WORKPLACE SAFETY, DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS, AND LEAVES IN THE COVID-19 ERA

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March 26, 2020
Associated General Contractors of Minnesota HR Forum

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Three Critical Areas

Safety (OSHA)

Disability Law (ADA)

Paid Leave (Families First Coronavirus Response Act)
Workplace Safety
• OSHA covers COVID-19

• OSHA is enforced administratively

• But individuals can sue for retaliation
OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ACT

- OSHA has given extensive guidance
- OSHA’s general-duty clause
- OSHA’s Personal Protective Equipment regulations (e.g., gloves, eye and face protection, respirators)
When do you record on 300 log?

• COVID-19 is a 300 log recordable event if
  – “confirmed”
  – Work-related
  – One Other Criteria

• How do you know if work related?

• For now, risk assessment
• . . . now? Partner with an attorney

• . . . if OSHA knocks? Same (15 days to contest)

• . . . at all times? Make employees feel safe.
Disability Accommodations
• COVID-19 arguably a “disability”

• But unlikely to trigger ADA
  – “direct threat” according to EEOC
  – Only guidance. Not binding
May an ADA-covered employer send an employee home if she has COVID-19 or symptoms associated with it?

Yes.
• May an ADA-covered employer ask an employee who reports feeling ill at work, or who calls in sick, questions about their symptoms to determine if they have or may have COVID-19?

• Yes.
• EEOC Acknowledged Symptoms:
  – Fever
  – Chills
  – Cough
  – Shortness of Breath
  – Sore Throat
• May an ADA-covered employer take an employee’s temperature to determine whether he has COVID-19?

• Yes.

• (A Word on Confidentiality)
Families First Coronavirus Response Act
(Paid Leave/FMLA Expansion)
WHAT IF AN EMPLOYEE CAN’T WORK OR THE BUSINESS IS SHUT DOWN?

- Paid leaves
- Unpaid leaves
- Unemployment
- Resources for business impacted by COVID-19
• **Effective**: April 1, 2020

• **Expires**: December 31, 2020 (no carry over)

• **Applies to private** employers with fewer than 500 EEs
  – DOL will consider waivers for 50-EEs-or-fewer Ers
  – Also non-private component
• Two Paid Leaves
  
  – General (Sick **and** School/Day Care) (Two Weeks)
  
  – Extended FMLA (**Just** School/Day Care) (Ten Weeks)
• Two weeks of paid leave
  – **Full pay** for employees taking leave due to their own quarantine or self-quarantine or symptoms
  – **2/3 pay** for employees **caring for a family member** under quarantine or a child whose school or day care is closed due to COVID-19 and for similar conditions that may be identified by federal agencies
FFCRA PAID LEAVE

EXTENDED FMLA LEAVE

• Up to 12 weeks of leave for employees who must be off work to care for the employee’s child(ren) due to school or day care closures caused by COVID-19

• First ten days/2 weeks unpaid or paid by other available PTO or sick leave

• Then, paid leave at 2/3 the employee’s regular rate
Follow the policy . . .

And, in Minnesota, allow use of paid sick time for care of a sick family member
MINNEAPOLIS AND SAINT PAUL SICK AND SAFE TIME ORDINANCES

- Employees who work for more than 80 hours per year in Minneapolis or Saint Paul
- Accrued leave may be taken by an employee who is out of work due to:
  - Coronavirus screening;
  - Care or quarantine due to Coronavirus symptoms or infection;
  - Testing or quarantine following exposure;
  - Need to care for child whose school or day care is closed due to Coronavirus; and
  - Workplace closure by order of a public official due to Coronavirus.
- This leave is paid, except for employers under the Minneapolis ordinance with fewer than six employees.
Unpaid FMLA and Other Leaves

- Employers with more than 50 employees
- Employees who work at a site with 50 or more employees within 75 miles and who have worked for at least 12 months and 1,250 hours
- 12 weeks unpaid, job protected leave for a serious health condition involving inpatient treatment or ongoing care by a health care provider or to care for a spouse, child or parent with a serious health condition
- Consider application of ADA and MHRA
By executive order, to address the impact of COVID-19:

• The waiting week has been eliminated
• The five-week benefit limit for business owners who have elected coverage has been lifted
• Applicants must still seek suitable employment while receiving benefits, but suitable employment does not pose a risk to your health or the health of others
• Workers temporarily laid off can satisfy the search requirement by staying in contact with their employer
HELP FOR BUSINESSES IMPACTED BY COVID-19

• Refundable tax credit (and tax withholding) for FFCRA leaves
  
  “Under guidance that will be released next week, eligible employers who pay qualifying sick or child care leave will be able to retain an amount of the payroll taxes equal to the amount of qualifying sick and child care leave that they paid, rather than deposit them with the IRS.”


• SBA small business loans
  
  https://mn.gov/deed/newscenter/covid/employers/

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Questions and Answers
Where do I post this notice? Since most of my workforce is teleworking, where do I electronically “post” this notice

- Each covered employer must post a notice of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) requirements in a conspicuous place on its premises.
- An employer may satisfy this requirement by emailing or direct mailing this notice to employees, or posting this notice on an employee information internal or external website.
  - https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/pandemic/ffcra-poster-questions

Posters Here ->
https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/pandemic

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STAY AT HOME ORDERS

DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENT?

• Minnesota? Not stated.

• Wisconsin? No.

 Will I be required to carry documentation to leave my home?

No. Individuals do not need special permission to leave their homes, but they must comply with this order as to when it is permissible to leave home. Similarly, if a business is an essential business or operation as outlined in this order, it does not need documentation or certification to continue work that is done in compliance with this order.


• AGC MN Exempt Worker Verification Form
COVID-19 TASK FORCE

www.arthurchapman.com/areas/covid-19-task-force

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News

- Plan not Panic: Join us this week for two webinars on the changing legal landscape related to COVID-19
- COVID-19: Plan not Panic
- COVID-19: FAQ’s for Employment, Coverage, and Workers’ Compensation

Resources

- ACKSP 2020 Families First Coronavirus Response Act Alert
- ACKSP 2020 COVID-19 Resources
• FFCRA Paid Leaves Summary and DOL Guidance
  – https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/pandemic

• Minneapolis Sick and Safe Time

• Saint Paul Sick and Safe Time
  – https://library.municode.com/mn/st._paul/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIILECO_TITXXIIIPUHESAWE_CH233PUHESAWE_S233.01STLEPUIN
• Minnesota unemployment

• DOL/IRS/Labor Guidance on Tax Credits

• COVID-19 Small Business Loans
  – [https://mn.gov/deed/newscenter/covid/employers/](https://mn.gov/deed/newscenter/covid/employers/)
RESOURCES

- Minnesota Chamber of Commerce COVID-19 Business Toolkit

- FMLA Generally

- OSHA Guidance
  - https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/

- EEOC Guidance