Agency

Department of Labor

Subject

Family and Medical Leave for School Paraprofessionals

Inclusive Sections

§§ 31-51rr-1—31-51rr-57

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Family and Medical Leave for School Paraprofessionals

Sec. 31-51rr-1. Definitions (29 CFR § 825.800)

As used in sections 31-51rr-1 to 31-51rr-47, inclusive, of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies:

(1) "FMLA" means section 31-51rr of the Connecticut General Statutes.

(2) "Act" means the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, Public Law 103–3 (February 5, 1993), 107 Stat. 6 (29 U.S.C. 2601 et seq., as amended).

(3) "Active duty" or "call to active duty status" means duty under a call or order to active duty or notification of an impending call or order to active duty in support of a contingency operation pursuant to Section 688 of Title 10 of the United States Code, which authorizes ordering to active duty retired members of the Regular Armed Forces and members of the retired Reserve who retired after completing at least twenty (20) years of active service; Section 12301(a) of Title 10 of the United States Code, which authorizes ordering all reserve component members to active duty in the case of war or national emergency; Section 12302 of Title 10 of the United States Code, which authorizes ordering any unit or unassigned member of the Ready Reserve to active duty; Section 12304 of Title 10 of the United States Code, which authorizes ordering any unit or unassigned member of the Selected Reserve and certain members of the Individual Ready Reserve to active duty; Section 12305 of Title 10 of the United States Code, which authorizes the suspension of promotion, retirement or separation rules for certain Reserve components; Section 12406 of Title 10 of the United States Code, which authorizes calling the National Guard into federal service in certain circumstances; chapter 15 of Title 10 of the United States Code, which authorizes calling the National Guard and state military into federal service in the case of insurrections and national emergencies; or any other provision of law during a war or during a national emergency declared by the President or Congress so long as it is in support of a contingency operation.

(4) "ADA" means the Americans With Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq., as amended from time to time).

(5) "CFEPA" means the Connecticut Fair Employment Practices Act, section 46a-51 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

(6) "COBRA" means the continuation coverage requirements of Title X of the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1986, as amended (Pub. L. 99–272, title X, section 10002; 100 Stat. 227; 29 U.S.C. 1161–1168).

(7) "Contingency operation" means a military operation that:

(A) Is designated by the Secretary of Defense as an operation in which members of the armed forces are or may become involved in military actions, operations, or hostilities against an enemy of the United States or against an opposing military force; or

(B) Results in the call or order to, or retention on, active duty of members of the uniformed services under section 688, 12301(a), 12302, 12304, 12305, or 12406 of Title 10 of the United States Code, chapter 15 of Title 10 of the United States Code, or any other provision of law during a war or during a national emergency declared by the President or

Congress.

(8) "Covered military member" means the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent on active duty or call to active duty status.

(9) "Eligible employee" or "employee" means:

(A) A "paraprofessional," as defined in section 31-51rr-1(20) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, who has been employed for a total of at least twelve (12) months by the employer on the date on which any FMLA leave is to commence, except that an employer need not consider any period of previous employment that occurred more than seven (7) years before the date of the most recent hiring of the employee, unless:

(i) The break in service is occasioned by the fulfillment of the employee's National Guard or Reserve military service obligation or

(ii) A written agreement, including a collective bargaining agreement, exists concerning the employer's intention to rehire the employee after the break in service, such as for purposes of the employee furthering his or her education or for childrearing purposes; and

(B) An individual who, on the date on which any FMLA leave is to commence, has been employed for at least nine hundred fifty (950) hours of service after the effective date of sections 31-51rr-1 et seq. of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies with such employer during the previous twelve (12)-month period, except that:

(i) An employee returning from fulfilling his or her National Guard or Reserve military obligation shall be credited with the hours-of-service that would have been performed but for the period of military service in determining whether the employee worked the nine hundred fifty (950) hours of service. Accordingly, a person reemployed following military service has the hours that would have been worked for the employer added to any hours actually worked during the previous twelve (12)-month period to meet the nine hundred fifty (950)-hour requirement.

(ii) To determine the hours that would have been worked during the period of military service, the employee's pre-service work schedule can generally be used for calculations.

(10) "Employ" means to suffer or permit to work.

(11) "Employer" means any political subdivision of the State of Connecticut. "Political subdivision" shall be construed and interpreted to include without limitation, any town, city, county, borough, district, school board, board of education, board of regents, social service or welfare agency, public and quasi-public corporation, housing authority, parking authority, redevelopment and urban renewal board or commission, or other authority or public agency established by law, and any water district, sewer district or similar authority established by special act or existing under the Connecticut General Statutes.

(12) "Employment benefits" means all benefits provided or made available to employees by an employer, including group life insurance, health insurance, disability insurance, sick leave, annual leave, educational benefits, and pensions, regardless of whether such benefits are provided by a practice or written policy of an employer or through an "employee benefit plan" as defined in section 3(3) of the federal Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, 29 U.S.C. 1002(3). The term does not include non-employment related obligations

paid by employees through voluntary deductions such as supplemental insurance coverage.

(13) "FLSA" means the Fair Labor Standards Act (29 U.S.C. 201 et seq.).

(14) "Group health plan" means any plan of, or contributed to by, an employer, including a self-insured plan, to provide health care, directly or otherwise, to the employer's employees, former employees, or the families of such employees or former employees. For purposes of FMLA, the term "group health plan" shall not include an insurance program providing health coverage under which employees purchase individual policies from insurers provided that:

(A) No contributions are made by the employer;

(B) Participation in the program is completely voluntary for employees;

(C) The sole functions of the employer with respect to the program are, without endorsing the program, to permit the insurer to publicize the program to employees, to collect premiums through payroll deductions and to remit them to the insurer;

(D) The employer receives no consideration in the form of cash or otherwise in connection with the program, other than reasonable compensation, excluding any profit, for administrative services actually rendered in connection with payroll deduction; and

(E) The premium charged with respect to such coverage does not increase in the event the employment relationship terminates.

(15) "Health care provider" means:

(A) A doctor of medicine or osteopathy who is authorized to practice medicine or surgery, as appropriate, by the State in which the doctor practices; or

(B) Any other person determined by the Commissioner to be capable of providing health care services.

(i) Others "capable of providing health care services" include only:

(I) Podiatrists, dentists, clinical psychologists, optometrists, and chiropractors, limited to treatment consisting of manual manipulation of the spine to correct a subluxation as demonstrated by X-ray to exist, authorized to practice in the State and performing within the scope of their practice as defined under State law;

(II) Nurse practitioners, nurse-midwives, clinical social workers and physician assistants who are authorized to practice under State law and who are performing within the scope of their practice as defined under State law;

(III) Christian Science Practitioners listed with the First Church of Christ, Scientist in Boston, Massachusetts. Where an employee or family member is receiving treatment from a Christian Science practitioner, an employee may not object to any requirement from an employer that the employee or family member submit to examination, though not treatment, to obtain a second or third certification from a health care provider other than a Christian Science practitioner except as otherwise provided under applicable State or local law or collective bargaining agreement;

(IV) Any health care provider from whom an employer or the employer's group health plan's benefits manager will accept certification of the existence of a serious health condition to substantiate a claim for benefits; and

(V) A health care provider listed above who practices in a country other than the United States, who is authorized to practice in accordance with the law of that country, and who is performing within the scope of his or her practice as defined under such law.

(ii) "Authorized to practice in the State" as used in this section means that the provider must be authorized to diagnose and treat physical or mental health conditions.

(16) "Incapable of self-care" means that the individual requires active assistance or supervision to provide daily self-care in several of the "activities of daily living" (ADLs) or "instrumental activities of daily living" (IADLs). Activities of daily living include adaptive activities such as caring appropriately for one's grooming and hygiene, bathing, dressing and eating. Instrumental activities of daily living include cooking, cleaning, shopping, taking public transportation, paying bills, maintaining a residence, using telephones and directories, using a post office, or others.

(17) "Intermittent leave" means leave taken in separate periods of time due to a single illness or injury, rather than for one continuous period of time, and may include leave of periods from an hour or more to several weeks. Examples of intermittent leave would include leave taken on an occasional basis for medical appointments, or leave taken several days at a time spread over a period of six (6) months, such as for chemotherapy.

(18) "Next of kin of a covered servicemember" means the nearest blood relative other than the covered servicemember's spouse, parent, son, or daughter, in the following order of priority: Blood relatives who have been granted legal custody of the covered servicemember by court decree or statutory provisions, brothers and sisters, grandparents, aunts and uncles, and first cousins, unless the covered servicemember has specifically designated in writing another blood relative as his or her nearest blood relative for purposes of military caregiver leave under the FMLA. When no such designation is made, and there are multiple family members with the same level of relationship to the covered servicemember, all such family members shall be considered the covered servicemember's next of kin and may take FMLA leave to provide care to the covered servicemember, either consecutively or simultaneously. When such designation has been made, the designated individual shall be deemed to be the covered servicemember's only next of kin.

(19) "Outpatient status" means, with respect to a covered servicemember, the status of a member of the Armed Forces assigned to either a military medical treatment facility as an outpatient; or a unit established for the purpose of providing command and control of members of the Armed Forces receiving medical care as outpatients.

(20) "Paraprofessional" means a school employee who performs duties that are instructional in nature or deliver either direct or indirect services to students and/or parents and serves in a position for which a teacher has ultimate responsibility for the design and implementation of educational programs and services.

(21) "Parent" means a biological, adoptive, step or foster father or mother, or any other individual who stood in loco parentis to the employee when the employee was a son or daughter as defined in subdivision (26) of this section. This term does not include parents "in law."

(22) "Parent of a covered servicemember" means a covered servicemember's biological, adoptive, step or foster father or mother, or any other individual who stood in loco parentis to the covered servicemember. This term does not include parents "in law."

(23) "Person" means an individual, partnership, association, corporation, business trust, legal representative, or any organized group of persons, and includes a public agency for purposes of this part.

(24) "Physical or mental disability" means a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of an individual, as defined in 29 CFR 630.

(25) "Reduced leave schedule" means a leave schedule that reduces the usual number of hours per workweek, or hours per workday, of an employee.

(26) "Son or daughter" means a biological, adopted, or foster child, a stepchild, a legal ward, or a child of a person standing in loco parentis, who is either under eighteen (18) years of age or eighteen (18) years of age or older and "incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability" at the time that FMLA leave is to commence.

(27) "Son or daughter of a covered servicemember" means a covered servicemember's biological, adopted, or foster child, stepchild, legal ward, or a child for whom the covered servicemember stood in loco parentis, and who is of any age.

(28) "Son or daughter on active duty or call to active duty status" means the employee's biological, adopted, or foster child, stepchild, legal ward, or a child for whom the employee stood in loco parentis, who is on active duty or call to active duty status, and who is of any age.

(29) "Spouse" means a husband or wife as defined or recognized under State law for purposes of marriage in the State where the employee resides, including common law marriage in States where it is recognized.

(Effective May 12, 2014)

Sec. 31-51rr-2. Eligible employee (29 CFR § 825.110)

(a) An eligible employee is an employee of a covered employer who:

(1) Has been employed by the employer for at least twelve (12) months, and

(2) Has been employed for at least nine hundred fifty (950) hours of service during the twelve (12)-month period immediately preceding the commencement of the leave.

(b) The twelve (12) months an employee must have been employed by the employer need not be consecutive months, provided;

(1) Subject to the exceptions provided in subsection (b)(2) of this section, employment periods prior to a break in service of seven (7) years or more need not be counted in determining whether the employee has been employed by the employer for at least twelve (12) months.

(2) Employment periods preceding a break in service of more than seven (7) years shall be counted in determining whether the employee has been employed by the employer for at least twelve (12) months where:

(A) The employee's break in service is occasioned by the fulfillment of his or her Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA), 38 U.S.C. 4301, *et seq.,* covered service obligation. The period of absence from work due to or necessitated by USERRA-covered service shall be also counted in determining whether the employee has been employed for at least twelve (12) months by the employer. However, this section does not provide any greater entitlement to the employee than would be available under the USERRA; or

(B) A written agreement, including a collective bargaining agreement, exists concerning the employer's intention to rehire the employee after the break in service.

(3) If an employee is maintained on the payroll for any part of a week, including any periods of paid or unpaid leave during which other benefits or compensation are provided by the employer, the week counts as a week of employment. For purposes of determining whether intermittent/occasional/casual employment qualifies as at least twelve (12) months, fifty-two (52) weeks is deemed to be equal to twelve (12) months.

(4) Nothing in this section prevents employers from considering employment prior to a continuous break in service of more than seven (7) years when determining whether an employee has met the twelve (12)-month employment requirement. However, if an employer chooses to recognize such prior employment, the employer shall do so uniformly, with respect to all employees with similar breaks in service.

(c) (1) Except as provided in subsection (c)(2) of this section, whether an employee has worked the minimum nine hundred fifty (950) hours of service is determined according to the principles established under the FLSA for determining compensable hours of work. *See* 29 CFR part 785. The determining factor is the number of hours an employee has worked for the employer within the meaning of the FLSA. The determination is not limited by methods of recordkeeping, or by compensation agreements that do not accurately reflect all of the hours an employee has worked for or been in service to the employer. Any accurate accounting of actual hours worked under FLSA's principles may be used.

(2) An employee returning from USERRA-covered service shall be credited with the hours of service that would have been performed but for the period of absence from work due to or necessitated by USERRA-covered service in determining the employee's eligibility for FMLA-qualifying leave. Accordingly, a person reemployed following USERRA-covered service has the hours that would have been worked for the employer added to any hours actually worked during the previous twelve (12)-month period to meet the hours of service requirement. In order to determine the hours that would have been worked during the period of absence from work due to or necessitated by USERRA-covered service, the employee's pre-service work schedule may be used for calculations.

(3) In the event an employer does not maintain an accurate record of hours worked by an employee, including for employees who are exempt from FLSA's requirement that a record be kept of their hours worked (*see* bona fide executive, administrative, and professional employees as defined in FLSA Regulations, 29 CFR part 541), the employer has the burden of showing that the employee has not worked the requisite hours.

