

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS: California Paid Sick Time

This fact sheet covers California’s statewide paid sick time law. Some California cities have their own sick time laws, which may provide additional rights. For more information, click [here](#) and [here](#).

1) What does the California Paid Sick Time law do?

California’s paid sick time law gives workers sick time that can be used to recover from physical/mental illness or injury; to seek medical diagnosis, treatment, or preventative care; to care for a family member who is ill or needs medical diagnosis, treatment, or preventative care; or to address needs that may arise if the worker is a victim of domestic violence, a sexual offense, or stalking. Additionally, the California Department of Industrial Relations released [administrative guidance](#) clarifying that sick time under California’s sick time law can also be used for certain COVID-19 related reasons, including if the worker:

- Is self-quarantining as a result of potential exposure to COVID-19 if quarantine is recommended by civil authorities;
- Has been exposed to COVID-19; or
- Has traveled to a high-risk area.

Note: Between January 1, 2022 and December 31, 2022, certain workers may have had additional sick time rights in relation to COVID-19 under [S.B. 114](#), which is an expired measure. Additionally, between September 19, 2020 and September 30, 2021, certain workers may have had additional sick time rights in relation to COVID-19 under [A.B. 1867](#) or [S.B. 95](#), which are two expired measures.

2) Am I covered?

If you work as an employee in California for at least **30 days** in a year, you are probably covered, whether you are a **full-time, part-time, or temporary** worker. However, the law does not cover federal employees, certain state and municipal employees, and certain flight deck or cabin crew employees or rail employees.

3) How much paid sick time can I earn?

As of January 1, 2024, California’s paid sick time law has changed as follows:

- You earn **1 hour** of sick time for **every 30 hours worked**. Employers are allowed to use a different, regular sick leave accrual schedule, as long as it results in your having at least 24 hours or 3 days of sick leave by your 120th calendar day of employment and at least 40 hours or 5 days of sick leave by the 200th calendar day of employment.
- Your employer may limit your *use* of paid sick time to **40 hours or 5 days** (with a “day” based upon your regular work hours) in a year, whichever is greater.
- An employee cannot have more than **80 hours or 10 days** of accrued sick time at any given time.

Prior to January 1, 2024:

- You were entitled to earn **1 hour** of sick time for **every 30 hours worked**. Employers were allowed to use a different, regular sick leave accrual schedule, as long as it resulted

in your having at least 24 hours or 3 days of accrued sick leave by the 120th calendar day of employment.

- Your employer could limit your *use* of paid sick time to **24 hours or 3 days** in a year, whichever was greater.
- An employee could not have more than **48 hours or 6 days** of accrued sick time at any given time.

All covered workers are protected against being fired or punished for using or requesting their sick 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 cannot use your sick time under California’s paid sick time law because your work or your child’s school or day care is closed unless you would otherwise be able to use your sick time (for example, if you are sick or caring for a sick family member).

5) Which of my family members are covered by 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, sibling, or a designated person of your choice.

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 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 time?

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

The California Labor Commissioner’s Office 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.