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KNOW YOUR RIGHTS: Seattle, WA Paid Sick and Safe Time

1) What does the Seattle Paid Sick and Safe Time law do?

It gives workers **sick time** that can be used to recover from physical/mental illness or injury; to seek medical diagnosis, treatment, or preventative care; or to care for a family member who is ill or needs medical diagnosis, treatment, or preventative care.

It also gives workers **safe time** that can be used when the worker's place of business is closed by order of a public official for any health-related reason to limit exposure to an infectious agent, biological toxin, or hazardous material; to care for a family member whose school or place of care has been closed; or to address certain non-medical needs that may arise if the worker or a family member are victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking. If a worker's employer has **250 or more full-time workers**, they can also use safe time when their place of business has reduced operations or closed for any health- or safety-related reason.

2) Am I covered?

If you work as an employee in Seattle, you are probably covered, whether you are a **full-time, part-time, or temporary** worker. However, the law does not cover government employees other than employees of the City of Seattle and independent contractors.

3) How much sick and safe time can I earn?

If your workplace has **250 or more full-time workers**, you earn **1 hour** of paid sick and safe time for **every 30 hours worked**. If your workplace has **fewer than 250 full-time workers**, you earn **1 hour** of sick and safe time for **every 40 hours worked**.

There is no limit to how much sick and safe time you can earn, however, your employer isn't required to allow you to carry over more than a certain amount of time to the next year, depending on the size of your employer. If your workplace has **250 or more workers**, your employer isn't required to allow you to carry over more than **72 hours** of sick and safe time per year. If your workplace has **at least 50 but less than 250 workers**, your employer isn't required to allow you to carry over more than **56 hours** of sick and safe time per year. If your workplace has **less than 50 workers**, your employer isn't required to allow you to carry over more than **40 hours** of sick and safe time per year.

All covered employees are protected against being fired or punished for using or requesting their sick and safe time (including threats, discipline, demotion, reduction in hours, termination, etc.).

4) What if my work or my child's school or daycare is closed for a health emergency?

You can use your safe time if your place of business is closed by order of a public official for any health-related reason to limit exposure to an infectious agent, biological toxin, or hazardous material or to care for any of the family members listed in Question 5 (including a child) whose school or place of care has been closed.

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If your employer has **250 or more full-time workers**, you can also use your safe time when your place of business has reduced operations or closed for any health- or safety-related reason.

5) Which of my family members are covered by the law?

Under the law, you can take **sick time** to care for yourself or a child, spouse, registered domestic partner, parent, parent of a spouse or registered domestic partner, grandchild, grandparent, or sibling.

Under the law, you can take **safe time** for yourself or a child, spouse, parent, parent of a spouse, grandparent, or person with whom you have a romantic relationship.

6) What if I already have paid leave or paid time off?

If you already get any paid leave (vacation, paid time off, etc.) that you can use as sick and safe time **and** it's **at least** the same amount you would earn under this law, the law does **not** give you any additional paid time off.

7) When can I begin using my sick and safe time?

You start earning sick and safe time immediately but cannot use it until 90 days after the start of your employment.

8) Do I need a doctor's note?

Under Seattle's paid sick and safe time law, you only need a doctor's note after more than 3 consecutive days of absence (and the note does not have to specify your illness).

However, under a temporary rule in effect from April 8, 2020 to June 7, 2020, you cannot be required to provide a doctor's note to your employer, even if you've been absent from work for more than 3 consecutive days. However, your employer may still require you to submit other documentation, such as a statement from you that you've used sick or safe time for a covered purpose.

The Seattle Office of Labor Standards is in charge of enforcing this law.

All covered workers are protected against being fired or punished for using or requesting sick or safe time. If you have a problem—or want more information—call A Better Balance's **free** legal clinic at **1-833-NEED-ABB**.

Please note that this fact sheet does not represent an exhaustive overview of the paid sick time law described, and it does not constitute legal advice. It is possible that additional provisions not described in this fact sheet may apply to a worker's specific circumstances or category of employment.