(4) The determination of whether an employee meets the hours of service requirement and has been employed by the employer for a total of at least twelve (12) months must be made as of the date the FMLA leave is to start. An employee may be on non-FMLA leave at the time he or she meets the twelve (12)-month eligibility requirement, and in that event, any portion of the leave taken for an FMLA qualifying reason after the employee meets the eligibility requirement would be FMLA leave.

(Effective May 12, 2014)

Sec. 31-51rr-3. Qualifying reasons for leave, general rule (29 CFR § 825.112)

(a) **Circumstances qualifying for leave.** Employers covered by FMLA are required to grant leave to eligible employees:

(1) For birth of a son or daughter, and to care for the newborn child;

(2) For placement with the employee of a son or daughter for adoption or foster care;

(3) To care for the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent with a serious health condition;

(4) Because of a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the functions of the employee's job;

(5) Because of any qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent is a covered military member on active duty or has been notified of an impending call or order to active duty in support of a contingency operation; and

(6) To care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness if the employee is the spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin of the service member.

(b) **Equal application.** The right to take leave under FMLA applies equally to male and female employees. A father, as well as a mother, may take family leave for the birth, placement for adoption, or foster care of a child.

(c) **Active employee.** In situations where the employer/employee relationship has been interrupted, such as an employee who has been on layoff, the employee shall be recalled or otherwise be re-employed before being eligible for FMLA leave. Under such circumstances, an eligible employee is immediately entitled to further FMLA leave for a qualifying reason.

(Effective May 12, 2014)

Sec. 31-51rr-4. Serious health condition (29 CFR § 825.113)

(a) The term "incapacity" means inability to work, attend school or perform other regular daily activities due to the serious health condition, treatment therefore, or recovery therefrom.

(b) The term "treatment" includes, but is not limited to, examinations to determine if a serious health condition exists and evaluations of the condition. Treatment does not include routine physical examinations, eye examinations, or dental examinations. A regimen of continuing treatment includes, for example, a course of prescription medication or therapy requiring special equipment to resolve or alleviate the health condition. A regimen of continuing treatment that includes the taking of over-the-counter medications such as

aspirin, antihistamines, or salves; or bed-rest, drinking fluids, exercise, and other similar activities that can be initiated without a visit to a health care provider, is not, by itself, sufficient to constitute a regimen of continuing treatment for purposes of FMLA leave.

(c) Conditions for which cosmetic treatments are administered, such as most treatments for acne or plastic surgery, are not "serious health conditions" unless inpatient hospital care is required or unless complications develop. Ordinarily, unless complications arise, the common cold, the flu, ear aches, upset stomach, minor ulcers, headaches other than migraine, routine dental or orthodontia problems, periodontal disease, are examples of conditions that do not meet the definition of a serious health condition and do not qualify for FMLA leave. Restorative dental or plastic surgery after an injury or removal of cancerous growths are serious health conditions provided all the other conditions of this regulation are met. Mental illness or allergies may be serious health conditions, but only if all the conditions of this section are met.

(Effective May 12, 2014)

Sec. 31-51rr-5. Inpatient care (29 CFR § 825.114)

Inpatient care means an overnight stay in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical care facility, including any period of incapacity as defined in section 31-51rr-4(a) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, or any subsequent treatment in connection with such inpatient care.

(Effective May 12, 2014)

Sec. 31-51rr-6. Continuing treatment (29 CFR § 825.115)

A serious health condition involving continuing treatment by a health care provider includes any one or more of the following:

(a) **Incapacity and treatment.** A period of incapacity of more than three (3) consecutive, full calendar days, and any subsequent treatment or period of incapacity relating to the same condition, that also involves:

(1) Treatment two or more times, within thirty (30) days of the first day of incapacity, unless extenuating circumstances exist, by a health care provider, by a nurse under direct supervision of a health care provider, or by a provider of health care services under orders of, or on referral by, a health care provider; or

(2) Treatment by a health care provider on at least one occasion, which results in a regimen of continuing treatment under the supervision of the health care provider.

(3) The requirement in subsections (a)(1) and (2) of this section for treatment by a health care provider means an in-person visit to a health care provider. The first or only in-person treatment visit shall take place within seven (7) days of the first day of incapacity.

(4) Whether additional treatment visits or a regimen of continuing treatment is necessary within the 30-day period shall be determined by the health care provider.

(5) The term "extenuating circumstances" in subsection (a)(1) of this section means circumstances beyond the employee's control that prevent the follow-up visit from occurring

as planned by the health care provider. Whether a given set of circumstances are extenuating depends on the facts. For example, extenuating circumstances exist if a health care provider determines that a second in-person visit is needed within the thirty (30)-day period, but the health care provider does not have any available appointments during that time period.

(b) **Pregnancy or prenatal care.** Any period of incapacity due to pregnancy, or for prenatal care.

(c) **Chronic conditions.** Any period of incapacity or treatment for such incapacity due to a chronic serious health condition. A chronic serious health condition is one which:

(1) Requires periodic visits, defined as at least twice a year, for treatment by a health care provider, or by a nurse under direct supervision of a health care provider;

(2) Continues over an extended period of time, including recurring episodes of a single underlying condition; and

(3) May cause episodic rather than a continuing period of incapacity (including, but not limited to, asthma, diabetes, epilepsy).

(d) **Permanent or long-term conditions.** A period of incapacity which is permanent or long-term due to a condition for which treatment may not be effective. The employee or family member shall be under the continuing supervision of, but need not be receiving active treatment by, a health care provider. Examples include Alzheimer's, a severe stroke, or the terminal stages of a disease.

(e) **Conditions requiring multiple treatments.** Any period of absence to receive multiple treatments, including any period of recovery therefrom, by a health care provider or by a provider of health care services under orders of, or on referral by, a health care provider, for:

(1) Restorative surgery after an accident or other injury; or

(2) A condition that would likely result in a period of incapacity of more than three (3) consecutive, full calendar days in the absence of medical intervention or treatment, such as cancer (chemotherapy, radiation), severe arthritis (physical therapy), or kidney disease (dialysis).

(f) Absences attributable to incapacity under subsection (b) or (c) of this section qualify for FMLA leave even though the employee or the covered family member does not receive treatment from a health care provider during the absence, and even if the absence does not last more than three (3) consecutive, full calendar days. For example, an employee with asthma may be unable to report for work due to the onset of an asthma attack or because the employee's health care provider has advised the employee to stay home when the pollen count exceeds a certain level. An employee who is pregnant may be unable to report to work because of severe morning sickness.

(Effective May 12, 2014)

Sec. 31-51rr-7. Leave for treatment of substance abuse (29 CFR § 825.119)

(a) Substance abuse may be a serious health condition if the conditions of sections 31-51rr-4 through 31-51rr-6, inclusive, of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies are

met. However, FMLA leave may only be taken for treatment for substance abuse by a health care provider or by a provider of health care services on referral by a health care provider. On the other hand, absence because of the employee's use of the substance, rather than for treatment, does not qualify for FMLA leave.

(b) Treatment for substance abuse does not prevent an employer from taking employment action against an employee. The employer may not take action against the employee because the employee has exercised his or her right to take FMLA leave for treatment. However, if the employer has an established policy, applied in a non-discriminatory manner that has been communicated to all employees, that provides under certain circumstances an employee may be terminated for substance abuse, pursuant to that policy the employee may be terminated whether or not the employee is presently taking FMLA leave. An employee may also take FMLA leave to care for a covered family member who is receiving treatment for substance abuse. The employer may not take action against an employee who is providing care for a covered family member receiving treatment for substance abuse.

(Effective May 12, 2014)

Sec. 31-51rr-8. Leave for pregnancy or birth (29 CFR § 825.120)

(a) **General rules**. Eligible employees are entitled to FMLA leave for pregnancy or birth of a child as follows:

(1) Both the mother and father are entitled to FMLA leave for the birth of their child.

(2) Both the mother and father are entitled to FMLA leave to be with the healthy newborn child (bonding time) during the twelve (12)-month period beginning on the date of birth. An employee's entitlement to FMLA leave for a birth expires at the end of the twelve (12)-month period beginning on the date of the birth. If state law allows, or the employer permits, bonding leave to be taken beyond this period, such leave will not qualify as FMLA leave. Under this section, both the mother and father are entitled to FMLA leave even if the newborn does not have a serious health condition.

(3) Spouses who are eligible for FMLA leave and are employed by the same covered employer may be limited to a combined total of twelve (12) weeks of leave during any twelve (12)-month period if the leave is taken for birth of the employee's son or daughter or to care for the child after birth, for placement of a son or daughter with the employee for adoption or foster care or to care for the child after placement, or to care for the employee's parent with a serious health condition. This limitation on the total weeks of leave applies to leave taken for the reasons specified as long as spouses are employed by the same employer. It would apply, for example, even though the spouses are employed at two different worksites of an employer. On the other hand, if one spouse is ineligible for FMLA leave, the other spouse would be entitled to a full twelve (12) weeks of FMLA leave. Where the spouses both use a portion of the total twelve (12)-week FMLA leave entitlement for either the birth of a child, for placement for adoption or foster care, or to care for a parent, the spouses would each be entitled to the difference between the amount such spouses have taken individually and twelve (12) weeks for FMLA leave for other purposes. For example,

if each spouse took six (6) weeks of leave to care for a healthy, newborn child, each could use an additional six (6) weeks due to his or her own serious health condition or to care for a child with a serious health condition. Note, too, that many State pregnancy disability laws specify a period of disability either before or after the birth of a child; such periods would also be considered FMLA leave for a serious health condition of the mother, and would not be subject to the combined limit.

(4) The mother is entitled to FMLA leave for incapacity due to pregnancy, for prenatal care, or for her own serious health condition following the birth of the child. Circumstances may require that FMLA leave begin before the actual date of birth of a child. An expectant mother may take FMLA leave before the birth of the child for prenatal care or if her condition makes her unable to work. The mother is entitled to leave for incapacity due to pregnancy even though she does not receive treatment from a health care provider during the absence, and even if the absence does not last for more than three (3) consecutive calendar days. For example, a pregnant employee may be unable to report to work because of severe morning sickness.

(5) A spouse is entitled to FMLA leave if needed to care for his or her pregnant spouse who is incapacitated or if needed to care for her during her prenatal care, or if needed to care for the spouse following the birth of a child if the spouse has a serious health condition.

(6) Both the mother and father are entitled to FMLA leave if needed to care for a child with a serious health condition if the requirements of sections 31-51rr-4 through 31-51rr-6, inclusive, and 31-51rr-1(26) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies are met. Thus, spouses may each take twelve (12) weeks of FMLA leave if needed to care for their newborn child with a serious health condition, even if both are employed by the same employer, provided they have not exhausted their entitlements during the applicable twelve (12)-month FMLA leave period.

(b) **Intermittent and reduced schedule leave.** An eligible employee may use intermittent or reduced schedule leave after the birth to be with a healthy newborn child only if the employer agrees. For example, an employer and employee may agree to a part-time work schedule after the birth. If the employer agrees to permit intermittent or reduced schedule leave for the birth of a child, 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. Transfer to an alternative position may require compliance with any applicable collective bargaining agreement, federal law (such as the ADA), and State law. Transfer to an alternative position may include altering an existing job to better accommodate the employee's need for intermittent or reduced leave. The employer's agreement is not required for intermittent leave required by the serious health condition of the mother or newborn child.

(Effective May 12, 2014)

Sec. 31-51rr-9. Leave for adoption or foster care (29 CFR § 825.121)

(a) **General rules**. Eligible employees are entitled to FMLA leave for placement with the employee of a son or daughter for adoption or foster care as follows:

(1) Employees may take FMLA leave before the actual placement or adoption of a child if an absence from work is required for the placement for adoption or foster care to proceed. For example, the employee may be required to attend counseling sessions, appear in court, consult with his or her attorney or the doctor(s) representing the birth parent, submit to a physical examination, or travel to another country to complete an adoption. The source of an adopted child, whether from a licensed placement agency or otherwise, is not a factor in determining eligibility for leave for this purpose.

(2) An employee's entitlement to leave for adoption or foster care expires at the end of the twelve (12)-month period beginning on the date of the placement. If state law allows, or the employer permits, leave for adoption or foster care to be taken beyond this period, such leave will not qualify as FMLA leave. Under this section, the employee is entitled to FMLA leave even if the adopted or foster child does not have a serious health condition.

(3) Spouses who are eligible for FMLA leave and are employed by the same covered employer may be limited to a combined total of twelve (12) weeks of leave during any twelve (12)-month period if the leave is taken for the placement of the employee's son or daughter or to care for the child after placement, for the birth of the employee's son or daughter or to care for the child after birth, or to care for the employee's parent with a serious health condition. This limitation on the total weeks of leave applies to leave taken for the reasons specified as long as the spouses are employed by the same employer. On the other hand, if one spouse is ineligible for FMLA leave, the other spouse would be entitled to a full twelve (12) weeks of FMLA leave. Where the spouses both use a portion of the total twelve (12)-week FMLA leave entitlement for either the birth of a child, for placement for adoption or foster care, or to care for a parent, the spouses would each be entitled to the difference between the amount such spouses have taken individually and twelve (12) weeks for FMLA leave for other purposes. For example, if each spouse took six (6) weeks of leave to care for a healthy, newly placed child, each could use an additional six (6) weeks due to his or her own serious health condition or to care for a child with a serious health condition.

(4) An eligible employee is entitled to FMLA leave in order to care for an adopted or foster child with a serious health condition if the requirements of sections 31-51rr-4 through 31-51rr-6, inclusive, and 31-51rr-1(26) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies are met. Thus, spouses may each take twelve (12) weeks of FMLA leave if needed to care for an adopted or foster child with a serious health condition, even if both are employed by the same employer, provided they have not exhausted their entitlements during the applicable twelve (12)-month FMLA leave period.

