Engage PEO Client Alert:

Massachusetts: Paid Family Medical Leave (PFML) Updates

In 2019, Massachusetts legislature passed a Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) law which allows covered employees to take up to 26 weeks of paid leave for medical or family reasons. A payroll tax was initiated in October 2019 to pay for this benefit, and employees were able to begin using the PFML benefit for certain covered reasons on January 1, 2021. **Engage issued three previous alerts on this topic, which can be accessed here, here, and here.**

Starting July 1, 2021, eligible employees will be able to use the paid leave benefit for an additional covered reason: Covered individuals may be entitled to up to 12 weeks of paid family leave to care for a family member with a serious health condition.

Reminders

Massachusetts employers are encouraged to maintain their leave policies in compliance with this law.

- **A sample paid leave policy can be accessed here**, which can be added to the employee handbook as an addendum. **No update is required for clients who implemented the sample paid leave policy attached to the December 22, 2020 Alert**. The sample paid leave policy issued with that Alert is compliant with the July 1, 2021 changes.

In addition, employers are required to display and/or distribute a poster relating to the benefits and entitlements under this law.

- **A copy of the mandatory poster can be accessed here**. Furthermore, employers must continue to notify new employees of PFML benefits and contribution rates within 30 days of hire.

COVID-19 Emergency Paid Sick Leave

Additional Paid Sick Leave (PSL) is now available for Massachusetts employees who need to take leave for covered reasons until September 30, 2021 (or until reimbursement funds are depleted, whichever comes earlier). This form of paid leave must be offered to employees in addition to any other forms of leave they may be entitled to under prevailing law or company policy.

Under the COVID-19 Emergency PSL, full time employees are entitled to up to 40 hours of paid sick leave for qualifying reasons, not to exceed $850/week. Employees working fewer than 40 hours per week are entitled to the number of hours they regularly work in a normal workweek.

Qualifying Reasons for Leave:

Employees can take leave for the following reasons:

- To take care of themselves or get medical treatment due to a COVID-19 diagnosis or symptoms, or to get or recover from a COVID-19 immunization
- To quarantine as required by a local, state, or federal public official, a health authority having jurisdiction, or a health care provider

Please contact your Engage HR Consultant if you have any questions.