

Sec. 31-51qq-15. May an employer transfer an employee to an “alternative position” in order to accommodate intermittent leave or reduced leave schedule?

(See 29 CFR § 825.204)

(a) If an employee needs intermittent leave or leave on a reduced leave schedule that is foreseeable based on the planned medical treatment for the employee or family member, including during a period of recovery from a serious health condition, or if the employer agrees to permit intermittent leave or reduced leave schedule for the birth of a child or the placement of a child for adoption or foster care, the employer may require the employee to transfer temporarily, during the period the intermittent or reduced leave schedule is required, to an available alternative position for which the employee is qualified and which better accommodates recurring periods of leave than does the employee’s regular position.

(b) The exercise of the authority to transfer an employee to an alternative position, taken pursuant to this section, shall not conflict with any provision of a collective bargaining agreement between such employer and a labor organization which is the collective bargaining representative of the unit of which the employee is a part. In addition transfer to an alternative position may require compliance with federal law (such as the Americans with Disabilities Act) or state law, including the Fair Employment Practices Act. Transfer to an alternative position may include altering an existing job to better accommodate the employee’s need for intermittent or reduced leave.

(c) The alternative position shall have equivalent pay and benefits. An alternative position for these purposes does not have to have equivalent duties. The employer may increase the pay and benefits of an existing alternative position, so as to make them equivalent to the pay and benefits of the employee’s regular job. The employer may also transfer the employee to a part-time job with the same hourly rate of pay and benefits, provided the employee is not required to take more leave than is medically necessary.

(1) For example, an employee desiring to take leave in increments of four hours per day could be transferred to a half-time job, or could remain in the employee’s same job on a part-time schedule, paying the same hourly rate as the employee’s previous job and enjoying the same benefits. The employer may not eliminate benefits which otherwise would not be provided to part-time employees; however, an employer may proportionately reduce benefits such as vacation leave where an employer’s normal practice is to base such benefits on the number of hours worked.

(d) An employer may not transfer the employee to an alternative position to discourage the employee from taking a leave or otherwise work a hardship on the employee.

(1) For example, a white collar employee may not be assigned to perform laborer’s work; an employee working the day shift may not be reassigned to the graveyard shift; an employee working in the headquarters facility may not be reassigned to a branch a significant distance away from the employee’s normal job location. Any such attempt on the part of the employer to make such a transfer shall be deemed a prohibited act under the FMLA.

(e) When an employee who is taking leave intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule and has been transferred to an alternative position, no longer needs to continue on leave and is able to return to full-time work, the employee shall be placed in the same or equivalent job he or she left when the leave commenced.

Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies

(Adopted effective March 9, 1999)