(b) **Use of intermittent and reduced schedule leave.** An eligible employee may use intermittent or reduced schedule leave after the placement of a healthy child for adoption or foster care only if the employer agrees. Thus, for example, the employer and employee may agree to a part-time work schedule after the placement for bonding purposes. If the

employer agrees to permit intermittent or reduced schedule leave for the placement 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. Transfer to an alternative position may require compliance with any applicable collective bargaining agreement, federal law (such as the ADA), and State law. Transfer to an alternative position may include altering an existing job to better accommodate the employee's need for intermittent or reduced leave. The employer's agreement is not required for intermittent leave required by the serious health condition of the adopted or foster child.

(Effective May 12, 2014)

Sec. 31-51rr-10. Definitions of adoption and foster care (29 CFR § 825.122)

(a) **Adoption.** "Adoption" means legally and permanently assuming the responsibility of raising a child as one's own. The source of an adopted child, whether from a licensed placement agency or otherwise, is not a factor in determining eligibility for FMLA leave.

(b) **Foster care.** Foster care means twenty-four (24)-hour care for children in substitution for, and away from, their parents or guardian. Such placement is made by or with the agreement of the State as a result of a voluntary agreement between the parent or guardian that the child be removed from the home, or pursuant to a judicial determination of the necessity for foster care, and involves agreement between the State and foster family that the foster family will take care of the child. Although foster care may be with relatives of the child, State action is involved in the removal of the child from parental custody.

(c) **Documenting relationships.** For purposes of confirmation of family relationship, the employer may require the employee giving notice of the need for leave to provide reasonable documentation or statement of family relationship. This documentation may take the form of a simple statement from the employee, or a child's birth certificate, a court document, or other similar documentation. The employer is entitled to examine documentation, but the employee is entitled to the return of the official document submitted for this purpose.

(Effective May 12, 2014)

Sec. 31-51rr-11. Unable to perform the functions of the position (29 CFR § 825.123)

(a) **Definition.** An employee is "unable to perform the functions of the position" where the health care provider finds that the employee is unable to work at all or is unable to perform any one of the essential functions of the employee's position within the meaning of the ADA and the regulations at 29 CFR 1630.2(n). An employee who will be absent from work to receive medical treatment for a serious health condition is considered to be unable to perform the essential functions of the position during the absence for treatment.

(b) **Statement of functions.** An employer has the option, in requiring certification from a health care provider, to provide a statement of the essential functions of the employee's position for the health care provider to review. A sufficient medical certification shall specify

what functions of the employee's position the employee is unable to perform so that the employer can then determine whether the employee is unable to perform one or more essential functions of the employee's position. For purposes of FMLA, the essential functions of the employee's position are to be determined with reference to the position the employee held at the time notice is given or leave commenced, whichever is earlier.

(Effective May 12, 2014)

Sec. 31-51rr-12. Needed to care for a family member or covered servicemember (29 CFR § 825.124)

(a) The medical certification provision that an employee is "needed to care for" a family member or covered servicemember encompasses both physical and psychological care. It includes situations where, for example, because of a serious health condition, the family member is unable to care for his or her own basic medical, hygienic, or nutritional needs or safety, or is unable to transport himself or herself to the doctor. The term also includes providing psychological comfort and reassurance which would be beneficial to a child, spouse or parent with a serious health condition who is receiving inpatient or home care.

(b) The term also includes situations where the employee may be needed to substitute for others who normally care for the family member or covered servicemember, or to make arrangements for changes in care, such as transfer to a nursing home. The employee need not be the only individual or family member available to care for the family member or covered servicemember.

(c) An employee's intermittent leave or a reduced leave schedule necessary to care for a family member or covered servicemember includes not only a situation where the condition of the family member or covered servicemember itself is intermittent, but also where the employee is only needed intermittently—such as where other care is normally available, or care responsibilities are shared with another member of the family or a third party.

(Effective May 12, 2014)

Sec. 31-51rr-13. Leave because of a qualifying exigency (29 CFR § 825.126)

(a) Eligible employees may take FMLA leave for a qualifying exigency while the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent is on covered active duty or call to covered active duty status or has been notified of an impending call or order to covered active duty.

(1) *Covered active duty or call to covered active duty status* in the case of a member of the Regular Armed Forces means duty during the deployment of the member with the Armed Forces to a foreign country. The active duty orders of a member of the Regular components of the Armed Forces will generally specify if the member is deployed to a foreign country.

(2) *Covered active duty or call to covered active duty status* in the case of a member of the Reserve components of the Armed Forces means duty during the deployment of the member with the Armed Forces to a foreign country under a Federal call or order to active duty in support of a contingency operation pursuant to: Section 688 of Title 10 of the United

States Code, which authorizes ordering to active duty retired members of the Regular Armed Forces and members of the retired Reserve who retired after completing at least twenty (20) years of active service; Section 12301(a) of Title 10 of the United States Code, which authorizes ordering all reserve component members to active duty in the case of war or national emergency; Section 12302 of Title 10 of the United States Code, which authorizes ordering any unit or unassigned member of the Ready Reserve to active duty; Section 12304 of Title 10 of the United States Code, which authorizes ordering any unit or unassigned member of the Selected Reserve and certain members of the Individual Ready Reserve to active duty; Section 12305 of Title 10 of the United States Code, which authorizes the suspension of promotion, retirement or separation rules for certain Reserve components; Section 12406 of Title 10 of the United States Code, which authorizes calling the National Guard into Federal service in certain circumstances; chapter 15 of Title 10 of the United States Code, which authorizes calling the National Guard and state military into Federal service in the case of insurrections and national emergencies; or any other provision of law during a war or during a national emergency declared by the President or Congress so long as it is in support of a contingency operation. *See* 10 U.S.C. 101(a)(13)(B).

(A) For purposes of covered active duty or call to covered active duty status, the Reserve components of the Armed Forces include the Army National Guard of the United States, Army Reserve, Navy Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve, Air National Guard of the United States, Air Force Reserve and Coast Guard Reserve, and retired members of the Regular Armed Forces or Reserves who are called up in support of a contingency operation pursuant to one of the provisions of law identified in subsection (a)(2) of this section.

(B) The active duty orders of a member of the Reserve components will generally specify if the military member is serving in support of a contingency operation by citation to the relevant section of Title 10 of the United States Code and/or by reference to the specific name of the contingency operation and will specify that the deployment is to a foreign country.

(3) *Deployment of the member with the Armed Forces to a foreign country* means deployment to areas outside of the United States, the District of Columbia, or any Territory or possession of the United States, including international waters.

(4) A call to covered active duty for purposes of leave taken because of a qualifying exigency refers to a Federal call to active duty. State calls to active duty are not covered unless under order of the President of the United States pursuant to one of the provisions of law identified in subsection (a)(2) of this section.

(b) An eligible employee may take FMLA leave for one or more of the following qualifying exigencies:

(1) *Short-notice deployment.*

(A) To address any issue that arises from the fact that the military member is notified of an impending call or order to covered active duty seven (7) or less calendar days prior to the date of deployment;

(B) Leave taken for this purpose can be used for a period of seven (7) calendar days

beginning on the date the military member is notified of an impending call or order to covered active duty;

(2) *Military events and related activities.*

(A) To attend any official ceremony, program, or event sponsored by the military that is related to the covered active duty or call to covered active duty status of the military member; and

(B) To attend family support or assistance programs and informational briefings sponsored or promoted by the military, military service organizations, or the American Red Cross that are related to the covered active duty or call to covered active duty status of the military member;

(3) *Childcare and school activities.* For the purposes of leave for childcare and school activities listed in (A) through (D), inclusive, of this subdivision, a child of the military member shall be the military member's biological, adopted, or foster child, stepchild, legal ward, or child for whom the military member stands in loco parentis, who is either under eighteen (18) years of age or eighteen (18) years of age or older and incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability at the time that FMLA leave is to commence. As with all instances of qualifying exigency leave, the military member shall be the spouse, son, daughter, or parent of the employee requesting qualifying exigency leave.

(A) To arrange for alternative childcare or a child of the military member when the covered active duty or call to covered active duty status of the military member necessitates a change in the existing childcare arrangement;

(B) To provide childcare for a child of the military member on an urgent, immediate need basis, but not on a routine, regular, or everyday basis, when the need to provide such care arises from the covered active duty or call to covered active duty status of the military member;

(C) To enroll in or transfer to a new school or day care facility a child of the military member when enrollment or transfer is necessitated by the covered active duty or call to covered active duty status of the military member; and

(D) To attend meetings with staff at a school or a daycare facility, such as meetings with school officials regarding disciplinary measures, parent-teacher conferences, or meetings with school counselors, for a child of the military member, when such meetings are necessary due to circumstances arising from the covered active duty or call to covered active duty status of the military member;

(4) *Financial and legal arrangements.*

(A) To make or update financial or legal arrangements to address the military member's absence while on covered active duty or call to covered active duty status, such as preparing and executing financial and healthcare powers of attorney, transferring bank account signature authority, enrolling in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS), obtaining military identification cards, or preparing or updating a will or living trust; and

(B) To act as the military member's representative before a federal, state, or local agency

for purposes of obtaining, arranging, or appealing military service benefits while the military member is on covered active duty or call to covered active duty status, and for a period of ninety (90) days following the termination of the military member's covered active duty status;

(5) *Counseling.* To attend counseling provided by someone other than a health care provider, for oneself, for the military member, or for the biological, adopted, or foster child, a stepchild, or a legal ward of the military member, or a child for whom the military member stands in loco parentis, who is either under eighteen (18) years of age, or age eighteen (18) years of age or older and incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability at the time that FMLA leave is to commence, provided that the need for counseling arises from the covered active duty or call to covered active duty status of the military member;

(6) *Rest and Recuperation.*

(A) To spend time with the military member who is on short-term, temporary, rest and recuperation leave during the period of deployment;

(B) Leave taken for this purpose can be used for a period of fifteen (15) calendar days beginning on the date the military member commences each instance of rest and recuperation leave;

(7) *Post-deployment activities.*

(A) To attend arrival ceremonies, reintegration briefings and events, and any other official ceremony or program sponsored by the military for a period of ninety (90) days following the termination of the military member's covered active duty status; and

(B) To address issues that arise from the death of the military member while on covered active duty status, such as meeting and recovering the body of the military member, making funeral arrangements, and attending funeral services;

(8) *Parental care.* For purposes of leave for parental care listed in subparagraphs (A) through (D), inclusive, of this subdivision, the parent of the military member shall be incapable of self-care and shall be the military member's biological, adoptive, step, or foster father or mother, or any other individual who stood in loco parentis to the military member when the member was under eighteen (18) years of age. A parent who is incapable of self-care means that the parent requires active assistance or supervision to provide daily self-care in three or more of the activities of daily living or instrumental activities of daily living. Activities of daily living include adaptive activities such as caring appropriately for one's grooming and hygiene, bathing, dressing, and eating. Instrumental activities of daily living include, but are not limited to, cooking, cleaning, shopping, taking public transportation, paying bills, maintaining a residence, using telephones and directories, using a post office. As with all instances of qualifying exigency leave, the military member shall be the spouse, son, daughter, or parent of the employee requesting qualifying exigency leave.

(A) To arrange for alternative care for a parent of the military member when the parent is incapable of self-care and the covered active duty or call to covered active duty status of the military member necessitates a change in the existing care arrangement for the parent;

(B) To provide care for a parent of the military member on an urgent, immediate need

basis, but not on a routine, regular, or everyday basis, when the parent is incapable of self-care and the need to provide such care arises from the covered active duty or call to covered active duty status of the military member;

(C) To admit to or transfer to a care facility a parent of the military member when admittance or transfer is necessitated by the covered active duty or call to covered active duty status of the military member; and

(D) To attend meetings with staff at a care facility, such as meetings with hospice or social service providers for a parent of the military member, when such meetings are necessary due to circumstances arising from the covered active duty or call to covered active duty status of the military member but not for routine or regular meetings;

(9) *Additional activities.* To address other events which arise out of the military member's covered active duty or call to covered active duty status provided that the employer and employee agree that such leave shall qualify as an exigency, and agree to both the timing and duration of such leave.

(Effective May 12, 2014)

Sec. 31-51rr-14. Leave to care for a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness (29 CFR § 825.127)

(a) Eligible employees are entitled to FMLA leave to care for a covered servicemember with a serious illness or injury.

(b) **Covered servicemember** means:

(1) A current member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy, is otherwise in outpatient status; or is otherwise on the temporary disability retired list, for a serious injury or illness.

(2) A covered veteran who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation or therapy for a serious injury or illness. *Covered veteran* means an individual who was a member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, and was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable at any time during the five-year period prior to the first date the eligible employee takes FMLA leave to care for the covered veteran. An eligible employee shall commence leave to care for a covered veteran within five (5) years of the veteran's active duty service, but the single twelve (12)-month period described in subsection (e)(1) of this section may extend beyond the five (5)-year period.

(A) For an individual who was a member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable prior to the effective date of this Final Rule, the period between October 28, 2009 and the effective date of this Final Rule shall not count towards the determination of the five (5) year period for covered veteran status.

(c) **A serious injury or illness** means:

(1) In the case of a current member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, means an injury or illness that was incurred by the covered

servicemember in the line of duty on active duty in the Armed Forces or that existed before the beginning of the member's active duty and was aggravated by service in the line of duty on active duty in the Armed Forces, and that may render the member medically unfit to perform the duties of the member's office, grade, rank or rating; and

(2) In the case of a covered veteran, means an injury or illness that was incurred by the member in the line of duty on active duty in the Armed Forces or existed before the beginning of the member's active duty and was aggravated by service in the line of duty on active duty in the Armed Forces and manifested itself before or after the member became a veteran, and is:

(A) a continuation of a serious injury or illness that was incurred or aggravated when the covered veteran was a member of the Armed Forces and rendered the servicemember unable to perform the duties of the servicemember's office, grade, rank, or rating; or

(B) a physical or mental condition for which the covered veteran has received a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Service-Related Disability Rating (VASRD) of fifty (50) percent or greater, and such VASRD rating is based, in whole or in part, on the condition precipitating the need for military caregiver leave; or

(C) a physical or mental condition that substantially impairs the covered veteran's ability to secure or follow a substantially gainful occupation by reason of a disability or disabilities related to military service, or would do so absent treatment; or

(D) an injury, including a psychological injury, on the basis of which the covered veteran has been enrolled in the Department of Veterans Affairs Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers.

