

Table Of Contents

Section	Page
<i>Introduction</i>	1
I. Qualifications For Employers	
I.1: <i>Our typical payroll usually only has 40 employees; however, during the busy holiday season, our numbers double. Are we covered by the FMLA during that period?</i>	3
I.2: <i>In determining whether our workforce falls under the FMLA, do I include part-time employees in the 50-employee count?</i>	3
I.3: <i>How do you measure the FMLA’s 75-mile requirement?</i>	3
I.4: <i>How should I count employees who do not have a fixed worksite such as our truck drivers and salespeople?</i>	3
I.5: <i>What about telecommuters who work from home?</i>	3
I.6: <i>Are public employers covered?</i>	4
I.7: <i>Can managers be held personally liable for FMLA violations?</i>	4
I.8: <i>My company has fewer than 50 employees, but we want to implement a leave policy that follows the FMLA. Could we get into trouble for potential FMLA violations?</i>	4
I.9: <i>If my company is a joint employer with a temp agency, do we both count the temps as part of our respective 50-employee thresholds?</i>	4
I.10: <i>My company is a joint employer with a Professional Employer Organization (PEO). When determining whether my company meets the 50-employees threshold, do we have to count all of the PEO’s employees?</i>	4
II. Qualifications For Employees	
II.1: <i>Are part-time employees eligible to take leave under the FMLA?</i>	5
II.2: <i>Should I include vacation or sick time when determining whether an employee has worked for at least 12 months?</i>	5
II.3: <i>When calculating the 1,250 hours, should I include time spent on vacation, suspension, etc.?</i>	6
II.4: <i>What is a key employee?</i>	6
II.5: <i>There is a married couple that works for the company. How much leave is each spouse entitled to?</i>	6

II.6: *An employee has requested leave, which is not to begin for 30 days. She is not currently eligible for FMLA leave, but she will be in a couple of weeks, when she hits her one-year anniversary. What do I tell her?.....7*

II.7: *An employee requested a medical leave for depression. He was not eligible for FMLA leave because he had not worked for the company for 12 months. We allowed him to take a short-term disability leave beginning January 24. He was released to return to work on April 10. We were unable to find a suitable job for him, so we terminated him on April 13. He's claiming that he was entitled to reinstatement because once he hit the 12-month employment mark on March 28, he became eligible for FMLA leave. Is he right?.....7*

II.8: *To determine service and hours eligibility under the FMLA, do I have to take into account prior service and hours worked by an individual we originally hired through a temporary staffing agency?.....7*

III. Events That Qualify Under The FMLA

III.1: *Under what circumstances must I grant FMLA leave?.....10*

III.2: *If a child is placed with an employee for foster care and then, after a period of two years, is adopted by the employee, which placement date (for foster care or for adoption) qualifies the employee for leave entitlement? Or do both dates qualify for FMLA leave as separate events?.....10*

III.3: *An employee requested leave to care for her grandmother, who raised her since she was three. Is she covered by the FMLA?.....10*

III.4: *Are common law spouses covered?.....10*

III.5: *Must I grant FMLA leave to an employee who wants time off to care for her pregnant, adult daughter?.....10*

III.6: *Does qualifying exigency leave and military caregiver leave apply to all individuals in the Armed Forces?.....10*

III.7: *For purposes of qualifying exigency leave, what is a contingency operation?.....11*

III.8: *Would an employee who is the parent of a covered service member qualify for qualifying exigency leave even though the child is over the age of 18?.....11*

III.9: *Does the term "next of kin" mean a blood relative?.....11*

III.10: *An employee was out for three days with the flu and wants the absence to be covered by the FMLA. I don't think the law was meant to cover common ailments like that. Who's right?.....11*

III.11: *Can a pregnant employee take FMLA leave for morning sickness?.....12*

III.12: *How do I determine a period of incapacity for young children when absence from work or school does not apply?.....13*

III.13: <i>When determining if an employee meets the FMLA’s definition of an incapacity can I count partial days?</i>	13
III.14: <i>When an employee goes out on leave to care for a terminally ill relative, what happens if the relative passes away?</i>	13
III.15: <i>I saw an employee who is out on FMLA leave working for another company. I fired him for fraud. Am I in trouble?</i>	13
III.16: <i>Can an employee take FMLA leave for visits to a physical therapist, if a doctor prescribes the therapy?</i>	13
III.17: <i>I’m pretty sure I was correct when I rejected an employee’s FMLA leave request for an in vitro procedure. Now I’m hesitating. Could this really be an FMLA-qualifying event?</i>	13
III.18: <i>I’ve heard that making arrangements for child care when a covered service member is called to active duty qualifies as a qualifying exigency. Is this true? What else constitutes a qualifying exigency?</i>	14
III.19: <i>Are the terms “serious injury or illness” and “serious health condition” interchangeable?</i>	14

