

**All Personnel**

AR 4161.8(a)

4261.8

**FAMILY CARE AND MEDICAL LEAVE**

4361.8

**Definitions**

*Child* means a biological, adopted, or foster child; a stepchild; a legal ward; or a child of a person standing in loco parentis as long as the child is under 18 years of age or an adult dependent child. (29 USC 2611; Government Code 12945.2)

*Eligible employee* means an employee who has at least 12 months of service with the district and who has at least 1,250 hours of service with the district during the previous 12-month period. *Full-time teachers* are deemed to meet the 1,250 hours of service requirement. (29 USC 2611; 29 CFR 825.110; Government Code 12945.2)

*Full-time teacher* means an employee whose principal function is to teach and instruct students in a class, a small group, or individual setting. (29 CFR 825.800)

*Parent* means a biological, foster, or adoptive parent; a stepparent; a legal guardian; or another person who stood in loco parentis to the employee when the employee was a child. (29 USC 2611; Government Code 12945.2)

*Serious health condition* means an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves either of the following: (29 USC 2611; 29 CFR 825.114; Government Code 12945.2)

1. Inpatient care in a hospital, hospice, or residential health care facility
2. Continuing treatment or continuing supervision by a health care provider, including one or more of the following:
  - a. A period of incapacity of more than three consecutive days
  - b. Any period of incapacity or treatment for such incapacity due to a chronic serious health condition
  - c. For purposes of leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), any period of incapacity due to pregnancy or for prenatal care

**Eligibility**

The district shall grant family care and medical leave to eligible employees for the following reasons: (29 USC 2612; Family Code 297.5; Government Code 12945.2)

1. Because of the birth of a child of the employee or placement of a child with the employee in connection with the adoption or foster care of the child by the employee.

## **FAMILY CARE AND MEDICAL LEAVE** (continued)

2. To care for the employee's child, parent, spouse, registered domestic partner, or child of a registered domestic partner with a serious health condition.
3. Because of the employee's own serious health condition that makes him/her unable to perform one or more essential functions of his/her position. However, for purposes of leave under the California Family Rights Act (CFRA), this does not include leave taken for disability on account of pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions.

The district shall not interfere with, restrain, or deny the exercise of any right provided to an eligible employee under the law. Also, the district shall not discharge or discriminate against any employee for opposing any practice made unlawful by, or because of, his/her involvement in any inquiry or proceeding related to the family care and medical leave. (29 USC 2615; Government Code 12945.2)

### **Terms of Leave**

An eligible employee shall be entitled to a total of 12 work weeks of leave during any 12-month period. (29 USC 2612; Government Code 12945.2)

This 12-month period shall be measured forward from the date the employee's first family care and medical leave begins. (29 CFR 825.200)

Leave taken pursuant to the CFRA shall run concurrently with leave taken pursuant to the FMLA, except in the following circumstances:

1. Leave taken to care for a registered domestic partner or a child of a domestic partner. Such leave shall count as leave under the CFRA. (Family Code 297.5)
2. Leave taken under the FMLA for disability on account of pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions. In addition to family care and medical leave, an employee may be entitled to take pregnancy disability leave of up to four months. During the otherwise unpaid portion of pregnancy disability leave, the employee may use any accrued vacation, sick time, or other paid leave. Such FMLA leave shall run concurrently with any pregnancy disability leave taken by the employee, except that CFRA leave shall not commence until the expiration of the pregnancy disability leave. (Government Code 12945, 12945.2; 2 CCR 7297.6)

Leave taken for the birth or placement of a child must be concluded within the 12-month period beginning on the date of the birth or placement of the child. Such leave does not have to be taken in one continuous period of time. The basic minimum duration of the leave for

## **FAMILY CARE AND MEDICAL LEAVE** (continued)

birth or placement of a child shall be two weeks. However, the district shall grant a request for leave of less than two weeks' duration on any two occasions. (29 USC 2612; 2 CCR 7297.3)

If both parents of a child work for the district, their family care and medical leave related to the birth or placement of the child shall be limited to a total of 12 weeks. This restriction shall apply whether the parents are married, registered domestic partners, or not married. (29 USC 2612; Government Code 12945.2)

During the period of family care and medical leave, the district shall require the employee to use his/her accrued vacation leave, other accrued time off, and any other paid or unpaid time off negotiated with the district. If the leave is because of the employee's own serious medical condition, the employee shall use accrued sick leave pursuant to collective bargaining agreements and/or Board policy. (29 USC 2612; Government Code 12945.2)

### **Intermittent Leave/Reduced Leave Schedule**

Leave related to the serious health condition of the employee or his/her child, parent, spouse, or registered domestic partner may be taken intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule when medically necessary, as determined by the health care provider of the person with the serious medical condition. However, the district may limit leave increments to the shortest period of time that the district's payroll system uses to account for absences or use of leave. (29 USC 2612; 2 CCR 7297.3)