(d) In order to care for a covered servicemember, an eligible employee shall be the spouse, son, daughter, or parent, or next of kin of a covered servicemember.

(e) An eligible employee is entitled to twelve (12) workweeks of leave to care for a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness during a single twelve (12)-month period.

(1) The single twelve (12)-month period described in subsection (e) of this section begins on the first day the eligible employee takes FMLA leave to care for a covered servicemember and ends twelve (12) months after that date, regardless of the method used by the employer to determine the employee's twelve (12) workweeks of leave entitlement for other FMLA-qualifying reasons. If an eligible employee does not take all of his or her twelve (12) workweeks of leave entitlement to care for a covered servicemember during this single twelve (12)-month period, the remaining part of his or her twelve (12) workweeks of leave entitlement to care for the covered servicemember is forfeited.

(2) The leave entitlement described in subsection (e) of this section is to be applied on a per-covered servicemember, per-injury basis such that an eligible employee may be entitled to take more than one period of twelve (12) workweeks of leave if the leave is to care for different covered servicemembers or to care for the same servicemember with a subsequent serious injury or illness, except that no more than twelve (12) workweeks of leave may be taken within any single twelve (12)-month period. An eligible employee may

take more than one period of twelve (12) workweeks of leave to care for a covered servicemember with more than one serious injury or illness only when the serious injury or illness is a subsequent serious injury or illness. When an eligible employee takes leave to care for more than one covered servicemember or for a subsequent serious injury or illness of the same covered servicemember, and the single twelve (12)-month periods corresponding to the different military caregiver leave entitlements overlap, the employee is limited to taking no more than twelve (12) workweeks of leave in each single twelve (12)-month period.

(3) An eligible employee is entitled to a combined total of twelve (12) workweeks of leave for any FMLA-qualifying reason during the single twelve (12)-month period described in subsection (e) of this section, provided that the employee is entitled to no more than twelve (12) workweeks of leave for one or more of the following: because of the birth of a son or daughter of the employee and in order to care for such son or daughter; because of the placement of a son or daughter with the employee for adoption or foster care; in order to care for the spouse, son, daughter, or parent with a serious health condition; because of the employee's own serious health condition; or because of a qualifying exigency.

(4) In all circumstances, including for leave taken to care for a covered servicemember, the employer is responsible for designating leave, paid or unpaid, as FMLA-qualifying, and for giving notice of the designation to the employee as provided in section 31-51rr-31 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies. In the case of leave that qualifies as both leave to care for a covered servicemember and leave to care for a family member with a serious health condition during the single twelve (12)-month period described in subsection (e) of this section, the employer shall designate such leave as leave to care for a covered servicemember in the first instance. Leave that qualifies as both leave to care for a covered servicemember and leave taken to care for a family member with a serious health condition during the single twelve (12)-month period described in subsection (e) of this section shall not be designated and counted as both leave to care for a covered servicemember and leave to care for a family member with a serious health condition. As is the case with leave taken for other qualifying reasons, employers may retroactively designate leave as leave to care for a covered servicemember pursuant to section 31-51rr-32(d) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies.

(f) Spouses who are eligible for FMLA leave and are employed by the same covered employer may be limited to a combined total of twelve (12) workweeks of leave during the single twelve (12)-month period described in subsection (e) of this section if the leave is taken for birth of the employee's son or daughter or to care for the child after birth, for placement of a son or daughter with the employee for adoption or foster care, or to care for the child after placement, to care for the employee's parent with a serious health condition, or to care for a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness. This limitation on the total weeks of leave applies to leave taken for the reasons specified as long as the spouses are employed by the same employer.

(Effective May 12, 2014)

Sec. 31-51rr-15. Amount of leave (29 CFR § 825.200)

(a) An eligible employee's FMLA leave entitlement is limited to a total of twelve (12) workweeks of leave during any twelve (12)-month period for any one, or more, of the following reasons:

(1) The birth of the employee's son or daughter, and to care for the newborn child;

(2) The placement with the employee of a son or daughter for adoption or foster care, and to care for the newly placed child;

(3) To care for the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent with a serious health condition;

(4) Because of a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform one or more of the essential functions of his or her job;

(5) Because of any qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent is a covered military member on active duty (or has been notified of an impending call or order to active duty) in support of a contingency operation; or

(6) To care for a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness if the employee is the spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin of the servicemember.

(b) An employer is permitted to choose any one of the following methods for determining the "twelve (12)-month period" in which the twelve (12) weeks of leave entitlement described in subsection (a) of this section occurs:

(1) The calendar year;

(2) Any fixed twelve (12)-month "leave year," such as a fiscal year, a year required by State law, or a year starting on an employee's "anniversary" date;

(3) The twelve (12)-month period measured forward from the date any employee's first FMLA leave under subsection (a) begins; or,

(4) A "rolling" twelve (12)-month period measured backward from the date an employee uses any FMLA leave as described in subsection (a).

(c) Under methods in subsections (b)(1) and (b)(2) of this section an employee would be entitled to up to twelve (12) weeks of FMLA leave at any time in the fixed twelve (12)-month period selected. An employee could, therefore, take twelve (12) weeks of leave at the end of the year and twelve (12) weeks at the beginning of the following year. Under the method in subsection (b)(3) of this section, an employee would be entitled to twelve (12) weeks of leave during the year beginning on the first date FMLA leave is taken; the next twelve (12)-month period would begin the first time FMLA leave is taken after completion of any previous twelve (12)-month period. Under the method in subsection (b)(4) of this section, the "rolling" twelve (12)-month period, each time an employee takes FMLA leave the remaining leave entitlement would be any balance of the twelve (12) weeks which has not been used during the immediately preceding twelve (12) months. For example, if an employee has taken eight (8) weeks of leave during the past twelve (12) months, an additional four (4) weeks of leave could be taken. If an employee used four (4) weeks beginning February 1, 2008, four (4) weeks beginning June 1, 2008, and four (4) weeks beginning December 1, 2008, the employee would not be entitled to any additional leave

until February 1, 2009. However, beginning on February 1, 2009, the employee would again be eligible to take FMLA leave, recouping the right to take the leave in the same manner and amounts in which it was used in the previous year. Thus, the employee would recoup (and be entitled to use) one additional day of FMLA leave each day for four (4) weeks, commencing February 1, 2009. The employee would also begin to recoup additional days beginning on June 1, 2009, and additional days beginning on December 1, 2009. Accordingly, employers using the rolling twelve (12)-month period may need to calculate whether the employee is entitled to take FMLA leave each time that leave is requested, and employees taking FMLA leave on such a basis may fall in and out of FMLA protection based on their FMLA usage in the prior twelve (12) months. For example, in the example above, if the employee needs six weeks of leave for a serious health condition commencing February 1, 2009, only the first four weeks of the leave would be FMLA-protected.

(d) Employers will be allowed to choose any one of the alternatives in subsection (b) of this section for the leave entitlements described in subsection (a) of this section provided the alternative chosen is applied consistently and uniformly to all employees. An employer wishing to change to another alternative is required to give at least sixty (60) days notice to all employees, and the transition shall take place in such a way that the employees retain the full benefit of twelve (12) weeks of leave under whichever method affords the greatest benefit to the employee. Under no circumstances may a new method be implemented in order to avoid the FMLA's leave requirements.

(e) If an employer fails to select one of the options in subsection (b) of this section for measuring the twelve (12)-month period for the leave entitlements described in subsection (a) of this section, the option that provides the most beneficial outcome for the employee will be used. The employer may subsequently select an option only by providing the sixty (60)-day notice to all employees of the option the employer intends to implement. During the running of the sixty (60)-day period any other employee who needs FMLA leave may use the option providing the most beneficial outcome to that employee. At the conclusion of the sixty (60)-day period the employer may implement the selected option.

(f) An eligible employee's FMLA leave entitlement is limited to a total of twelve (12) workweeks of leave during a "single twelve (12)-month period" to care for a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness. An employer shall determine the "single twelve (12)-month period" in which the twelve (12) weeks-of-leave-entitlement described in this subsection occurs using the twelve (12)-month period measured forward from the date an employee's first FMLA leave to care for the covered servicemember begins.

(g) During the "single twelve (12)-month period" described in subsection (f) of this section, an eligible employee's FMLA leave entitlement is limited to a combined total of twelve (12) workweeks of FMLA leave for any qualifying reason.

(h) For purposes of determining the amount of leave used by an employee, the fact that a holiday may occur within the week taken as FMLA leave has no effect; the week is counted as a week of FMLA leave. However, if an employee is using FMLA leave in increments of less than one week, the holiday will not count against the employee's FMLA

entitlement unless the employee was otherwise scheduled and expected to work during the holiday. Similarly, if for some reason the employer's business activity has temporarily ceased and employees generally are not expected to report for work for one or more weeks (for example, a school closing two weeks for the Christmas/New Year holiday or the summer vacation or an employer closing the plant for retooling or repairs), the days the employer's activities have ceased do not count against the employee's FMLA leave entitlement.

(Effective May 12, 2014)

Sec. 31-51rr-16. Leave to care for a parent (29 CFR § 825.201)

(a) **General rule.** An eligible employee is entitled to FMLA leave if needed to care for the employee's parent with a serious health condition. Care for parents-in-law is not covered by the FMLA.

(b) **"Same employer" limitation.** Spouses who are eligible for FMLA leave and are employed by the same covered employer may be limited to a combined total of twelve (12) weeks of leave during any twelve (12)-month period if the leave is taken to care for the employee's parent with a serious health condition, for the birth of the employee's son or daughter or to care for the child after the birth, or for placement of a son or daughter with the employee for adoption or foster care or to care for the child after placement. This limitation on the total weeks of leave applies to leave taken for the reasons specified as long as spouses are employed by the same employer. It would apply, for example, even though the spouses are employed at two different worksites of an employer. On the other hand, if one spouse is ineligible for FMLA leave, the other spouse would be entitled to a full twelve (12) weeks of FMLA leave. Where the spouses both use a portion of the total twelve (12)-week FMLA leave entitlement for either the birth of a child, for placement for adoption or foster care, or to care for a parent, the spouses would each be entitled to the difference between the amount each spouse has taken individually and twelve (12) weeks for FMLA leave for other purposes. For example, if each spouse took six (6) weeks of leave to care for a parent, each could use an additional six (6) weeks due to his or her own serious health condition or to care for a child with a serious health condition.

(Effective May 12, 2014)

Sec. 31-51rr-17. Intermittent leave or reduced leave schedule (29 CFR § 825.202)

(a) **Definition.** FMLA leave may be taken intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule under certain circumstances. Intermittent leave is FMLA leave taken in separate blocks of time due to a single qualifying reason.

(b) **Medical necessity.** For intermittent leave or leave on a reduced leave schedule taken because of one's own serious health condition, to care for a parent, son, or daughter with a serious health condition, or to care for a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness, there shall be a medical need for leave and it shall be that such medical need can be best accommodated through an intermittent or reduced leave schedule. The treatment regimen and other information described in the certification of a serious health condition

and in the certification of a serious injury or illness, if required by the employer, addresses the medical necessity of intermittent leave or leave on a reduced leave schedule. Leave may be taken intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule when medically necessary for planned and/or unanticipated medical treatment of a serious health condition or of a covered servicemember's serious injury or illness, or for recovery from treatment or recovery from a serious health condition or a covered servicemember's serious injury or illness. It may also be taken to provide care or psychological comfort to a covered family member with a serious health condition or a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness.

(1) Intermittent leave may be taken for a serious health condition of a parent, son, or daughter, for the employee's own serious health condition, or a serious injury or illness of a covered servicemember which requires treatment by a health care provider periodically, rather than for one continuous period of time, and may include leave of periods from an hour or more to several weeks. Examples of intermittent leave would include leave taken on an occasional basis for medical appointments, or leave taken several days at a time spread over a period of six months, such as for chemotherapy. A pregnant employee may take leave intermittently for prenatal examinations or for her own condition, such as for periods of severe morning sickness. An example of an employee taking leave on a reduced leave schedule is an employee who is recovering from a serious health condition and is not strong enough to work a full-time schedule.

(2) Intermittent or reduced schedule leave may be taken for absences where the employee or family member is incapacitated or unable to perform the essential functions of the position because of a chronic serious health condition or a serious injury or illness of a covered servicemember, even if he or she does not receive treatment by a health care provider.

(c) **Birth or placement.** When leave is taken after the birth of a healthy child or placement of a healthy child for adoption or foster care, an employee may take leave intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule only if the employer agrees. Such a schedule reduction might occur, for example, where an employee, with the employer's agreement, works part-time after the birth of a child, or takes leave in several segments. The employer's agreement is not required, however, for leave during which the mother has a serious health condition in connection with the birth of her child or if the newborn child has a serious health condition.

(d) **Qualifying exigency.** Leave due to a qualifying exigency may be taken on an intermittent or reduced leave schedule basis.

(Effective May 12, 2014)

Sec. 31-51rr-18. Scheduling of intermittent or reduced schedule leave (29 CFR § 825.203)

Eligible employees may take FMLA leave on an intermittent or reduced schedule basis when medically necessary due to the serious health condition of a covered family member or the employee or the serious injury or illness of a covered servicemember. Eligible employees may also take FMLA leave on an intermittent or reduced schedule basis when

necessary because of a qualifying exigency. If an employee needs leave intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule for planned medical treatment, then the employee shall make a reasonable effort to schedule the treatment so as not to disrupt unduly the employer's operations.