IV. How To Calculate FMLA Leave

IV.1: <i>An employee is having twins. Does this mean she gets 24 weeks of leave?</i>	15
IV.2: <i>I had an employee take 24 weeks off in a row by stacking FMLA time at the end of one calendar year and the beginning of the next. Is there anything I can do to prevent this from happening again?</i>	16
IV.3: <i>What should we do if we want to change the method of calculation? We’ve been using the calendar year all along, and now we’d like to switch to the rolling method.</i>	16
IV.4: <i>An employee claims we didn’t make clear that our policy is to use the rolling method, so she wants another 12 weeks now under the calendar year method. What do we do?</i>	16
IV.5: <i>When it says that employees are entitled to 12 weeks of leave, does that mean they are really entitled to 60 days (12 weeks × 5 workdays) or 84 days (12 weeks × 7 calendar days)?... 16</i>	
IV.6: <i>Are the 26 weeks for military caregiver leave in addition to the 12 weeks available for other FMLA-qualifying events?</i>	16
IV.7: <i>I am aware that military caregiver leave is only available during a single 12-month period. When should I start calculating that period?</i>	16
IV.8: <i>Is the 26-week leave entitlement for military caregiver leave a one-time only entitlement or may an employee have multiple entitlements?</i>	17

IV.9: <i>An employee is out on FMLA leave. She normally works overtime. When calculating leave against her FMLA entitlement, should I factor in the overtime she would have worked?.....</i>	18
IV.10: <i>If a holiday falls during an employee’s FMLA leave period, does that day count against the employee’s leave entitlement, or is the employee entitled to 12 weeks plus one day?.....</i>	18
IV.11: <i>An employee wants to take leave for her baby, but it’s been eight months since the baby’s birth. Doesn’t FMLA leave need to be used for prenatal care or for the birth of the child?...</i>	18
IV.12: <i>An employee agrees to work from home while on leave. Does the time spent working count against the 12-week entitlement?.....</i>	18
IV.13: <i>An employee has been using intermittent leave under FMLA and has been out a lot in the last quarter. Does he still qualify for our perfect attendance bonus program?.....</i>	18
IV.14: <i>An employee injured her back, so we put her on light duty for more than three months. Then, we found out her doctor permanently restricted her from lifting heavy objects. Since we couldn’t accommodate her restrictions, we fired her. She claims we violated the FMLA. We think that providing the 13 weeks of light duty fulfilled our FMLA obligations. Who’s right?.....</i>	19
IV.15: <i>Can I reevaluate an employee’s need for intermittent leave at the start of a new 12-month period?.....</i>	19

V. Offering Intermittent Or Reduced Schedule Leave

V.1: <i>What’s the difference between intermittent and reduced schedule leave?.....</i>	21
V.2: <i>Can employees request intermittent or reduced schedule leave at any time?.....</i>	21
V.3: <i>In what increments may employees take intermittent or reduced schedule leave?.....</i>	21
V.4: <i>I want to transfer an employee who needs a reduced schedule to another job that is better suited for the schedule she needs. But she refused the transfer. What now?.....</i>	22
V.5: <i>Does the alternative job need to have equivalent job duties?.....</i>	22
V.6: <i>How do I calculate leave time for a part-time employee?.....</i>	22
V.7: <i>What do I do for employees whose hours fluctuate from week to week?.....</i>	22
V.8: <i>Can I ask for certification each time an employee wants to take leave under an intermittent schedule?.....</i>	23
V.9: <i>Can one of my employees take intermittent leave every other Thursday for six months for medical treatment?.....</i>	23

