Client Alert

Rhode Island End of Year Update 2025

Sample polices for the topics covered in this Alert can be downloaded here.

New Hire Notices

WHAT'S NEW: Rhode Island added a new hire notice requirement for employers effective **January 1, 2026**.

Rhode Island employers must provide all newly hired employees with a single written notice containing the following:

- Rate of pay
- Allowances for meals and lodging;
- Employer's policy on sick, vacation, personal leave, holidays, and hours
- The employee's employment status and whether the employee is exempt from minimum wage and/or overtime;
- A list of deductions that may be made from employee's pay;
- The number of days in the pay period, the regularly scheduled payday, and the payday on which the employee will receive the first payment of wages earned;
- The legal name of the employer and the operating name of the employer, if different from its legal name.
- The physical address of the employer's main office or principal place of business, and its mailing address if different; and
- The telephone number of the employer.

The employer must keep a copy of the notice provided to the employee that contains the employee's signature.

WHAT EMPLOYERS SHOULD DO: Employers should review hiring policies and prepare to provide compliant notices at the time of hire.

Updates to Temporary Caregiver Insurance Law

WHAT'S NEW: Rhode Island made updates to its temporary caregiver insurance law effective **January 1, 2026**.

Under the existing temporary caregiver insurance law, employees are entitled to paid benefits through the state in order to care for a family member with a serious health condition or to bond with a new child. The recent updates make the following additions:

- The definition of family member was expanded to include siblings.
- Eligibility for benefits was expanded to employees recovering from bone marrow or organ donation.
    - Employees are eligible for leave to cover procedures, medical tests and surgeries related to the donation, including no more than five (5) business days of recovery from a bone marrow transplant or no more than thirty (30) business days recover from a living organ donor transplant.
- Maximum eligibility for leave in a benefit year was increased to 8 weeks.

All leave under this program is job protected. Employees must apply with the state to receive paid benefits.

WHAT EMPLOYERS SHOULD DO: Employers should review their leave policies and update them as necessary.

Clients should ensure that managers are educated on the new requirements.

Ban on Captive Audience Meetings

WHAT'S NEW: Rhode Island passed legislation imposing a ban on captive audience meetings in the workplace.

WHAT IT MEANS: Under the new law, employers are prohibited from discharging, disciplining, penalizing or otherwise taking adverse employment action against an employee because they refused to attend an employer sponsored meeting or listen to a speech or view communications if the meeting, speech or communication is to learn about the employer's opinions regarding religious or political matters.

Employers may continue to communicate information that is required by law and information that is required for an employee to perform their job. Employers may also engage in non-mandatory casual conversations.

WHAT EMPLOYERS SHOULD DO: Employers should review their internal attendance and discipline policies as they pertain to meetings and communications, and ensure that managers are educated on the new requirements.

Updates to Reasonable Accommodation Law

WHAT'S NEW: Rhode Island made updates to its reasonable accommodation law that became effective June 24, 2025.

Rhode Island employers continue to be required to accommodate employees and prospective employees for conditions related to pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions. **With the new updates, employers are now also required to accommodate employees for menopause or related medical conditions.**

- “Related conditions” includes but is not limited to lactation or need to express breast milk for a nursing child, or the need to manage the effects of vasomotor symptoms (hot flashes).
- Under the law, employers are required to provide reasonable accommodations to employees and are prohibited from discriminating against employees for pregnancy, childbirth, menopause or a related medical condition.
- Employers are required to display a poster and provide written notice to all existing employees, employees at the time of hire, and within 10 days of an employee notifying the employer of pregnancy or menopause.

WHAT EMPLOYERS SHOULD DO: Employers should review their accommodation policies and update as necessary, and ensure that managers are updated on the new requirements.

Amendments to Fair Employment Practices Act

WHAT’S NEW: Rhode Island made updates to its Fair Employment Practices Act that became effective July 1, 2025.

The updates protect individuals from discrimination based on traits historically associated with race, including hair texture and protective hairstyles.

WHAT EMPLOYERS SHOULD DO: Employers should review their equal employment opportunity policies and update as necessary, and ensure that managers are educated on the new requirements.

If you have any questions, please contact your HR Business Partner/Consultant.