

**Sec. 31-51rr-43. Fitness-for-duty certification (29 CFR § 825.312)**

(a) As a condition of restoring an employee whose FMLA leave was occasioned by the employee's own serious health condition that made the employee unable to perform the employee's job, an employer may have a uniformly-applied policy or practice that requires all similarly-situated employees, such as those in the same occupation and with the same serious health condition, who take leave for such conditions to obtain and present certification from the employee's health care provider that the employee is able to resume work. The employee has the same obligations to participate and cooperate, including providing a complete and sufficient certification or providing sufficient authorization to the health care provider to provide the information directly to the employer, in the fitness-for-duty certification process as in the initial certification process.

(b) An employer may seek a fitness-for-duty certification only with regard to the particular health condition that caused the employee's need for FMLA leave. The certification from the employee's health care provider shall certify that the employee is able to resume work. Additionally, an employer may require that the certification specifically address the employee's ability to perform the essential functions of the employee's job. In order to require such a certification, an employer shall provide an employee with a list of the essential functions of the employee's job no later than with the designation notice required by section 31-51rr-31(d) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, and shall indicate in the designation notice that the certification shall address the employee's ability to perform those essential functions. If the employer satisfies these requirements, the employee's health care provider shall certify that the employee can perform the identified essential functions of his or her job. Following the procedures set forth in section 31-51rr-38(a) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, the employer may contact the employee's health care provider for purposes of clarifying and authenticating the fitness-for-duty certification. Clarification may be requested only for the serious health condition for which FMLA leave was taken. The employer may not delay the employee's return to work while contact with the health care provider is being made. No second or third opinions on a fitness-for-duty certification may be required.

(c) The cost of the certification shall be borne by the employee, and the employee is not entitled to be paid for the time or travel costs spent in acquiring the certification.

(d) The designation notice required in section 31-51rr-31(d) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies shall advise the employee if the employer will require a fitness-for-duty certification to return to work and whether that fitness-for-duty certification must address the employee's ability to perform the essential functions of the employee's job.

(e) An employer may delay restoration to employment until an employee submits a required fitness-for-duty certification unless the employer has failed to provide the notice required in subsection (d) of this section. If an employer provides the notice required, an employee who does not provide a fitness-for-duty certification or request additional FMLA leave is no longer entitled to reinstatement under the FMLA.

(f) An employer is not entitled to a certification of fitness to return to duty for each absence taken on an intermittent or reduced leave schedule. However, an employer is entitled to a certification of fitness to return to duty for such absences up to once every thirty (30) days if reasonable safety concerns exist regarding the employee's ability to

perform his or her duties, based on the serious health condition for which the employee took such leave. If an employer chooses to require a fitness-for-duty certification under such circumstances, the employer shall inform the employee at the same time it issues the designation notice that for each subsequent instance of intermittent or reduced schedule leave, the employee will be required to submit a fitness-for-duty certification unless one has already been submitted within the past thirty (30) days. Alternatively, an employer can set a different interval for requiring a fitness-for-duty certification as long as it does not exceed once every thirty (30) days and as long as the employer advises the employee of the requirement in advance of the employee taking the intermittent or reduced schedule leave. The employer may not terminate the employment of the employee while awaiting such a certification of fitness to return to duty for an intermittent or reduced schedule leave absence. Reasonable safety concerns means a reasonable belief of significant risk of harm to the individual employee or others. In determining whether reasonable safety concerns exist, an employer should consider the nature and severity of the potential harm and the likelihood that potential harm will occur.

(g) If State or local law or the terms of a collective bargaining agreement govern an employee's return to work, those provisions shall be applied.

(h) Requirements under the ADA apply. After an employee returns from FMLA leave, the ADA requires any medical examination at an employer's expense by the employer's health care provider be job-related and consistent with business necessity. For example, an attorney may not be required to submit to a medical examination or inquiry just because his or her leg had been amputated. The essential functions of an attorney's job do not require use of both legs; therefore such an inquiry would not be job related. An employer may require a warehouse laborer, whose back impairment affects the ability to lift, to be examined by an orthopedist, but may not require this employee to submit to an HIV test where the test is not related to either the essential functions of his or her job or to his/her impairment. If an employee's serious health condition may also be a disability within the meaning of the ADA, the FMLA does not prevent the employer from following the procedures for requesting medical information under the ADA.

(Effective May 12, 2014)