

Vermont's Expanded Unpaid Family & Parental Leave

Vermont has expanded access to unpaid leave under the Parental and Family Leave Act (21 V.S.A. §§ 471–472a). This update broadens eligibility, leave types, and covered employers.

Covered Employers

- Parental, Bereavement, Safe, and Qualifying Exigency Leave: Required for employers with 10+ employees working 30 hours per week
- Family Leave: Required for employers with 15+ employees who work 30+ hours per week

Covered Employees

- Parental, Bereavement, Family, and Qualifying Exigency Leave: Employees who work 30+ hours per week for at least one year
- Safe Leave: Employees that work 20+ hours per week for at least six months

→ Who is a “Family Member”?

- A child, parent, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, spouse, civil union or domestic partner

→ Employer Rights & Duties

- May ask an employee for documentation establishing the family relationship and for the need for leave
- Must provide unchanged worker benefits during leave
- Must offer previous job or comparable job at equal pay, benefits, and seniority at leave's end

→ Employee Rights & Duties

- Must provide reasonable leave notice
- May use accrued paid leave or short-term disability leave
- May sue to enforce or recover damages for violations
- State employees may lodge a complaint with the Human Rights Commission
- Non-state employees may lodge a complaint with the Attorney General

Types of Leave

Parental Leave

- Miscarriage or childbirth recovery, to care for or bond with a biological, foster, or adopted child within the first year of birth or placement

Safe Leave

- Victim of domestic violence, stalking, or sexual assault of themselves or a family member for medical care, recovery, safety planning, relocation, or meeting with a law enforcement

Bereavement Leave

- Death of a family member or settling of an estate; two weeks (10 workdays) of leave (and no more than 5 consecutive) within one year of the death

Family Leave

- Personal health conditions or those of a family member

Qualifying Exigency

- Active-duty military deployment, return, and other related activities for themselves or a family member (full list can be found at 29 C.F.R. § 825.126)

Short-Term Family Leave

- Activities for family members including: certain preschool and school activities, routine medical and dental appointments, care and well-being professional services appointments, and medical emergencies