



ORLEANS PARISH COMMUNICATION DISTRICT

Administrators of New Orleans' 9-1-1/3-1-1 System

To: All OPCD Employees

From: David L. Taylor, OPCD Director of Human Resources

RE: OPCD Guidance in Response to the FFCRA and COVID-19

Date: March 30, 2020

As new developments arise in response to the coronavirus pandemic, we are committed to providing our employees with the most up to date information to ensure you have the necessary resources and information relative to COVID-19. On March 18, 2020, Congress passed and adopted into law the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (H.R. 6201) in response to the economic impacts associated with the coronavirus pandemic. The FFCRA requires certain employers to provide their employees with paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons related to COVID-19. These provisions will apply starting Wednesday, April 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020.

According to the FFCRA legislation, certain employers are exempt from the provisions of the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act and Emergency FMLA Expansion Act as those businesses are considered essential to limit the spread of COVID-19. **In collaboration with our legal attorneys, the leadership team has reviewed the parameters of this legislation to determine how it impacts us. This memo is to provide notice that Orleans Parish Communication District is considered an excluded employer under the FFCRA Act as we are deemed essentially vital to maintain public safety in the City of New Orleans during this declared state of emergency and are categorized as "emergency responders" under the provisions of the act.**

For the purposes of employees who may be excluded from paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave by their employer under the FFCRA, an emergency responder is an employee who is necessary for the provision of transport, care, health care, comfort, and nutrition of such patients, or whose services are otherwise needed to limit the spread of COVID-19. This includes but is not limited to military or national guard, law enforcement officers, correctional institution personnel, fire fighters, emergency medical services personnel, physicians, nurses public health personnel, emergency medical technicians, paramedics, emergency management personnel, **911 operators**, public works personnel, and **persons with skills or training in operating specialized equipment or other skills needed to provide aid in a declared emergency as well as individuals who work for such facilities employing these individuals and whose work is necessary to maintain the operation of the facility.** These specifics can be found here at this [link](#) on Question 57 of the U.S. Department of Labor's Frequently Asked Questions and Answers (FAQ).

Although OPCD is excluded from these provisions under the FFCRA, we remain committed to supporting our employees during these difficult times at every step of the way. If any of our employees become directly impacted by COVID-19, please be sure to follow the proper procedures outlined in the Policy Memorandum No. 144 (R) to immediately notify the supervisor's bridge. Our Human Resources team will then be in contact with employees who have been impacted to provide additional guidance and resources to determine when it is safe to return to work. We also have resources available through our Magellan Employee Assistance Program to assist employees who may be dealing with the uncertainty and anxiety about the pandemic. If an employee has any questions or need any additional assistance relative to COVID-19, please contact the Human Resources team at 504-671-3911 or by email at hrhelpdesk@911nola.org. A copy of this notice along with the Department of Labor's FFCRA Poster and FAQ will be posted in the employee break rooms and Power DMS.

As the agency leadership team receives additional developments, we will be sure to share them with you. We appreciate your commitment to unwavering service and excellence during these times, and wholeheartedly thank you for all that you do for each other and the citizens and visitors of New Orleans.

EMPLOYEE RIGHTS

PAID SICK LEAVE AND EXPANDED FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE UNDER THE FAMILIES FIRST CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE ACT

The **Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA or Act)** requires certain employers to provide their employees with paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons related to COVID-19. These provisions will apply from April 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020.

► PAID LEAVE ENTITLEMENTS

Generally, employers covered under the Act must provide employees:

Up to two weeks (80 hours, or a part-time employee's two-week equivalent) of paid sick leave based on the higher of their regular rate of pay, or the applicable state or Federal minimum wage, paid at:

- 100% for qualifying reasons #1-3 below, up to \$511 daily and \$5,110 total;
- ⅔ for qualifying reasons #4 and 6 below, up to \$200 daily and \$2,000 total; and
- Up to 12 weeks of paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave paid at ⅓ for qualifying reason #5 below for up to \$200 daily and \$12,000 total.

A part-time employee is eligible for leave for the number of hours that the employee is normally scheduled to work over that period.

► ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES

In general, employees of private sector employers with fewer than 500 employees, and certain public sector employers, are eligible for up to two weeks of fully or partially paid sick leave for COVID-19 related reasons (see below). *Employees who have been employed for at least 30 days prior to their leave request may be eligible for up to an additional 10 weeks of partially paid expanded family and medical leave for reason #5 below.*

► QUALIFYING REASONS FOR LEAVE RELATED TO COVID-19

An employee is entitled to take leave related to COVID-19 if the employee is unable to work, including unable to telework, because the employee:

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. is subject to a Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19;2. has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine related to COVID-19;3. is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and is seeking a medical diagnosis;4. is caring for an individual subject to an order described in (1) or self-quarantine as described in (2); | <ol style="list-style-type: none">5. is caring for his or her child whose school or place of care is closed (or child care provider is unavailable) due to COVID-19 related reasons; or6. is experiencing any other substantially-similar condition specified by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. |
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► ENFORCEMENT

The U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division (WHD) has the authority to investigate and enforce compliance with the FFCRA. Employers may not discharge, discipline, or otherwise discriminate against any employee who lawfully takes paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave under the FFCRA, files a complaint, or institutes a proceeding under or related to this Act. Employers in violation of the provisions of the FFCRA will be subject to penalties and enforcement by WHD.



