



Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination



PARENTAL LEAVE

An Act Relative to Parental Leave expands the current maternity leave law, G.L. c. 149, § 105D, which is enforced by the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD). Currently, Massachusetts law requires employers with six or more employees to provide eight weeks of unpaid maternity leave for the purpose of giving birth or for the placement of a child under the age of 18, or under the age of 23 if the child is mentally or physically disabled, for adoption. The new law goes into effect on April 7, 2015 and expands the current leave law in the following ways:

The parental leave law is now gender neutral. Both men and women are entitled to parental leave.

If the employer agrees to provide parental leave for longer than 8 weeks, the employer must reinstate the employee at the end of the extended leave unless it clearly informs the employee in writing before the leave and before any extension of that leave, that taking longer than 8 weeks of leave shall result in the denial of reinstatement or the loss of other rights and benefits.

The law clarifies that the right to leave applies to employees who have completed an initial probationary period set by the terms of employment, but which is not greater than 3 months.

The law provides that if two employees of the same employer give birth to or adopt the same child, the two employees are entitled to an aggregate of 8 weeks of leave.

The law clarifies that an employee seeking leave must provide at least 2 weeks' notice of the anticipated date of departure and the employee's intention to return, but also permits the employee to provide notice as soon as practicable if the delay is for reasons beyond the employee's control.

The law clarifies that an employee on parental leave for the adoption of a child shall be entitled to the same benefits offered to an employee on leave for the birth of a child.

The law expands the notice requirements, mandating that employers keep a posting in a conspicuous place describing the law's requirements and the employer's policies as to parental leave.

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Visit our website for more resources and instructions on filing a complaint: www.mass.gov/mcad