



## HR Updates

by Insurance Marketing Center

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### **Public Health Emergency Leave is Effective Upon Enactment, and Bereavement Leave Takes Effect Oct. 1, 2021**

The Maryland legislature passed a number of new bills affecting employers, including those addressing bereavement leave and protections for essential workers in a catastrophic public health emergency. These bills are expected to be signed into law shortly.

#### **Public Health Emergency Leave**

Effective upon enactment, the [Essential Workers Protection Act](#) (EWPA) generally provides protections for essential workers related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Most notably, the EWPA provides up to 112 hours of paid public health emergency leave per essential worker, in addition to any existing paid leave, but only if there is federal or state funding for that leave.

The worker would be able to take this leave for the following reasons related to the communicable disease:

- To isolate due to a diagnosis or symptoms;
- To obtain a diagnosis, preventive care or treatment;
- To care for a family member diagnosed with the disease;

- By order of a public health official or health care professional because of the worker's exposure to or symptoms of the disease, or to care for a family member who has been so ordered; or
- To care for a family member whose care provider is unavailable or whose school/place of care has been closed because of the emergency.

### **Bereavement Leave**

Effective Oct. 1, 2021, the Maryland legislature [amended](#) its existing bereavement leave law to require employers with 15 or more employees to allow the use of any existing accrued paid leave for bereavement purposes. This allows employees to take accrued paid leave in the case of the death of a spouse, parent or child of any age. The employer cannot take any adverse action against an employee who has used or requested this leave, opposed an unlawful practice, reported a violation or participated in a proceeding under this law.

### **HR News Alerts provided by:**

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