(Effective May 12, 2014)

Sec. 31-51rr-19. Transfer of an employee to an alternative position during intermittent leave or reduced schedule leave (29 CFR § 825.204)

(a) **Transfer or reassignment.** If an employee needs intermittent leave or leave on a reduced leave schedule that is foreseeable based on planned medical treatment for the employee, a family member, or a covered servicemember, including during a period of recovery from one's own serious health condition, a serious health condition of a spouse, parent, son, or daughter, or a serious injury or illness of a covered servicemember, or if the employer agrees to permit intermittent or reduced schedule leave for the birth of a child or for placement of a child for adoption or foster care, the employer may require the employee to transfer temporarily, during the period that 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) **Compliance.** Transfer to an alternative position may require compliance with any applicable collective bargaining agreement, federal law (such as the ADA), and State law. Transfer to an alternative position may include altering an existing job to better accommodate the employee's need for intermittent or reduced schedule leave.

(c) **Equivalent pay and benefits.** 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. 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) **Employer limitations.** An employer may not transfer the employee to an alternative position in order to discourage the employee from taking leave or otherwise work a hardship on the employee. 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 will be held to be contrary to the prohibited acts of the FMLA.

(e) **Reinstatement of employee.** 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 as the job he or she left when the leave commenced. An employee may not be required to take more leave than necessary to address the circumstance that precipitated the need for leave.

(Effective May 12, 2014)

Sec. 31-51rr-20. Increments of FMLA leave for intermittent or reduced schedule leave (29 CFR § 825.205)

(a) **Minimum increment**.

(1) When an employee takes FMLA leave on an intermittent or reduced leave schedule basis, the employer shall account for the leave using an increment no greater than the shortest period of time that the employer uses to account for use of other forms of leave provided that it is not greater than one hour and provided further that an employee's FMLA leave entitlement may not be reduced by more than the amount of leave actually taken. An employer may not require an employee to take more leave than is necessary to address the circumstances that precipitated the need for the leave, provided that the leave is counted using the shortest increment of leave used to account for any other type of leave. If an employer uses different increments to account for different types of leave, the employer shall account for FMLA leave in the smallest increment used to account for any other type of leave. For example, if an employer accounts for the use of annual leave in increments of one hour and the use of sick leave in increments of one-half hour, then FMLA leave use shall be accounted for using increments no larger than one-half hour. If an employer accounts for use of leave in varying increments at different times of the day or shift, the employer may also account for FMLA leave in varying increments, provided that the increment used for FMLA leave is no greater than the smallest increment used for any other type of leave during the period in which the FMLA leave is taken. If an employer accounts for other forms of leave use in increments greater than one hour, the employer shall account for FMLA leave use in increments no greater than one hour. An employer may account for FMLA leave in shorter increments than used for other forms of leave. For example, an employer that accounts for other forms of leave in one hour increments may account for FMLA leave in a shorter increment when the employee arrives at work several minutes late, and the employer wants the employee to begin work immediately. Such accounting for FMLA leave will not alter the increment considered to be the shortest period used to account for other forms of leave or the use of FMLA leave in other circumstances. In all cases, employees may not be charged FMLA leave for periods during which they are working.

(2) Where it is physically impossible for an employee using intermittent leave or working a reduced leave schedule to commence or end work mid-way through a shift, such as where

a flight attendant or a railroad conductor is scheduled to work aboard an airplane or train, or a laboratory employee is unable to enter or leave a sealed ''clean room'' during a certain period of time and no equivalent position is available, the entire period that the employee is forced to be absent is designated as FMLA leave and counts against the employee's FMLA entitlement. The period of the physical impossibility is limited to the period during which the employer is unable to permit the employee to work prior to a period of FMLA leave or return the employee to the same or equivalent position due to the physical impossibility after a period of FMLA leave.

(b) **Calculation of leave**.

(1) When an employee takes leave on an intermittent or reduced leave schedule, only the amount of leave actually taken may be counted toward the employee's leave entitlement. The actual workweek is the basis of leave entitlement. Therefore, if an employee who would otherwise work forty (40) hours a week takes off eight (8) hours, the employee would use one-fifth (1⁄5) of a week of FMLA leave. Similarly, if a full-time employee who would otherwise work eight (8) hour days works four (4)-hour days under a reduced leave schedule, the employee would use one-half (1⁄2) week of FMLA leave. Where an employee works a part-time schedule or variable hours, the amount of FMLA leave that an employee uses is determined on a pro rata or proportional basis. If an employee who would otherwise work thirty (30) hours per week, but works only twenty (20) hours a week under a reduced leave schedule, the employee's ten (10) hours of leave would constitute one-third (1⁄3) of a week of FMLA leave for each week the employee works the reduced leave schedule. An employer may convert these fractions to their hourly equivalent so long as the conversion equitably reflects the employee's total normally scheduled hours. An employee does not accrue FMLA-protected leave at any particular hourly rate. An eligible employee is entitled to up to a total of twelve (12) workweeks of leave, and the total number of hours contained in those workweeks is necessarily dependent on the specific hours the employee would have worked but for the use of leave.

(2) If an employer has made a permanent or long-term change in the employee's schedule for reasons other than FMLA, and prior to the notice of need for FMLA leave, the hours worked under the new schedule are to be used for making this calculation.

(3) If an employee's schedule varies from week to week to such an extent that an employer is unable to determine with any certainty how many hours the employee would otherwise have worked but for the taking of FMLA leave, a weekly average of the hours scheduled over the twelve (12) months prior to the beginning of the leave period, including any hours for which the employee took leave of any type, would be used for calculating the employee's leave entitlement.

(c) **Overtime.** If an employee would normally be required to work overtime, but is unable to do so because of a FMLA-qualifying reason that limits the employee's ability to work overtime, the hours which the employee would have been required to work may be counted against the employee's FMLA entitlement. In such a case, the employee is using intermittent or reduced schedule leave. For example, if an employee would normally be

required to work for forty-eight (48) hours in a particular week, but due to a serious health condition the employee is unable to work more than forty (40) hours that week, the employee would utilize eight hours of FMLA-protected leave out of the forty-eight (48)-hour workweek, or one-sixth (1⁄6) of a week of FMLA leave. Voluntary overtime hours that an employee does not work due to an FMLA-qualifying reason may not be counted against the employee's FMLA leave entitlement.

(Effective May 12, 2014)

Sec. 31-51rr-21. Substitution of paid leave (29 CFR § 825.207)

(a) Generally, FMLA leave is unpaid leave. However, under the circumstances described in this section, FMLA permits an eligible employee to choose to substitute accrued paid leave for FMLA leave. If an employee does not choose to substitute accrued paid leave, the employer may require the employee to substitute accrued paid leave for unpaid FMLA leave. The term "substitute" means that the paid leave provided by the employer, and accrued pursuant to established policies of the employer, will run concurrently with the unpaid FMLA leave. Accordingly, the employee receives pay pursuant to the employer's applicable paid leave policy during the period of otherwise unpaid FMLA leave. An employee's ability to substitute accrued paid leave is determined by the terms and conditions of the employer's normal leave policy. When an employee chooses, or an employer requires, substitution of accrued paid leave, the employer must inform the employee that the employee must satisfy any procedural requirements of the paid leave policy only in connection with the receipt of such payment. If an employee does not comply with the additional requirements in an employer's paid leave policy, the employee is not entitled to substitute accrued paid leave, but the employee remains entitled to take unpaid FMLA leave. Employers may not discriminate against employees on FMLA leave in the administration of their paid leave policies.

(b) If neither the employee nor the employer elects to substitute paid leave for unpaid FMLA leave under the above conditions and circumstances, the employee will remain entitled to all the paid leave which is earned or accrued under the terms of the employer's plan.

(c) If an employee uses paid leave under circumstances which do not qualify as FMLA leave, the leave will not count against the employee's FMLA leave entitlement. For example, paid sick leave used for a medical condition which is not a serious health condition or serious injury or illness does not count against the employee's FMLA leave entitlement.

(d) Leave taken pursuant to a disability leave plan would be considered FMLA leave for a serious health condition and counted in the leave entitlement permitted under FMLA if it meets the criteria set forth above in sections 31-51rr-3 to 31-51rr-6, inclusive, of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies. In such cases, the employer may designate the leave as FMLA leave and count the leave against the employee's FMLA leave entitlement. Because leave pursuant to a disability benefit plan is not unpaid, the provision for substitution of the employee's accrued paid leave is inapplicable, and neither the employee

nor the employer may require the substitution of paid leave. However, employers and employees may agree, where state law permits, to have paid leave supplement the disability plan benefits, such as in the case where a plan only provides replacement income for two-thirds (2/3) of an employee's salary.

(e) The Act provides that a serious health condition may result from injury to the employee "on or off" the job. If the employer designates the leave as FMLA leave in accordance with section 31-51rr-31(d) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, the leave counts against the employee's FMLA leave entitlement. Because the workers' compensation absence is not unpaid, the provision for substitution of the employee's accrued paid leave is not applicable, and neither the employee nor the employer may require the substitution of paid leave. However, employers and employees may agree, where state law permits, to have paid leave supplement workers' compensation benefits, such as in the case where workers' compensation only provides replacement income for two-thirds (2/3) of an employee's salary. If the health care provider treating the employee for the workers' compensation injury certifies the employee is able to return to a "light duty job" but is unable to return to the same or equivalent job, the employee may decline the employer's offer of a "light duty job." As a result the employee may lose workers' compensation payments, but is entitled to remain on unpaid FMLA leave until the employee's FMLA leave entitlement is exhausted. As of the date workers' compensation benefits cease, the substitution provision becomes applicable and either the employee may elect or the employer may require the use of accrued paid leave.

(f) Section 7(o) of the FLSA and state law permit public employers under prescribed circumstances to substitute compensatory time off accrued at one and one-half hours for each overtime hour worked in lieu of paying cash to an employee when the employee works overtime hours as prescribed by the Act. This section of the FLSA limits the number of hours of compensatory time an employee may accumulate depending upon whether the employee works in fire protection or law enforcement (480 hours) or elsewhere for a public agency (240 hours). In addition, under the FLSA, an employer always has the right to cash out an employee's compensatory time or to require the employee to use the time. Therefore, if an employee requests and is permitted to use accrued compensatory time to receive pay for time taken off for an FMLA reason, or if the employer requires such use pursuant to the FLSA, the time taken may be counted against the employee's FMLA leave entitlement.

(Effective May 12, 2014)

Sec. 31-51rr-22. Maintenance of employee benefits (29 CFR § 825.209)

(a) During any FMLA leave, an employer must maintain the employee's coverage under any group health plan (as defined in the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 at 26 U.S.C. 5000(b)(1)) on the same conditions as coverage would have been provided if the employee had been continuously employed during the entire leave period. All employers covered by FMLA, including public agencies, are subject to the Act's requirements to maintain health coverage. For purposes of FMLA, the term "group health plan" shall not include an

insurance program providing health coverage under which employees purchase individual policies from insurers provided that:

(1) No contributions are made by the employer;

(2) Participation in the program is completely voluntary for employees;

(3) The sole functions of the employer with respect to the program are, without endorsing the program, to permit the insurer to publicize the program to employees, to collect premiums through payroll deductions and to remit them to the insurer;

(4) The employer receives no consideration in the form of cash or otherwise in connection with the program, other than reasonable compensation, excluding any profit, for administrative services actually rendered in connection with payroll deduction; and,

(5) The premium charged with respect to such coverage does not increase in the event the employment relationship terminates.

(b) The same group health plan benefits provided to an employee prior to taking FMLA leave must be maintained during the FMLA leave. For example, if family member coverage is provided to an employee, family member coverage must be maintained during the FMLA leave. Similarly, benefit coverage during FMLA leave for medical care, surgical care, hospital care, dental care, eye care, mental health counseling, substance abuse treatment, and the like, must be maintained during leave if provided in an employer's group health plan, including a supplement to a group health plan, whether or not provided through a flexible spending account or other component of a cafeteria plan.

(c) If an employer provides a new health plan or benefits or changes health benefits or plans while an employee is on FMLA leave, the employee is entitled to the new or changed plan/benefits to the same extent as if the employee were not on leave. For example, if an employer changes a group health plan so that dental care becomes covered under the plan, an employee on FMLA leave must be given the same opportunity as other employees to receive (or obtain) the dental care coverage. Any other plan changes, which apply to all employees of the workforce, would also apply to an employee on FMLA leave.

(d) Notice of any opportunity to change plans or benefits must also be given to an employee on FMLA leave. If the group health plan permits an employee to change from single to family coverage upon the birth of a child or otherwise add new family members, such a change in benefits must be made available while an employee is on FMLA leave. If the employee requests the changed coverage it must be provided by the employer.

(e) An employee may choose not to retain group health plan coverage during FMLA leave. However, when an employee returns from leave, the employee is entitled to be reinstated on the same terms as prior to taking the leave, including family or dependent coverages, without any qualifying period, physical examination, exclusion of pre-existing conditions or other such restrictions.

(f) Except as required by COBRA, an employer's obligation to maintain health benefits during leave and to restore the employee to the same or equivalent employment under FMLA ceases if and when the employment relationship would have terminated if the employee had not taken FMLA leave (for example, if the employee's position is eliminated

as part of a nondiscriminatory reduction in force and the employee would not have been transferred to another position); an employee informs the employer of his or her intent not to return from leave, including before starting the leave if the employer is so informed before the leave starts; or the employee fails to return from leave or continues on leave after exhausting his or her FMLA leave entitlement in the twelve (12)-month period.

(g) An employee's entitlement to benefits other than group health benefits during a period of FMLA leave, such as holiday pay, is to be determined by the employer's established policy for providing such benefits when the employee is on other forms of leave, paid or unpaid, as appropriate.

(Effective May 12, 2014)

Sec. 31-51rr-23. Employee payment of group health benefit premiums (29 CFR § 825.210)

(a) Group health plan benefits must be maintained on the same basis as coverage would have been provided if the employee had been continuously employed during the FMLA leave period. Therefore, any share of group health plan premiums which had been paid by the employee prior to FMLA leave must continue to be paid by the employee during the FMLA leave period. If premiums are raised or lowered, the employee would be required to pay the new premium rates. Maintenance of health insurance policies which are not a part of the employer's group health plan are the sole responsibility of the employee. The employee and the insurer should make necessary arrangements for payment of premiums during periods of unpaid FMLA leave.

