



Baker Signs COVID-19 Emergency Paid Sick Leave Law

On May 28th, 2021, Governor Baker signed legislation establishing a COVID-19 Emergency Paid Sick Leave program in the Commonwealth. **Effective immediately, all Massachusetts employers must grant up to 40 hours of emergency paid leave for full time employees, and prorated emergency paid leave for part time employees**, for certain COVID-19 related purposes.

Employers are eligible for reimbursement for the cost of providing the required paid leave through a new \$75 million state fund created by the law, unless the employer is otherwise eligible for reimbursement from the federal COVID-19 emergency sick leave tax credit program established under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. Employers must make the required leave available through **September 30, 2021**, or until the state fund is exhausted.

The Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development has issued **preliminary employer guidance** to facilitate implementation of the new law. The guidance provides important details pertaining to eligible reasons for taking leave, calculating leave amounts, written leave requests, and the law's non-retaliation provisions. Additional guidance will be issued in the coming weeks and is expected to include model employee notification and written request for leave forms, as well as information on how employers may apply for reimbursement from the state. In the interim, employers may use this preliminary guidance document to provide required employee notification and should adopt a written request for leave policy that follows the process outlined in the **Employees Request for Leave** section of the guidance.

RAM will continue to provide updates as new information becomes available. New information will also be posted to the RAM website www.retailersma.org.