



# PAID SICK LEAVE Notice of Employee Rights

Healthy Workplaces Act | NMSA 50-17-1 to 50-17-12 | Effective date: July 1, 2022

## Labor Relations Division

401 Broadway NE, Albuquerque, NM 87102

Albuquerque: (505) 841-4400 • Santa Fe: (505) 827-6838 • Las Cruces: (575) 524-6195

### ACCRUAL

Employees accrue one hour of earned sick leave for every thirty hours worked, starting their first day of work. Up to 64 hours of unused earned sick leave can carry over year-to-year.

The Act provides minimum requirements; other laws or employer policies may provide for more accrual, use, or carry over of earned sick leave. The Act does not preempt or override the terms of any collective bargaining agreement.

The Act applies to all employees—full-time, part-time, seasonal, and temporary. The Act also applies to employees who are salaried, tipped, or on a per-diem schedule, as well as employees paid on task, piece, or commission basis. Employees may not contract out of or agree to waive their rights under the Act.

### USE OF PAID SICK LEAVE

Employees may use up to 64 hours of earned sick leave per twelve-month period, if they work enough hours. Individual employers may set a higher limit. Employers may select when the 12-month period begins.

### PAY

Used sick leave is compensated at the employee's usual hourly rate and benefits. The hourly rate must be at least minimum wage.

### REASON FOR USE OF LEAVE

Employees may use accrued sick leave for the following reasons:

- Employee's treatment or diagnosis of illness, injury, or health condition, or preventative medical care.
- Care of employee's family members for treatment or diagnosis of illness, injury, or health condition, or preventative medical care.
- Meetings related to employee's child's health or disability.
- Absence necessary because of and related to domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking suffered by the employee or their family member.

### USE OF SICK LEAVE

Employers must grant use of earned sick leave upon the oral or written request of an employee or an individual acting on the employee's behalf. When possible, the request must include the expected duration of the absence. An employer may not condition an employee's taking earned sick leave on the employee searching for or finding a replacement worker to cover during the employee's absence. An employer may not require an employee to use other paid leave before the employee uses sick leave pursuant to the Act.

The employee should notify the employer in advance when use of sick leave is foreseeable and make a reasonable effort to schedule the leave so it does not disrupt business operations. When use of sick leave is not foreseeable, the employee must notify the employer as soon as practicable.

### NOTICE

An employer must give written or electronic notice of employee rights and the Act's terms and provisions to an employee at the start of employment. This notice must be in English, Spanish, or any language that is the first language spoken by at least ten percent of the employer's workforce, as requested by the employee.

### REASONABLE DOCUMENTATION

An employer may require reasonable documentation verifying the sick leave was used for a covered purpose if the employee uses two or more consecutive workdays of sick leave. Employers must treat all information obtained related to an employee taking sick leave as confidential.

### DOCUMENT RETENTION

Employers must keep records documenting hours worked by employees and earned sick leave accrued and taken by employees for four years.

### RETALIATION PROHIBITED

Employers may not take or threaten an adverse action against an employee that is reasonably likely to deter employees from exercising or attempting to exercise their rights under the Act. Employers may not retaliate because an employee raises concerns about violations of the Act, exercises their rights under the Act, or participates in investigations or legal proceedings related to alleged violations of the Act.

Examples of retaliation include the following: denying use or delaying payment of earned sick leave, termination, reducing work hours, giving the employee undesirable assignments or scheduling, threats, discipline, counting use of earned sick leave hours as an absence that may lead to any adverse action, or any other employment action considered less favorable.

### COMPLAINT PROCESS

The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions, Labor Relations Division, enforces the Act. Any employee aggrieved by a violation of the Act may file a complaint with the Labor Relations Division by calling (505) 841-4400, visiting [www.dws.state.nm.us](http://www.dws.state.nm.us), or going to a New Mexico Workforce Connections Office. Notice: The Division will disclose complainant's identity as part of the investigation. An employee's legal status for presence in the United States is not a defense to any action brought pursuant to the Act.

Employees must file a complaint with the Division or file a civil action in a court within three years from the date the alleged violation occurred.

An employer found to be in violation of the Act will be liable for damages and/or penalties pursuant to the Act.

For more details, see the full text of the law and regulations, available at [www.dws.state.nm.us](http://www.dws.state.nm.us)