(b) If the FMLA leave is substituted paid leave, the employee's share of premiums must be paid by the method normally used during any paid leave, presumably as a payroll deduction.

(c) If FMLA leave is unpaid, the employer has a number of options for obtaining payment from the employee. The employer may require that payment be made to the employer or to the insurance carrier, but no additional charge may be added to the employee's premium payment for administrative expenses. The employer may require employees to pay their share of premium payments in any of the following ways:

(1) Payment would be due at the same time as it would be made if by payroll deduction;

(2) Payment would be due on the same schedule as payments are made under COBRA;

(3) Payment would be prepaid pursuant to a cafeteria plan at the employee's option;

(4) The employer's existing rules for payment by employees on "leave without pay" would be followed, provided that such rules do not require prepayment, prior to the commencement of the leave, of the premiums that will become due during a period of unpaid FMLA leave or payment of higher premiums than if the employee had continued to work instead of taking leave; or

(5) Another system voluntarily agreed to between the employer and the employee, which may include prepayment of premiums, such as through increased payroll deductions when the need for the FMLA leave is foreseeable.

(d) The employer must provide the employee with advance written notice of the terms and conditions under which these payments must be made.

(e) An employer may not require more of an employee using unpaid FMLA leave than the employer requires of other employees on "leave without pay."

(f) An employee who is receiving payments as a result of a workers' compensation injury must make arrangements with the employer for payment of group health plan benefits when simultaneously taking FMLA leave.

(Effective May 12, 2014)

Sec. 31-51rr-24. Maintenance of benefits under multi-employer health plans (29 CFR § 825.211)

(a) A multi-employer health plan is a plan to which more than one employer is required to contribute, and which is maintained pursuant to one or more collective bargaining agreements between employee organization(s) and the employers.

(b) An employer under a multi-employer plan must continue to make contributions on behalf of an employee using FMLA leave as though the employee had been continuously employed, unless the plan contains an explicit FMLA provision for maintaining coverage such as through pooled contributions by all employers party to the plan.

(c) During the duration of an employee's FMLA leave, coverage by the group health plan, and benefits provided pursuant to the plan, must be maintained at the level of coverage and benefits which were applicable to the employee at the time FMLA leave commenced.

(d) An employee using FMLA leave cannot be required to use "banked" hours or pay a greater premium than the employee would have been required to pay if the employee had been continuously employed.

(e) As provided in section 31-51rr-22(f) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies of this part, group health plan coverage must be maintained for an employee on FMLA leave until:

(1) The employee's FMLA leave entitlement is exhausted;

(2) The employer can show that the employee would have been laid off and the employment relationship terminated; or

(3) The employee provides unequivocal notice of intent not to return to work.

(Effective May 12, 2014)

Sec. 31-51rr-25. Employee failure to pay health plan premium payments (29 CFR § 825.212)

(a) (1) In the absence of an established employer policy providing a longer grace period, an employer's obligations to maintain health insurance coverage cease under FMLA if an employee's premium payment is more than thirty (30) days late. In order to drop the coverage for an employee whose premium payment is late, the employer must provide written notice to the employee that the payment has not been received. Such notice must be mailed to the employee at least fifteen (15) days before coverage is to cease, advising that

coverage will be dropped on a specified date at least fifteen (15) days after the date of the letter unless the payment has been received by that date. If the employer has established policies regarding other forms of unpaid leave that provide for the employer to cease coverage retroactively to the date the unpaid premium payment was due, the employer may drop the employee from coverage retroactively in accordance with that policy, provided the fifteen (15)-day notice was given. In the absence of such a policy, coverage for the employee may be terminated at the end of the thirty (30)-day grace period, where the required fifteen (15)-day notice has been provided.

(2) An employer has no obligation regarding the maintenance of a health insurance policy which is not a "group health plan."

(3) All other obligations of an employer under FMLA would continue; for example, the employer continues to have an obligation to reinstate an employee upon return from leave.

(b) The employer may recover the employee's share of any premium payments missed by the employee for any FMLA leave period during which the employer maintains health coverage by paying the employee's share after the premium payment is missed.

(c) If coverage lapses because an employee has not made required premium payments, upon the employee's return from FMLA leave the employer must still restore the employee to coverage/benefits equivalent to those the employee would have had if leave had not been taken and the premium payment(s) had not been missed, including family or dependent coverage. In such case, an employee may not be required to meet any qualification requirements imposed by the plan, including any new preexisting condition waiting period, to wait for an open season, or to pass a medical examination to obtain reinstatement of coverage. If an employer terminates an employee's insurance in accordance with this section and fails to restore the employee's health insurance as required by this section upon the employee's return, the employer may be liable for benefits lost by reason of the violation, for other actual monetary losses sustained as a direct result of the violation, and for appropriate equitable relief tailored to the harm suffered.

(Effective May 12, 2014)

Sec. 31-51rr-26. Employer recovery of benefit costs (29 CFR § 825.213)

(a) In addition to the circumstances discussed in section 31-51rr-25(b) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, an employer may recover its share of health plan premiums during a period of unpaid FMLA leave from an employee if the employee fails to return to work after the employee's FMLA leave entitlement has been exhausted or expires, unless the reason the employee does not return is due to:

(1) The continuation, recurrence, or onset of either a serious health condition of the employee or the employee's family member, or a serious injury or illness of a covered servicemember, which would otherwise entitle the employee to leave under FMLA; or

(2) Other circumstances beyond the employee's control. They include such situations as where a parent chooses to stay home with a newborn child who has a serious health condition; an employee's spouse is unexpectedly transferred to a job location more than

seventy-five (75) miles from the employee's worksite; a relative or individual other than a covered family member has a serious health condition and the employee is needed to provide care; or the employee is laid off while on leave. Other circumstances beyond the employee's control would not include a situation where an employee desires to remain with a parent in a distant city even though the parent no longer requires the employee's care, or a parent chooses not to return to work to stay home with a well, newborn child.

(3) When an employee fails to return to work because of the continuation, recurrence, or onset of either a serious health condition of the employee or employee's family member, or a serious injury or illness of a covered servicemember, thereby precluding the employer from recovering its share of health benefit premium payments made on the employee's behalf during a period of unpaid FMLA leave, the employer may require medical certification of the employee's or the family member's serious health condition or the covered servicemember's serious injury or illness. Such certification is not required unless requested by the employer. 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. The employee is required to provide medical certification in a timely manner which, for purposes of this section, is within thirty (30) days from the date of the employer's request. For purposes of medical certification, the employee may use the optional Labor Department forms developed for these purposes (*see* Appendix B of this part). If the employer requests medical certification and the employee does not provide such certification in a timely manner or within thirty (30) days, or the reason for not returning to work does not meet the test of other circumstances beyond the employee's control, the employer may recover one hundred (100) percent of the health benefit premiums it paid during the period of unpaid FMLA leave.

(b) Under some circumstances an employer may elect to maintain other benefits, such as life insurance or disability insurance, by paying the employee's share of premiums during periods of unpaid FMLA leave. For example, to ensure the employer can meet its responsibilities to provide equivalent benefits to the employee upon return from unpaid FMLA leave, it may be necessary that premiums be paid continuously to avoid a lapse of coverage. If the employer elects to maintain such benefits during the leave, at the conclusion of leave, the employer is entitled to recover only the costs incurred for paying the employee's share of any premiums whether or not the employee returns to work.

(c) An employee who returns to work for at least thirty (30) calendar days is considered to have "returned" to work. An employee who transfers directly from taking FMLA leave to retirement, or who retires during the first thirty (30) days after the employee returns to work, is deemed to have returned to work.

(d) When an employee elects or an employer requires paid leave to be substituted for FMLA leave, the employer may not recover its share of health insurance or other non-health benefit premiums for any period of FMLA leave covered by paid leave. Because paid leave provided under a plan covering temporary disabilities, including workers' compensation, is not unpaid, recovery of health insurance premiums does not apply to such paid leave.

(e) The amount that self-insured employers may recover is limited to only the employer's share of allowable "premiums" as would be calculated under COBRA, excluding the two (2) percent fee for administrative costs.

(f) When an employee fails to return to work, any health and non-health benefit premiums which this section of the regulations permits an employer to recover are a debt owed by the non-returning employee to the employer. The existence of this debt caused by the employee's failure to return to work does not alter the employer's responsibilities for health benefit coverage and, under a self-insurance plan, payment of claims incurred during the period of FMLA leave. To the extent recovery is allowed, the employer may recover the costs through deduction from any sums due to the employee, such as unpaid wages, vacation pay, and profit sharing, provided such deductions do not otherwise violate applicable Federal or State wage payment or other laws. Alternatively, the employer may initiate legal action against the employee to recover such costs.

(Effective May 12, 2014)

Sec. 31-51rr-27. Employee right to reinstatement (29 CFR § 825.214)

General rule. On return from FMLA leave, an employee is entitled to be returned to the same position the employee held when leave commenced, or to an equivalent position with equivalent benefits, pay, and other terms and conditions of employment. An employee is entitled to such reinstatement even if the employee has been replaced or his or her position has been restructured to accommodate the employee's absence.

(Effective May 12, 2014)

Sec. 31-51rr-28. Equivalent position (29 CFR § 825.215)

(a) **Equivalent position.** An equivalent position is one that is virtually identical to the employee's former position in terms of pay, benefits and working conditions, including privileges, perquisites and status. It must involve the same or substantially similar duties and responsibilities, which must entail substantially equivalent skill, effort, responsibility, and authority.

(b) **Conditions to qualify.** If an employee is no longer qualified for the position because of the employee's inability to attend a necessary course, renew a license, fly a minimum number of hours, etc., as a result of the leave, the employee shall be given a reasonable opportunity to fulfill those conditions upon return to work.

(c) **Equivalent pay.**

(1) An employee is entitled to any unconditional pay increases which may have occurred during the FMLA leave period, such as cost of living increases. Pay increases conditioned upon seniority, length of service, or work performed must be granted in accordance with the employer's policy or practice with respect to other employees on an equivalent leave status for a reason that does not qualify as FMLA leave. An employee is entitled to be restored to a position with the same or equivalent pay premiums, such as a shift differential. If an employee departed from a position averaging ten (10) hours of overtime and

corresponding overtime pay each week, an employee is ordinarily entitled to such a position on return from FMLA leave.

(2) Equivalent pay includes any bonus or payment, whether it is discretionary or non-discretionary, made to employees consistent with the provisions of subsection (c)(1) of this section. However, if a bonus or other payment is based on the achievement of a specified goal such as hours worked, products sold or perfect attendance, and the employee has not met the goal due to FMLA leave, then the payment may be denied, unless otherwise paid to employees on an equivalent leave status for a reason that does not qualify as FMLA leave. For example, if an employee who used paid vacation leave for a non-FMLA purpose would receive the payment, then the employee who used paid vacation leave for an FMLA-protected purpose also must receive the payment.

(d) **Equivalent benefits.** "Benefits" include all benefits provided or made available to employees by an employer, including group life insurance, health insurance, disability insurance, sick leave, annual leave, educational benefits, and pensions, regardless of whether such benefits are provided by a practice or written policy of an employer through an employee benefit plan as defined in Section 3(3) of the federal Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, 29 U.S.C. 1002(3).

(1) At the end of an employee's FMLA leave, benefits must be resumed in the same manner and at the same levels as provided when the leave began, and subject to any changes in benefit levels that may have taken place during the period of FMLA leave affecting the entire workforce, unless otherwise elected by the employee. Upon return from FMLA leave, an employee cannot be required to requalify for any benefits the employee enjoyed before FMLA leave began, including family or dependent coverages. For example, if an employee was covered by a life insurance policy before taking leave but is not covered or coverage lapses during the period of unpaid FMLA leave, the employee cannot be required to meet any qualifications, such as taking a physical examination, in order to requalify for life insurance upon return from leave. Accordingly, some employers may find it necessary to modify life insurance and other benefits programs in order to restore employees to equivalent benefits upon return from FMLA leave, make arrangements for continued payment of costs to maintain such benefits during unpaid FMLA leave, or pay these costs subject to recovery from the employee on return from leave.

(2) An employee may, but is not entitled to, accrue any additional benefits or seniority during unpaid FMLA leave. Benefits accrued at the time leave began, such as paid vacation, sick or personal leave to the extent not substituted for FMLA leave, however, must be available to an employee upon return from leave.

(3) If, while on unpaid FMLA leave, an employee desires to continue life insurance, disability insurance, or other types of benefits for which he or she typically pays, the employer is required to follow established policies or practices for continuing such benefits for other instances of leave without pay. If the employer has no established policy, the employee and the employer are encouraged to agree upon arrangements before FMLA leave begins.

(4) With respect to pension and other retirement plans, any period of unpaid FMLA leave shall not be treated as or counted toward a break in service for purposes of vesting and eligibility to participate. Also, if the plan requires an employee to be employed on a specific date in order to be credited with a year of service for vesting, contributions or participation purposes, an employee on unpaid FMLA leave on that date shall be deemed to have been employed on that date. However, unpaid FMLA leave periods need not be treated as credited service for purposes of benefit accrual, vesting and eligibility to participate.

(5) Employees on unpaid FMLA leave are to be treated as if they continued to work for purposes of changes to benefit plans. They are entitled to changes in benefits plans, except those which may be dependent upon seniority or accrual during the leave period, immediately upon return from leave or to the same extent they would have qualified if no leave had been taken. For example, if the benefit plan is predicated on a pre-established number of hours worked each year and the employee does not have sufficient hours as a result of taking unpaid FMLA leave, the benefit is lost.

(e) **Equivalent terms and conditions of employment**. An equivalent position must have substantially similar duties, conditions, responsibilities, privileges and status as the employee's original position.

(1) The employee must be reinstated to the same or a geographically proximate worksite (*i.e.*, one that does not involve a significant increase in commuting time or distance) from where the employee had previously been employed. If the employee's original worksite has been closed, the employee is entitled to the same rights as if the employee had not been on leave when the worksite closed. For example, if an employer transfers all employees from a closed worksite to a new worksite in a different city, the employee on leave is also entitled to transfer under the same conditions as if he or she had continued to be employed.

