

September 2012



## Know Your Rights: Seattle's Paid Sick and Safe Leave Law

Most people who work in Seattle have the right to earn paid sick days. Seattle's City Council adopted paid sick days at the urging of the Seattle Coalition for a Healthy Workforce to promote the health of Seattle's workers, children, families, and businesses.

### Here are the basics:

- Starting September 1, 2012, people working in companies with more than 4 employees will accrue 1 hour of sick and safe time for every 40 hours worked. In companies with more than 250 employees, workers accrue 1 hour for every 30 hours worked. Full-time, part-time, and contract workers are all covered.
- Paid Sick and Safe Time can be used for:
  - sickness and preventive health care of the employee or a family member;
  - to cope with domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking;
  - or if the employee's place of business or child's school or daycare is closed due to a public health emergency.
- Employees have a right to use accrued leave or carry over into the next year:
  - up to 40 hours in firms with 5 to 50 employees
  - up to 56 hours in firms with 50 to 250 employees
  - up to 72 hours in firms with over 250 employees

**What about existing paid leave policies?** Employers can continue to provide leave above the standard and in a variety of ways, including as vacation and PTO, as long as the leave can be used for the same purposes and the accrual method meets the standards.

**How do you count employees?** All the company's employees are included to determine employer size, no matter where they work, based on a 40 hour workweek. For example, a company with 60 employees who each worked 20 hours per week on average, would count as having 30 employees. But only the people working in Seattle have a right to paid leave.

**Are there exceptions?** People working for public agencies other than the City of Seattle are not included. Neither are work study students, or people who only work occasionally inside the city limits (less than 180 hours in a year). New employees may have to wait 180 days before they can use leave, and new businesses generally have 2 years before they have to offer paid leave. Workers covered by union contracts may bargain for different policies.

**For more information:** <http://www.seattle.gov/civilrights/SickLeave.htm> or call 206-684-4500