VI. Pay/Benefits Issues

VI.1: <i>Can FMLA leave be paid?</i>	25
VI.2: <i>Can employees substitute paid time when they are entitled to a temporary disability benefit?</i>	26
VI.3: <i>What happens when an employee qualifies for leave under the FMLA and Workers' Compensation?</i>	26
VI.4: <i>Should our company provide unpaid FMLA leave, or allow employees to substitute their accrued paid leave?</i>	27
VI.5: <i>An employee is arguing that because he is exempt under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), which means he gets paid his full salary each week no matter how many or how few hours he works, his pay cannot be docked for working a reduced schedule under the FMLA. Is this true?</i>	27
VI.6: <i>What happens with employees' health benefits when they take leave?</i>	27
VI.7: <i>Can employees opt out of benefits coverage while on FMLA leave?</i>	27
VI.8: <i>Do I have to maintain health benefits for all employees who don't opt out?</i>	27
VI.9: <i>How do employees pay their share of the premium when they are on leave?</i>	27
VI.10: <i>An employee missed a premium payment. What should I do now?</i>	28
VI.11: <i>Because of missed premium payments, an employee's health coverage lapsed. Now that she's ready to return to work, she wants her benefits back. Do we have to comply?</i>	28
VI.12: <i>An employee decided not to return at the end of leave. Can our company recover premiums paid?</i>	28
VI.13: <i>Are there times when we may not recover premiums paid when an employee does not return from leave?</i>	28
VI.14: <i>Are employees entitled to other benefits, such as holiday pay, while on leave?</i>	28
VI.15: <i>An employee has elected to contribute to a cafeteria plan, but now he's on unpaid FMLA leave. How does he pay for benefits under the plan?</i>	29
VI.16: <i>Are we required to continue cafeteria plan health payments for an employee on unpaid FMLA leave if company policy requires all employees on unpaid leave of any kind to make their own group health coverage payments?</i>	29
VI.17: <i>Suppose I have an employee who has elected to continue coverage under a health FSA. What happens when he goes on unpaid FMLA leave? How do we get his payments?</i>	29

VI.18: *What happens if an employee chooses to terminate coverage in a health FSA while on unpaid FMLA leave?.....29*

VII. Notification Requirements

VII.1: *Is an FMLA poster required by law?.....31*

VII.2: *Part of my workforce speaks English as a second language. What are my posting obligations to them?.....31*

VII.3: *In addition to posting an FMLA poster, what other notification obligations do employers have?.....32*

VII.4: *If we have sufficient information to designate an employee's leave request as FMLA upon his request, can we provide the eligibility and designation notices at the same time?...33*

VII.5: *Does it matter whether or not we designate an employee's time off as FMLA leave, as long as we provide the appropriate leave time?.....33*

VII.6: *We made a mistake in granting FMLA leave to an employee who wasn't eligible. Can we take it back?.....34*

VII.7: *Can employees really receive FMLA leave even if they don't specifically ask for it?.....34*

VII.8: *Can I turn down leave requests when employees don't provide 30 days' notice of their need for leave?.....34*

VII.9: *What are the employee's notice obligations if the need for leave is not foreseeable?....35*

VII.10: *An employee fails to call in an absence as per company policy, so after three days, I fire him for job abandonment. He claims his job is protected because I am aware he is qualified for intermittent FMLA leave. Who's right?.....35*

VII.11: *Can I require that an employee who has a flexible work schedule and occasionally works from home give advance notice to take FMLA leave for a spouse's operation?.....35*

VIII. Certification/Record-Keeping Requirements

VIII.1: *When may I ask an employee to provide certification supporting the need for leave?...38*

VIII.2: *An employee is dragging her feet. What type of deadline can I demand for turning in certification?.....38*

VIII.3: *An employee submitted certification that is vague. What's our next move?.....39*

VIII.4: *If an employee's serious health condition lasts longer than a single leave year, can we require annual medical certification?.....39*

VIII.5: <i>An employee’s mother has a serious health condition. What kinds of information can we ask for?.....</i>	<i>39</i>
VIII.6: <i>An employee’s serious health condition also qualifies as a disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Should I follow the ADA’s procedures for requesting medical information or the FMLA’s procedures?.....</i>	<i>40</i>
VIII.7: <i>I can’t read the handwriting of the physician who completed an employee’s certification. Can I call her to clarify?.....</i>	<i>40</i>
VIII.8: <i>If certification is completed in a foreign language, can I require the employee to translate it?.....</i>	<i>40</i>
VIII.9: <i>I think an employee went to a doctor who is willing to sign off on anything. What can I do?.....</i>	<i>40</i>
VIII.10: <i>What happens if the second opinion conflicts with the original serious health condition certification?.....</i>	<i>40</i>
VIII.11: <i>What should I do when an employee insists that she has a serious health condition and demands FMLA leave, despite the fact that she hasn’t been able to get appropriate medical certification from a doctor?.....</i>	<i>40</i>
VIII.12: <i>What kind of certification can I ask for when an employee requests military caregiver leave?.....</i>	<i>40</i>
VIII.13: <i>Can I request a second opinion for an employee’s need for military caregiver leave?.....</i>	<i>42</i>
VIII.14: <i>What kind of certification can I ask for when an employee requests qualifying exigency leave?</i>	<i>42</i>
VIII.15: <i>Can I ever request subsequent recertification?.....</i>	<i>42</i>
VIII.16: <i>Who pays for recertification?.....</i>	<i>42</i>
VIII.17: <i>How do I go about asking for certification when an employee wants to return from FMLA leave?.....</i>	<i>43</i>
VIII.18: <i>An employee returning from FMLA leave refuses to furnish return-to-work medical certification. Can we refuse to reinstate him until he provides the required certification?.....</i>	<i>43</i>
VIII.19: <i>Is it ever permissible to impose more stringent return-to-work requirements on employees than those required by the FMLA?.....</i>	<i>43</i>
VIII.20: <i>Do I have to accept a medical certification filled out by someone else other than a medical doctor?.....</i>	<i>43</i>
VIII.21: <i>Can I require an employee returning from FMLA leave for their own serious health condition to submit to a medical examination by the company’s health care provider?.....</i>	<i>44</i>