WAGE AND HOUR DIVISION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

For additional information
or to file a complaint:

1-866-487-9243

TTY: 1-877-889-5627

dol.gov/agencies/whd



WH1422 REV 03/20

Families First Coronavirus Response Act: Questions and Answers

As provided under the legislation, the U.S. Department of Labor will be issuing implementing regulations. Additionally, as warranted, the Department will continue to provide compliance assistance to employers and employees on their responsibilities and rights under the FFCRA.

DEFINITIONS

“Paid sick leave” – means paid leave under the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act.

“Expanded family and medical leave” – means paid leave under the Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion Act.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. What is the effective date of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), which includes the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act and the Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion Act?

The FFCRA’s paid leave provisions are effective on April 1, 2020, and apply to leave taken between April 1, 2020, and December 31, 2020.

2. As an employer, how do I know if my business is under the 500-employee threshold and therefore must provide paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave?

You have fewer than 500 employees if, at the time your employee’s leave is to be taken, you employ fewer than 500 full-time and part-time employees within the United States, which includes any State of the United States, the District of Columbia, or any Territory or possession of the United States. In making this determination, you should include employees on leave; temporary employees who are jointly employed by you and another employer (regardless of whether the jointly-employed employees are maintained on only your or another employer’s payroll); and day laborers supplied by a temporary agency (regardless of whether you are the temporary agency or the client firm if there is a continuing employment relationship). Workers who are independent contractors under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), rather than employees, are not considered employees for purposes of the 500-employee threshold.

Typically, a corporation (including its separate establishments or divisions) is considered to be a single employer and its employees must each be counted towards the 500-employee threshold. Where a corporation has an ownership interest in another corporation, the two corporations are separate employers unless they are joint employers under the FLSA with respect to certain employees. If two entities are found to be joint employers, all of their common employees must be counted in determining whether paid sick leave must be provided under the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act and expanded family and medical leave must be provided under the Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion Act.

In general, two or more entities are separate employers unless they meet the integrated employer test under the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA). If two entities are an integrated employer under the FMLA, then employees of all entities making up the integrated employer will be counted in determining employer coverage for purposes of paid sick leave under the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act and expanded family and medical leave under the Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion Act.

3. If I am a private sector employer and have 500 or more employees, do the Acts apply to me?

No. Private sector employers are only required to comply with the Acts if they have fewer than 500 employees.^[1]

4. If providing child care-related paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave at my business with fewer than 50 employees would jeopardize the viability of my business as a going concern, how do I take advantage of the small business exemption?

To minimize the spread of the virus associated with COVID-19, the Department encourages employers to be judicious when using this definition to exempt health care providers from the provisions of the FFCRA.

57. Who is an emergency responder?

For the purposes of employees who may be excluded from paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave by their employer under the FFCRA, an emergency responder is an employee who is necessary for the provision of transport, care, health care, comfort, and nutrition of such patients, or whose services are otherwise needed to limit the spread of COVID-19. This includes but is not limited to military or national guard, law enforcement officers, correctional institution personnel, fire fighters, emergency medical services personnel, physicians, nurses, public health personnel, emergency medical technicians, paramedics, emergency management personnel, 911 operators, public works personnel, and persons with skills or training in operating specialized equipment or other skills needed to provide aid in a declared emergency as well as individuals who work for such facilities employing these individuals and whose work is necessary to maintain the operation of the facility. This also includes any individual that the highest official of a state or territory, including the District of Columbia, determines is an emergency responder necessary for that state's or territory's or the District of Columbia's response to COVID-19.

To minimize the spread of the virus associated with COVID-19, the Department encourages employers to be judicious when using this definition to exempt emergency responders from the provisions of the FFCRA.

58. When does the small business exemption apply to exclude a small business from the provisions of the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act and Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion Act?

An employer, including a religious or nonprofit organization, with fewer than 50 employees (small business) is exempt from providing (a) paid sick leave due to school or place of care closures or child care provider unavailability for COVID-19 related reasons and (b) expanded family and medical leave due to school or place of care closures or child care provider unavailability for COVID-19 related reasons when doing so would jeopardize the viability of the small business as a going concern. A small business may claim this exemption if an authorized officer of the business has determined that:

1. The provision of paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave would result in the small business's expenses and financial obligations exceeding available business revenues and cause the small business to cease operating at a minimal capacity;
2. The absence of the employee or employees requesting paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave would entail a substantial risk to the financial health or operational capabilities of the small business because of their specialized skills, knowledge of the business, or responsibilities; or
3. There are not sufficient workers who are able, willing, and qualified, and who will be available at the time and place needed, to perform the labor or services provided by the employee or employees requesting paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave, and these labor or services are needed for the small business to operate at a minimal capacity.

59. If I am a small business with fewer than 50 employees, am I exempt from the requirements to provide paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave?

A small business is exempt from certain paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave requirements if providing an employee such leave would jeopardize the viability of the business as a going concern. This means a small business is exempt from mandated paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave requirements only if the:

- employer employs fewer than 50 employees;
- leave is requested because the child's school or place of care is closed, or child care provider is unavailable, due to COVID-19 related reasons; and
- an authorized officer of the business has determined that at least one of the three conditions described in Question 58 is satisfied.

The Department encourages employers and employees to collaborate to reach the best solution for maintaining the business and ensuring employee safety.

[1] If you are a Federal employee, you are eligible to take paid sick leave under the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act. But only some Federal employees are eligible to take expanded family and medical leave under the Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion Act. Your eligibility will depend on whether you are covered under Title I or Title II of the Family Medical Leave