care for a parent (but not a parent-in-law) who has a serious health condition.

Leave for birth or placement for adoption or foster care must conclude within 12 months of the birth or placement.

Under some circumstances, employees may take FMLA leave intermittently - which means taking leave in blocks of time, or by reducing their normal weekly or daily work schedule.

- If FMLA leave is for birth or placement for adoption or foster care, use of intermittent leave is subject to the employer's approval.
- FMLA leave may be taken intermittently whenever medically necessary to care for a seriously ill family member, or because the employee is seriously ill and unable to work.

Employees may choose to use accrued paid leave (vacation leave or personal leave) when the LOA is for a family member or the employee after sick time is used. Use of accrued paid sick leave will be limited to illness of the employee only. In no case can use of paid leave be credited as FMLA leave after the leave has ended.

"Serious health condition" means an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves:

- any period of incapacity or treatment connected with inpatient care (i.e., an overnight stay) in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical-care facility;
- any period of incapacity requiring absence of more than three calendar days from work, school or other regular daily activities that also involves continuing treatment by (or under the supervision of) a health care provider; or
- continuing treatment by (or under the supervision of) a health care provider for a chronic or long-term health condition that is incurable or so serious that, if not treated, would likely result in a period of incapacity of more than **three** calendar days, and for prenatal care.

"Health care provider" means:

- doctors of medicine or osteopathy authorized to practice medicine or surgery by the state in which the doctor practices; or podiatrists, dentists, clinical psychologists, optometrists and chiropractors (limited to manual manipulation of the spine to correct a subluxation as demonstrated by (X-ray to exist) authorized to practice, and performing within the scope of their practice, under state law; or, nurse practitioners and nurse-midwives authorized to practice, and performing within the scope of their practice, as defined under state law; or

- Christian Science practitioners listed with the First Church of Christ, Scientist in Boston, Massachusetts.

## MAINTENANCE OF HEALTH BENEFITS

The Smithtown Central School District will maintain group health insurance coverage for an employee on FMLA leave whenever such insurance was provided before the leave was taken and on the same terms as if the employee had continued to work. Arrangements will be made for employees to pay their share of health insurance premiums while on leave if applicable.

The district will recover premiums it paid to maintain health coverage for an employee who fails to return to work from FMLA leave.

## JOB RESTORATION

Upon return from FMLA leave, an employee will be restored to his or her original job, or to an equivalent job with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms and conditions.

In addition, an employee's use of FMLA leave will not result in the loss of any employment benefit that the employee earned or was entitled to before using FMLA leave.

## NOTICE AND CERTIFICATION

Employees seeking to use FMLA leave will be required to provide:

- 30-day advance notice of the need to take FMLA leave when the need is foreseeable;
- medical certifications supporting the need for leave due to a serious health condition affecting the employee or an immediate family member;
- when requested, second or third medical opinions and periodic recertifications (at the District's expense); and periodic reports during FMLA leave regarding the employee's status and intent to return to work.

When leave is needed to care for an immediate family member or the employee's own illness, and is for planned medical treatment, the employee must try to schedule treatment so as not to unduly disrupt the District's operation.

The District will inform covered employees of their rights and responsibilities under FMLA, including giving specific information when an employee gives notice of FMLA leave on what is required of the employee and what might happen in certain circumstances, such as if the employee fails to return to work after FMLA leave. Each request for intermittent leave will be determined on an individual basis.

#### OTHER PROVISIONS

Special rules apply to employees of local education agencies. Generally, these rules provide for FMLA leave to be taken in blocks of time when intermittent leave is needed or the leave is required near the end of a school term. Each request for intermittent leave will be determined on an individual basis.

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