(2) The employee is ordinarily entitled to return to the same shift or an equivalent work schedule.

(3) The employee must have the same or an equivalent opportunity for bonuses, profit-sharing, and other similar discretionary and non-discretionary payments.

(4) FMLA does not prohibit an employer from accommodating an employee's request to be restored to a different shift, schedule, or position which better suits the employee's personal needs on return from leave, or to offer a promotion to a better position. However, an employee cannot be induced by the employer to accept a different position against the employee's wishes.

(f) **De minimis exception.** The requirement that an employee be restored to the same or equivalent job with the same or equivalent pay, benefits, and terms and conditions of employment does not extend to de minimis, intangible, or unmeasurable aspects of the job.

(Effective May 12, 2014)

Sec. 31-51rr-29. Limitations on an employee's right to reinstatement (29 CFR § 825.216)

(a) An employee has no greater right to reinstatement or to other benefits and conditions

of employment than if the employee had been continuously employed during the FMLA leave period. An employer shall be able to show that an employee would not otherwise have been employed at the time reinstatement is requested in order to deny restoration to employment. For example:

(1) If an employee is laid off during the course of taking FMLA leave and employment is terminated, the employer's responsibility to continue FMLA leave, maintain group health plan benefits and restore the employee cease at the time the employee is laid off, provided the employer has no continuing obligations under a collective bargaining agreement or otherwise. An employer would have the burden of proving that an employee would have been laid off during the FMLA leave period and, therefore, would not be entitled to restoration. Restoration to a job slated for lay-off when the employee's original position is not would not meet the requirements of an equivalent position.

(2) If a shift has been eliminated, or overtime has been decreased, an employee would not be entitled to return to work that shift or the original overtime hours upon restoration. However, if a position on, for example, a night shift has been filled by another employee, the employee is entitled to return to the same shift on which employed before taking FMLA leave.

(3) If an employee was hired for a specific term or only to perform work on a discrete project, the employer has no obligation to restore the employee if the employment term or project is over and the employer would not otherwise have continued to employ the employee. On the other hand, if an employee was hired to perform work on a contract, and after that contract period the contract was awarded to another contractor, the successor contractor may be required to restore the employee if it is a successor employer.

(b) In addition to the circumstances explained above, an employer may delay restoration to an employee who fails to provide a fitness-for-duty certificate to return to work.

(c) If the employee is unable to perform an essential function of the position because of a physical or mental condition, including the continuation of a serious health condition or an injury or illness also covered by workers' compensation, the employee has no right to restoration to another position under the FMLA. The employer's obligations may, however, be governed by the ADA, as amended, or the CFEPA.

(d) An employee who fraudulently obtains FMLA leave from an employer is not protected by FMLA's job restoration or maintenance of health benefits provisions.

(e) If the employer has a uniformly-applied policy governing outside or supplemental employment, such a policy may continue to apply to an employee while on FMLA leave. An employer which does not have such a policy may not deny benefits to which an employee is entitled under FMLA on this basis unless the FMLA leave was fraudulently obtained as in subsection (d) of this section.

(Effective May 12, 2014)

Sec. 31-51rr-30. Protection for employees who request leave or otherwise assert FMLA rights (29 CFR § 825.220)

(a) The FMLA prohibits interference with an employee's rights under the law, and with legal proceedings or inquiries relating to an employee's rights. More specifically, the law contains the following employee protections:

(1) An employer is prohibited from interfering with, restraining, or denying the exercise of or attempts to exercise any rights provided by the Act.

(2) An employer is prohibited from discharging or in any other way discriminating against any person, whether or not an employee, for opposing or complaining about any unlawful practice under the Act.

(3) All persons, whether or not employers, are prohibited from discharging or in any other way discriminating against any person, whether or not an employee, because that person has:

(A) Filed any charge, or has instituted or caused to be instituted any proceeding under or related to this Act;

(B) Given, or is about to give, any information in connection with an inquiry or proceeding relating to a right under this Act; or

(C) Testified, or is about to testify, in any inquiry or proceeding relating to a right under this Act.

(b) Any violations of the Act or of these regulations constitute interfering with, restraining, or denying the exercise of rights provided by the Act. An employer may be liable for compensation and benefits lost by reason of the violation, for other actual monetary losses sustained as a direct result of the violation, and for appropriate equitable or other relief, including employment, reinstatement, promotion, or any other relief tailored to the harm suffered. "Interfering with" the exercise of an employee's rights would include, for example, not only refusing to authorize FMLA leave, but discouraging an employee from using such leave. It would also include manipulation by a covered employer to avoid responsibilities under FMLA, for example:

(1) Changing the essential functions of the job in order to preclude the taking of leave; or

(2) Reducing hours available to work in order to avoid employee eligibility.

(c) The Act's prohibition against "interference" prohibits an employer from discriminating or retaliating against an employee or prospective employee for having exercised or attempted to exercise FMLA rights. For example, if an employee on leave without pay would otherwise be entitled to full benefits, other than health benefits, the same benefits would be required to be provided to an employee on unpaid FMLA leave. By the same token, employers cannot use the taking of FMLA leave as a negative factor in employment actions, such as hiring, promotions or disciplinary actions; nor can FMLA leave be counted under "no fault" attendance policies.

(d) Employees cannot waive, nor may employers induce employees to waive, their prospective rights under FMLA. For example, employees or their collective bargaining

representatives cannot "trade off" the right to take FMLA leave against some other benefit offered by the employer. This does not prevent the settlement or release of FMLA claims by employees based on past employer conduct without the approval of the Labor Department, or a court. Nor does it prevent an employee's voluntary and uncoerced acceptance, which is not as a condition of employment, of a "light duty" assignment while recovering from a serious health condition. An employee's acceptance of such "light duty" assignment does not constitute a waiver of the employee's prospective rights, including the right to be restored to the same position the employee held at the time the employee's FMLA leave commenced or to an equivalent position. The employee's right to restoration, however, ceases at the end of the applicable twelve (12)-month FMLA leave year.

(e) Individuals, and not merely employees, are protected from retaliation for opposing any practice which is unlawful under the Act. They are similarly protected if they oppose any practice which they reasonably believe to be a violation of the Act or regulations.

(Effective May 12, 2014)

Sec. 31-51rr-31. Employer notice requirements (29 CFR § 825.300)

(a) **General notice**.

(1) Every employer covered by the FMLA is required to post and keep posted on its premises, in conspicuous places where employees are employed, a notice explaining the Act's provisions and providing information concerning the procedures for filing complaints of alleged violations of section 31-51rr of the Connecticut General Statutes with the Labor Department. The notice must be posted prominently where it can be readily seen by employees and applicants for employment. The poster and the text must be large enough to be easily read and contain fully legible text. Electronic posting is sufficient to meet this posting requirement as long as it otherwise meets the requirements of this section. Employers can comply with this requirement by posting the notice provided in Appendix B.

(2) Covered employers must post this general notice even if no employees are eligible for FMLA leave.

(3) If an FMLA-covered employer has any eligible employees, it shall also provide this general notice to each employee by including the notice in employee handbooks or other written guidance to employees concerning employee benefits or leave rights, if such written materials exist, or by distributing a copy of the general notice to each new employee upon hiring. In either case, distribution may be accomplished electronically.

(4) To meet the requirements of subsection (a)(3) of this section, employers may duplicate the text of the notice contained in Appendix B or may use another format so long as the information provided includes, at a minimum, all of the information contained in that notice. Where an employer's workforce is comprised of a significant portion of workers who are not literate in English, the employer shall provide the general notice in a language in which the employees are literate. Employers furnishing FMLA notices to sensory-impaired individuals must also comply with all applicable requirements under Federal or

State law.

(b) **Eligibility notice**.

(1) When an employee requests FMLA leave, or when the employer acquires knowledge that an employee's leave may be for an FMLA-qualifying reason, the employer must notify the employee of the employee's eligibility to take FMLA leave within five (5) business days, absent extenuating circumstances. Employee eligibility is determined and notice must be provided at the commencement of the first instance of leave for each FMLA-qualifying reason in the applicable twelve (12)-month period. All FMLA absences for the same qualifying reason are considered a single leave and employee eligibility as to that reason for leave does not change during the applicable twelve (12)-month period.

(2) The eligibility notice shall state whether the employee is an eligible employee, as described in section 31-51rr-2(a) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies. If the employee is not eligible for FMLA leave, the notice must state at least one reason why the employee is not eligible, including as applicable the number of months the employee has been employed by the employer, and the number of hours of service worked for the employer during the twelve (12)-month period. Notification of eligibility may be oral or in writing; employers may use the form referenced in Appendix A to provide such notification to employees. The employer is obligated to translate this notice in any situation in which it is obligated to do so.

(3) If an employee provides notice of a subsequent need for FMLA leave during the applicable twelve (12)-month period due to a different FMLA-qualifying reason, and the employee's eligibility status has not changed, no additional eligibility notice is required. If, however, the employee's eligibility status has changed, such as if the employee has worked less than nine hundred fifty (950) hours of service for the employer in the twelve (12) months preceding the commencement of leave for the subsequent qualifying reason, the employer must notify the employee of the change in eligibility status within five (5) business days, absent extenuating circumstances.

(c) **Rights and responsibilities notice**.

(1) Employers shall provide written notice detailing the specific expectations and obligations of the employee and explaining any consequences of a failure to meet these obligations. The employer may use the form referenced in Appendix A. The employer is obligated to translate this notice in any situation in which it is obligated to do so. This notice shall be provided to the employee each time the eligibility notice is provided pursuant to subsection (b) of this section. If leave has already begun, the notice should be mailed to the employee's address of record. Such specific notice must include, as appropriate:

(A) That the leave may be designated and counted against the employee's annual FMLA leave entitlement if qualifying and the applicable twelve (12)-month period for FMLA entitlement;

(B) Any requirements for the employee to furnish certification of a serious health condition, serious injury or illness, or qualifying exigency arising out of active duty or call to active duty status, and the consequences of failing to do so;

(C) The employee's right to substitute paid leave, whether the employer will require the substitution of paid leave, the conditions related to any substitution, and the employee's entitlement to take unpaid FMLA leave if the employee does not meet the conditions for paid leave;

(D) Any requirement for the employee to make any premium payments to maintain health benefits and the arrangements for making such payments, and the possible consequences, such as the circumstances under which coverage may lapse, of failure to make such payments on a timely basis;

(E) The employee's rights to maintenance of benefits during the FMLA leave and restoration to the same or an equivalent job upon return from FMLA leave; and

(F) The employee's potential liability for payment of health insurance premiums paid by the employer during the employee's unpaid FMLA leave if the employee fails to return to work after taking FMLA leave.

(2) The notice of rights and responsibilities may include other information, such as whether the employer will require periodic reports of the employee's status and intent to return to work, but is not required to do so.

(3) The notice of rights and responsibilities may be accompanied by any required certification form.

(4) If the specific information provided by the notice of rights and responsibilities changes, the employer shall, within five (5) business days of receipt of the employee's first notice of need for leave subsequent to any change, provide written notice referencing the prior notice and setting forth any of the information in the notice of rights and responsibilities that has changed. For example, if the initial leave period was paid leave and the subsequent leave period would be unpaid leave, the employer may need to give notice of the arrangements for making premium payments.

(5) Employers are also expected to responsively answer questions from employees concerning their rights and responsibilities under the FMLA.

(6) A prototype notice of rights and responsibilities is referenced in Appendix A; the prototype may be obtained from the U.S. Department of Labor's website. Employers may adapt the prototype notice as appropriate to meet these notice requirements. The notice of rights and responsibilities may be distributed electronically so long as it otherwise meets the requirements of this section.

(d) **Designation notice**.

(1) The employer is responsible in all circumstances for designating leave as FMLA-qualifying, and for giving notice of the designation to the employee as provided in this section. When the employer has enough information to determine whether the leave is being taken for a FMLA-qualifying reason, such as after receiving a certification, the employer must notify the employee whether the leave will be designated and will be counted as FMLA leave within five (5) business days absent extenuating circumstances. The employer may use the form referenced in Appendix A. Only one notice of designation is required for each FMLA-qualifying reason per applicable twelve (12)-month period, regardless of whether

the leave taken due to the qualifying reason will be a continuous block of leave or intermittent or reduced schedule leave. If the employer determines that the leave will not be designated as FMLA-qualifying, such as if the leave is not for a reason covered by FMLA or the FMLA leave entitlement has been exhausted, the employer must notify the employee of that determination. If the employer requires paid leave to be substituted for unpaid FMLA leave, or that paid leave taken under an existing leave plan be counted as FMLA leave, the employer must inform the employee of this designation at the time of designating the FMLA leave.

(2) If the employer has sufficient information to designate the leave as FMLA leave immediately after receiving notice of the employee's need for leave, the employer may provide the employee with the designation notice at that time.

(3) If the employer will require the employee to present a fitness-for-duty certification to be restored to employment, the employer must provide notice of such requirement with the designation notice. If the employer will require that the fitness-for-duty certification address the employee's ability to perform the essential functions of the employee's position, the employer must so indicate in the designation notice, and must include a list of the essential functions of the employee's position. If the employer handbook or other written documents, if any, describing the employer's leave policies clearly provide that a fitness-for-duty certification will be required in specific circumstances, such as by stating that fitness-for-duty certification will be required in all cases of back injuries for employees in a certain occupation, the employer is not required to provide written notice of the requirement with the designation notice, but must provide oral notice no later than with the designation notice.

(4) The designation notice must be in writing. A prototype designation notice is referenced in Appendix A; the prototype designation notice may be obtained from the U.S. Department of Labor's website. If the leave is not designated as FMLA leave because it does not meet the requirements of section 31-51rr of the Connecticut General Statutes, the notice to the employee that the leave is not designated as FMLA leave may be in the form of a simple written statement.