If an employee needs intermittent leave or leave on a reduced work schedule that is foreseeable based on planned medical treatment for the employee or a family member, the district may require the employee to transfer temporarily to an available alternative position. This alternative position must have equivalent pay and benefits, the employee must be qualified for the position, and the position must better accommodate recurring periods of leave than the employee's regular job. Transfer to an alternative position may include altering an existing job to better accommodate the employee's need for intermittent leave or a reduced leave schedule. (29 USC 2612; 2 CCR 7297.3)

### **Request for Leave**

If an employee's need for leave is foreseeable, the employee shall provide the district with reasonable advance notice for the leave. If an employee's need for leave is foreseeable due to a planned medical treatment or supervision, the employee shall make a reasonable effort to schedule the treatment or supervision to avoid disruption of district operations. This scheduling shall be subject to the health care provider's approval. (Government Code 12945.2)

## **FAMILY CARE AND MEDICAL LEAVE (continued)**

### **Certification of Health Condition**

A request by an employee for family care and medical leave for his/her serious health condition, or to care for a child, parent, spouse, registered domestic partner, or child of a registered domestic partner with a serious health condition, shall be supported by a certification from the health care provider of the employee or such other person as applicable. The certification shall include the following: (29 USC 2613; Government Code 12945.2; 2 CCR 7297.0)

1. The date on which the serious health condition began
2. The probable duration of the condition
3. If the employee is requesting leave to care for a child, parent, spouse, registered domestic partner, or child of a registered domestic partner with a serious health condition, the health care provider's certification of both of the following:
  - a. Estimated amount of time the health care provider believes the employee needs to care for the child, parent, spouse, registered domestic partner, or child of the registered domestic partner
  - b. Statement that the serious health condition warrants the participation of a family member to provide care during a period of the treatment or supervision of the child, parent, spouse, registered domestic partner, or child of a registered domestic partner
4. If the employee is requesting leave because of his/her own serious health condition, a statement that due to the serious health condition, he/she is unable to work at all or to perform one or more essential functions of his/her job
5. If the employee is requesting leave for intermittent treatment or is requesting leave on a reduced leave schedule for planned medical treatment, a statement of the medical necessity for the leave, the dates on which treatment is expected to be given, the duration of such treatment, and the expected duration of the leave

If the district doubts the validity of a certification that accompanies a request for leave, the Superintendent or designee may require the employee to obtain a second opinion from a district-approved health care provider, at district expense. If the second opinion is contrary to the first, the Superintendent or designee may require the employee to obtain a third medical opinion from a third health care provider approved by both the employee and the district, again at district expense. The opinion of the third health care provider shall be final and binding. (29 USC 2613; Government Code 12945.2)

AR 4161.8(e)  
4261.8  
4361.8

## **FAMILY CARE AND MEDICAL LEAVE (continued)**

If additional leave is needed when the time estimated by the health care provider expires, the district may require the employee to provide recertification in the manner specified in items #1-5 above. (29 USC 2613; Government Code 12945.2)

### **Fitness for Duty**

Employees who take family care and medical leave for their own serious health conditions shall present certification from their health care provider to the effect that they are able to resume work.

### **Rights to Reinstatement and Maintenance of Benefits**

Upon granting an employee's request for family care and medical leave, the Superintendent or designee shall guarantee to reinstate the employee in the same or a comparable position when the leave ends. (29 USC 2614; Government Code 12945.2)

The district may refuse to reinstate an employee returning from leave to the same or a comparable position if all of the following apply: (29 USC 2614; Government Code 12945.2)

1. The employee is a salaried "key employee" who is among the highest paid 10 percent of those district employees who are employed within 75 miles of the employee's worksite.
2. The refusal is necessary to prevent substantial and grievous economic injury to district operations.
3. The district informs the employee of its intent to refuse reinstatement at the time it determines that the refusal is necessary, and the employee fails to immediately return to service.

An employee who takes leave has no greater right to reinstatement than if he/she had been continuously employed during the leave period. If the district reduces its work force during the leave period and the employee is laid off for legitimate reasons at that time or if the employee is terminated for reasons unrelated to the leave, he/she is not entitled to reinstatement, provided the district has no continuing obligations under a collective bargaining agreement or otherwise. (29 CFR 825.216)

## **FAMILY CARE AND MEDICAL LEAVE (continued)**

During the period when an employee is on family care and medical leave, he/she shall maintain his/her status with the district and the leave shall not constitute a break in service for purposes of longevity, seniority under any collective bargaining agreement, or any employee benefit plan. (29 USC 2614; Government Code 12945.2)

