

The Maine Department of Labor has received questions from employers and workers around COVID-19, the novel coronavirus. Therefore, the Department put together the following resources.

The Maine Center for Disease Control (CDC) continues to urge all Maine residents to take precautions and [follow guidelines issued by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (U.S. CDC).

- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid shaking hands as a greeting.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

More information from the U.S. and Maine CDC:

- General information: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- Maine CDC: <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/epi/airborne/coronavirus.shtml>

Resources for Businesses and Employees:

From U.S. CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/businesses-employers.html>

FAQ's from U.S. DOL about the Fair Labor Standards Act: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/flsa/pandemic>

Guidance on preparing workplaces for COVID-19 by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA): <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf>

- OSHA's COVID-19 webpage: <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/>

Relevant Labor Law

Maine's Family Medical Leave laws apply to an employee that has worked for the same employer for at least 12 consecutive months. The employee would be entitled to up to 10 work weeks of job-protected unpaid Family Medical Leave in any two years unless employed at a permanent work site with fewer than 15 employees. Employers may provide paid leave at their discretion.

Maine's Family Sick Leave law states that if an employer provides paid leave, then the employer shall allow an employee to use the paid leave for the care of an immediate family member who is ill. This law section does not apply to the illness of the employee. This law gives the employee the right to choose what type of leave they are going to use, if their employer provides multiple benefits, such as sick, vacation, or personal with limitations.

Larger businesses, such as businesses that have 50 or more employees, will fall under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act laws which provides up to 12 weeks of leave for a qualifying event. **U.S. Department of Labor FAQ's about federal FMLA:** <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/fmla/pandemic>.

Maine's Earned Paid Leave law does not go into effect until January 1, 2021. This law, when in effect, will guarantee that those employees that have accrued time will be paid for their accrued time off, up to 40 hours in one year of employment.

Work-Related Illness - If the illness is work related, the employee and employer should consult with the Maine Workers' Compensation Board. For more information about the Worker's Compensation Board, visit <https://www.maine.gov/wcb/>.