VIII.22: *A pregnant employee wants to take two weeks of vacation at the end of the month to take care of her husband who will be recuperating from surgery and save her FMLA leave for when her baby is born. Our employee handbook states that FMLA leave should run concurrently with paid sick, vacation, or personal leave. What can we do if the employee does not want to take FMLA leave for the time off to care for her husband and won't supply medical certification?.....44*

VIII.23: *I fired an employee after he failed to hand in his medical certification form and exhausted all of his company-provided, non-FMLA leave. He claims he gave the form to his doctor, and his doctor dropped the ball, but he didn't know until he was fired. Do I have to give him more time to provide the certification?.....44*

VIII.24: *If a supervisor has reason to doubt an employee's claim that he/she is too sick to work, company policy calls for the employee to provide proof of illness (e.g., doctor's note) in order to receive paid sick leave. Is this legal for FMLA-related absences?.....44*

VIII.25: *What records am I required to keep under the FMLA?.....45*

VIII.26: *We don't track exempt employees' hours for pay purposes. Can we track their hours to determine when they reach the 1,250-hour mark for FMLA eligibility?.....45*

VIII.27: *Where should FMLA records be kept?.....45*

IX. Reinstatement & Termination Rights

IX.1: *I hired a temporary worker to fill in for an employee who needed 12 weeks of leave. The temp is doing a much better job than the original employee, so I'd like to keep the temp where she is. But I know the employee has reinstatement rights. Is there any way I can legally keep the temp in this position?.....47*

IX.2: *Does equivalent pay mean I have to give raises to employees on FMLA leave?.....48*

IX.3: *Are there any circumstances under which employees are **not** entitled to be reinstated to their former or an equivalent position?.....48*

IX.4: *An employee had been having performance problems. When she went out on leave, her supervisor discovered that the problems were even greater than previously thought. We'd like to get rid of her, but are afraid to do so because she's out on leave. What can we do?.....48*

IX.5: *Do I have to reinstate an employee who is no longer qualified for his original position because he was unable to attend a required course while out on leave?.....48*

IX.6: *I sent out an initial notification letter when an employee's leave began that warned her that her employment would be terminated if she didn't return after 12 weeks. Do I also have to send an additional warning prior to the end of the 12 weeks?.....48*

IX.7: *I heard a rumor that an employee does not plan on returning to work when his leave ends, but he has not said anything to me about it. Can I come right out and ask him about his intent to return?.....48*

IX.8: *Halfway through her leave, an employee sent me a letter stating that she will not be returning at the end of her leave. Can I terminate her now, or is she entitled to her full 12 weeks?..48*

IX.9: *An employee is ready to return much sooner than anticipated. Do we have to take her back now?.....49*

IX.10: *An employee expected to be returned to her position the day after her FMLA leave ended. Since we had made some changes to our work processes while she was out, it took us about a month to get her into an equivalent position. She claims that's illegal. We think it's reasonable. Who's right?.....49*

IX.11: *Can we have employees sign an agreement to release the company from FMLA claims?.....49*

X. Other Laws & The FMLA

X.1: *Do I have to extend additional FMLA leave to an employee with a disability who can't return to work after the 12 weeks are up?.....51*

X.2: *Will accommodating an employee with a disability with a modified, part-time job violate the FMLA?.....51*

X.3: *Can employees turn down a light-duty job for Workers' Compensation purposes if they are out on FMLA leave?.....51*

X.4: *My state also has its own family and medical leave law. Which one do I follow?.....51*

X.5: *How does COBRA affect the FMLA?.....51*

X.6: *Do I have to offer COBRA to an employee who had declined group health benefits coverage during FMLA leave, and then decided not to return to work?.....52*

X.7: *How should the 12-month and the 1,250-hours-of-service FMLA requirements be calculated for returning service members?.....52*

Appendix A: Tracking FMLA Leave.....53

Index.....55