For a period of 12 weeks, the district shall continue to provide an eligible employee on family care and medical leave the group health plan coverage that was in place before he/she took the leave. The employee shall reimburse the district for premiums paid during the family care and medical leave when he/she fails to return to district employment after the expiration of the leave and the failure is for any reason other than the continuation, recurrence, or onset of a serious health condition, or other circumstances beyond his/her control. (29 USC 2614; 29 CFR 825.213; Government Code 12954.2)

In addition, during the period when an employee is on family care and medical leave, he/she shall be entitled to continue to participate in other employee benefit plans including life, short-term or long-term disability, or accident insurance, pension and retirement plans, and supplemental unemployment benefit plans to the same extent and under the same conditions as apply to an unpaid leave taken for any other purpose. However, for purposes of pension and retirement plans, the district shall not be required to make plan payments for an employee during the leave period and the leave period shall not be counted for purposes of time accrued under the plan. (Government Code 12945.2)

### **Notifications**

The Superintendent or designee shall post notices about federal and state law related to family care and medical leave in a conspicuous place. Information about employee rights and obligations related to such leaves shall also be included in employee handbooks. (29 USC 2619; 2 CCR 7297.9)

At least the first time in each six-month period that an employee requests family care and medical leave, the Superintendent or designee shall provide written notice detailing specific expectations and obligations, and explaining any consequences of a failure to meet these obligations. The notice shall include: (29 CFR 825.301)

1. A statement that the leave will be counted against the employee's annual family care and medical leave entitlement
2. Any requirements for the employee to furnish medical certification of a serious health condition and the consequences of failing to provide the notice

AR 4161.8(g)  
4261.8  
4361.8

### **FAMILY CARE AND MEDICAL LEAVE (continued)**

3. The employee's right to substitute paid leave, conditions related to any substitution, and whether the district requires this substitution
4. Health benefit arrangements
5. If applicable, the employee's status as a "key employee" and information related to restoration of that status
6. The employee's right to restoration to the same or an equivalent job
7. The employee's potential liability for health benefits should the employee not return to service
8. The district's requirement that the employee, upon return, present medical certification to the effect that he/she is able to resume work

### **Records**

The Superintendent or designee shall maintain records pertaining to an individual employee's use of family care and medical leave in accordance with law.

### **Servicemember Family Leave**

The district shall grant up to a total of 26 work weeks of leave during a single 12-month period to an employee to care for a covered servicemember who is his/her spouse, child, parent, or next of kin. (29 USC 2611, 2612)

*Covered servicemember* means a member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, who has suffered a serious injury or illness and who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy, is otherwise in outpatient status, or is otherwise on the temporary disability retired list for that injury or illness. (29 USC 2611, 2612)

*Next of kin* means the nearest blood relative to that individual. (29 USC 2611, 2612)

*Outpatient status* means the status of a member of the Armed Forces assigned to a military medical treatment facility as an outpatient or a unit established for the purpose of providing command and control of members of the Armed Forces receiving medical care as outpatients. (29 USC 2611)

AR 4161.8(h)  
4261.8  
4361.8

## **FAMILY CARE AND MEDICAL LEAVE** (continued)

*Serious injury or illness* means an injury or illness incurred by the member in the line of duty on active duty in the Armed Forces that may render the member medically unfit to perform the duties of the member's office, grade, rank, or rating. (29 USC 2611)

The employee shall provide reasonable and practicable notice of the need for the leave when the necessity for the leave is foreseeable. (29 USC 2612)

The leave can be taken intermittently or on a reduced schedule when medically necessary. An employee taking servicemember leave in combination with other leaves pursuant to this regulation shall be entitled to a combined total of 26 work weeks of leave during a single 12-month period. When both spouses work for the district and both wish to take such leave, the spouses are limited to a maximum combined total of 26 work weeks during a single 12-month period. (29 USC 2612)

During the period of servicemember leave, the district shall require the employee to use his/her accrued vacation leave, other accrued time off, and any other paid or unpaid time off negotiated with the district. (29 USC 2612)

### *Legal Reference:*

#### FAMILY CODE

297-297.5 *Rights, protections and benefits under law; registered domestic partners*

#### GOVERNMENT CODE

12940 *Unlawful employment practices*

12945 *Pregnancy; childbirth or related medical condition; unlawful practice*

12945.1-12945.2 *California Family Rights Act*

#### CODE OF REGULATIONS, TITLE 2

7291.2-7291.16 *Sex discrimination: pregnancy and related medical conditions*

7297.0-7297.11 *Family care leave*

#### UNITED STATES CODE, TITLE 29

2601-2654 *Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, as amended*

#### CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS, TITLE 29

825.100-825.800 *Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993*

#### COURT DECISIONS

*Tellis v. Alaska Airlines*, (9<sup>th</sup> Cir., 2005) 414 F.3d 1045

### *Management Resources:*

#### WEB SITES

California Department of Fair Employment and Housing: <http://www.dfeh.ca.gov>

U.S. Department of Labor, Compliance Assistance, FMLA: <http://www.dol.gov/esa/whd/fmla>