(5) If the information provided by the employer to the employee in the designation notice changes, such as when the employee exhausts the FMLA leave entitlement, the employer shall provide, within five (5) business days of receipt of the employee's first notice of need for leave subsequent to any change, written notice of the change.

(6) The employer must notify the employee of the amount of leave counted against the employee's FMLA leave entitlement. If the amount of leave needed is known at the time the employer designates the leave as FMLA-qualifying, the employer must notify the employee of the number of hours, days, or weeks that will be counted against the employee's FMLA leave entitlement in the designation notice. If it is not possible to provide the hours, days, or weeks that will be counted against the employee's FMLA leave entitlement, such as in the case of unforeseeable intermittent leave, then the employer must provide notice of the amount of leave counted against the employee's FMLA leave entitlement upon the

request by the employee, but no more often than once in a thirty (30)-day period and only if leave was taken in that period. The notice of the amount of leave counted against the employee's FMLA entitlement may be oral or in writing. If such notice is oral, it shall be confirmed in writing, no later than the following payday, unless the payday is less than one week after the oral notice, in which case the notice must be no later than the subsequent payday. Such written notice may be in any form, including a notation on the employee's pay stub.

(e) **Consequences of failing to provide notice**. Failure to follow the notice requirements set forth in this section may constitute an interference with, restraint, or denial of the exercise of an employee's FMLA rights. An employer may be liable for compensation and benefits lost by reason of the violation, for other actual monetary losses sustained as a direct result of the violation, and for appropriate equitable or other relief, including employment, reinstatement, promotion, or any other relief tailored to the harm suffered.

(Effective May 12, 2014)

Sec. 31-51rr-32. Designation of FMLA leave (29 CFR § 825.301)

(a) **Employer responsibilities.** The employer's decision to designate leave as FMLA-qualifying shall be based only on information received from the employee or the employee's spokesperson, such as if the employee is incapacitated, the employee's spouse, adult child, parent, or doctor, may provide notice to the employer of the need to take FMLA leave. In any circumstance where the employer does not have sufficient information about the reason for an employee's use of leave, the employer shall inquire further of the employee or the spokesperson to ascertain whether leave is potentially FMLA-qualifying. Once the employer has acquired knowledge that the leave is being taken for a FMLA-qualifying reason, the employer shall notify the employee as provided in section 31-51rr-31(d) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies.

(b) **Employee responsibilities.** An employee giving notice of the need for FMLA leave does not need to expressly assert rights under section 31-51rr of the Connecticut General Statutes or even mention the FMLA to meet his or her obligation to provide notice, though the employee needs to state a qualifying reason for the needed leave and otherwise satisfy the notice requirements set forth in sections 31-51rr-33 or 31-51rr-34 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies depending on whether the need for leave is foreseeable or unforeseeable. An employee giving notice of the need for FMLA leave shall explain the reasons for the needed leave so as to allow the employer to determine whether the leave qualifies under the Act. If the employee fails to explain the reasons, leave may be denied. In many cases, in explaining the reasons for a request to use leave, especially when the need for the leave was unexpected or unforeseen, an employee will provide sufficient information for the employer to designate the leave as FMLA leave. An employee using accrued paid leave may in some cases not spontaneously explain the reasons or their plans for using their accrued leave. However, if an employee requesting to use paid leave for a FMLA-qualifying reason does not explain the reason for the leave and the employer denies the employee's

request, the employee will need to provide sufficient information to establish a FMLA-qualifying reason for the needed leave so that the employer is aware that the leave may not be denied and may designate that the paid leave be appropriately counted against the employee's FMLA leave entitlement. Similarly, an employee using accrued paid vacation leave who seeks an extension of unpaid leave for a FMLA-qualifying reason will need to state the reason. If this is due to an event which occurred during the period of paid leave, the employer may count the leave used after the FMLA-qualifying reason against the employee's FMLA leave entitlement.

(c) **Disputes.** If there is a dispute between an employer and an employee as to whether leave qualifies as FMLA leave, it should be resolved through discussions between the employee and the employer. Such discussions and the decision shall be documented.

(d) **Retroactive designation.** If an employer does not designate leave as required by section 31-51rr-31 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, the employer may retroactively designate leave as FMLA leave with appropriate notice to the employee as required by section 31-51rr-31 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies provided that the employer's failure to timely designate leave does not cause harm or injury to the employee. In all cases where leave would qualify for FMLA protections, an employer and an employee may mutually agree that leave be retroactively designated as FMLA leave.

(e) **Remedies.** If an employer's failure to timely designate leave in accordance with section 31-51rr-31 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies causes the employee to suffer harm, it may constitute an interference with, restraint of, or denial of the exercise of an employee's FMLA rights. An employer may be liable for compensation and benefits lost by reason of the violation, for other actual monetary losses sustained as a direct result of the violation, and for appropriate equitable or other relief, including employment, reinstatement, promotion, or any other relief tailored to the harm suffered. For example, if an employer that was put on notice that an employee needed FMLA leave failed to designate the leave properly, but the employee's own serious health condition prevented him or her from returning to work during that time period regardless of the designation, an employee may not be able to show that the employee suffered harm as a result of the employer's actions. However, if an employee took leave to provide care for a son or daughter with a serious health condition believing it would not count toward his or her FMLA entitlement, and the employee planned to later use that FMLA leave to provide care for a spouse who would need assistance when recovering from surgery planned for a later date, the employee may be able to show that harm has occurred as a result of the employer's failure to designate properly. The employee may establish this by showing that he or she would have arranged for an alternative caregiver for the seriously-ill son or daughter if the leave had been designated timely.

(Effective May 12, 2014)

Sec. 31-51rr-33. Employee notice requirements for foreseeable FMLA leave (29 CFR § 825.302)

(a) **Timing of notice.** An employee must provide the employer at least thirty (30) days advance notice before FMLA leave is to begin if the need for the leave is foreseeable based on an expected birth, placement for adoption or foster care, planned medical treatment for a serious health condition of the employee or of a family member, or the planned medical treatment for a serious injury or illness of a covered servicemember. If thirty (30) days notice is not practicable, such as because of a lack of knowledge of approximately when leave will be required to begin, a change in circumstances, or a medical emergency, notice shall be given as soon as practicable. For example, an employee's health condition may require leave to commence earlier than anticipated before the birth of a child. Similarly, little opportunity for notice may be given before placement for adoption. For foreseeable leave due to a qualifying exigency, notice must be provided as soon as practicable, regardless of how far in advance such leave is foreseeable. Whether FMLA leave is to be continuous or is to be taken intermittently or on a reduced schedule basis, notice need only be given one time, but the employee shall advise the employer as soon as practicable if dates of scheduled leave change or are extended, or were initially unknown. In those cases where the employee is required to provide at least thirty (30) days notice of foreseeable leave and does not do so, the employee shall explain the reasons why such notice was not practicable upon a request from the employer for such information.

(b) **As soon as practicable** means as soon as both possible and practical, taking into account all of the facts and circumstances in the individual case. When an employee becomes aware of a need for FMLA leave less than thirty (30) days in advance, it may be practicable for the employee to provide notice of the need for leave either the same day or the next business day. In all cases, however, the determination of when an employee could practicably provide notice shall take into account the individual facts and circumstances.

(c) **Content of notice.** An employee shall provide at least verbal notice sufficient to make the employer aware that the employee needs FMLA-qualifying leave, and the anticipated timing and duration of the leave. Depending on the situation, such information may include that a condition renders the employee unable to perform the functions of the job; that the employee is pregnant or has been hospitalized overnight; whether the employee or the employee's family member is under the continuing care of a health care provider; if the leave is due to a qualifying exigency, that a covered military member is on active duty or call to active duty status, and that the requested leave is for one of the reasons listed in section 31-51rr-13(a) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies; if the leave is for a family member, that the condition renders the family member unable to perform daily activities, or that the family member is a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness; and the anticipated duration of the absence, if known. When an employee seeks leave for the first time for a FMLA-qualifying reason, the employee need not expressly assert rights under the FMLA or even mention the FMLA. When an employee seeks leave due to a FMLA-qualifying reason, for which the employer has previously provided FMLA-

protected leave, the employee shall specifically reference the qualifying reason for leave or the need for FMLA leave. In all cases, the employer may inquire further of the employee if it is necessary to have more information about whether FMLA leave is being sought by the employee, and obtain the necessary details of the leave to be taken. In the case of medical conditions, the employer may find it necessary to inquire further to determine if the leave is because of a serious health condition and may request medical certification to support the need for such leave. An employer may also request certification to support the need for leave for a qualifying exigency or for military caregiver leave. When an employee has been previously certified for leave due to more than one FMLA-qualifying reason, the employer may need to inquire further to determine for which qualifying reason the leave is needed. An employee has an obligation to respond to an employer's questions designed to determine whether an absence is potentially FMLA-qualifying. Failure to respond to reasonable employer inquiries regarding the leave request may result in denial of FMLA protection if the employer is unable to determine whether the leave is FMLA-qualifying.

(d) **Complying with employer policy.** An employer may require an employee to comply with the employer's usual and customary notice and procedural requirements for requesting leave, absent unusual circumstances. For example, an employer may require that written notice set forth the reasons for the requested leave, the anticipated duration of the leave, and the anticipated start of the leave. An employee also may be required by an employer's policy to contact a specific individual. Unusual circumstances would include situations such as when an employee is unable to comply with the employer's policy that requests for leave should be made by contacting a specific number because on the day the employee needs to provide notice of his or her need for FMLA leave there is no one to answer the call-in number and the voice mail box is full. Where an employee does not comply with the employer's usual notice and procedural requirements, and no unusual circumstances justify the failure to comply, FMLA-protected leave may be delayed or denied. However, FMLA-protected leave may not be delayed or denied where the employer's policy requires notice to be given sooner than set forth in subsection (a) of this section and the employee provides timely notice as set forth in subsection (a) of this section.

(e) **Scheduling planned medical treatment.** When planning medical treatment, the employee must consult with the employer and make a reasonable effort to schedule the treatment so as not to disrupt unduly the employer's operations, subject to the approval of the health care provider. Employees are ordinarily expected to consult with their employers prior to the scheduling of treatment in order to work out a treatment schedule which best suits the needs of both the employer and the employee. For example, if an employee who provides notice of the need to take FMLA leave on an intermittent basis for planned medical treatment neglects to consult with the employer to make a reasonable effort to arrange the schedule of treatments so as not to unduly disrupt the employer's operations, the employer may initiate discussions with the employee and require the employee to attempt to make such arrangements, subject to the approval of the health care provider.

(f) Intermittent leave or leave on a reduced leave schedule shall be medically necessary

due to a serious health condition or a serious injury or illness. An employee shall advise the employer, upon request, of the reasons why the intermittent/reduced leave schedule is necessary and of the schedule for treatment, if applicable. The employee and employer shall attempt to work out a schedule for such leave that meets the employee's needs without unduly disrupting the employer's operations, subject to the approval of the health care provider.

(g) An employer may waive employees' FMLA notice requirements.

(Effective May 12, 2014)

Sec. 31-51rr-34. Employee notice requirements for unforeseeable FMLA leave (29 CFR § 825.303)

(a) **Timing of notice.** When the approximate timing of the need for leave is not foreseeable, an employee shall provide notice to the employer as soon as practicable under the facts and circumstances of the particular case. It generally may be practicable for the employee to provide notice of leave that is unforeseeable within the time prescribed by the employer's usual and customary notice requirements applicable to such leave. Notice may be given by the employee's spokesperson, such as a spouse, adult family member, or other responsible party, if the employee is unable to do so personally. For example, if an employee's child has a severe asthma attack and the employee takes the child to the emergency room, the employee would not be required to leave his or her child in order to report the absence while the child is receiving emergency treatment. However, if the child's asthma attack required only the use of an inhaler at home followed by a period of rest, the employee is expected to call the employer promptly after ensuring the child has used the inhaler.

(b) **Content of notice.** An employee shall provide sufficient information for an employer to reasonably determine whether the FMLA may apply to the leave request. Depending on the situation, such information may include that a condition renders the employee unable to perform the functions of the job; that the employee is pregnant or has been hospitalized overnight; whether the employee or the employee's family member is under the continuing care of a health care provider; if the leave is due to a qualifying exigency, that a covered military member is on active duty or call to active duty status, that the requested leave is for one of the reasons listed in section 31-51rr-13(a) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, and the anticipated duration of the absence; or if the leave is for a family member that the condition renders the family member unable to perform daily activities or that the family member is a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness; and the anticipated duration of the absence, if known. When an employee seeks leave for the first time for a FMLA-qualifying reason, the employee need not expressly assert rights under the FMLA or even mention the FMLA. When an employee seeks leave due to a qualifying reason, for which the employer has previously provided the employee FMLA-protected leave, the employee must specifically reference either the qualifying reason for leave or the need for FMLA leave. Calling in "sick" without providing more information will not be

considered sufficient notice to trigger an employer's obligations under the Act. The employer will be expected to obtain any additional required information through informal means. An employee has an obligation to respond to an employer's questions designed to determine whether an absence is potentially FMLA-qualifying. Failure to respond to reasonable employer inquiries regarding the leave request may result in denial of FMLA protection if the employer is unable to determine whether the leave is FMLA-qualifying.

(c) **Complying with employer policy.** When the need for leave is not foreseeable, an employee must comply with the employer's usual and customary notice and procedural requirements for requesting leave, absent unusual circumstances. For example, an employer may require employees to call a designated number or a specific individual to request leave. However, if an employee requires emergency medical treatment, he or she would not be required to follow the call-in procedure until his or her condition is stabilized and he or she has access to, and is able to use, a phone. Similarly, in the case of an emergency requiring leave because of a FMLA-qualifying reason, written advance notice pursuant to an employer's internal rules and procedures may not be required when FMLA leave is involved. If an employee does not comply with the employer's usual notice and procedural requirements, and no unusual circumstances justify the failure to comply, FMLA-protected leave may be delayed or denied.

(Effective May 12, 2014)

Sec. 31-51rr-35. Employee failure to provide notice (29 CFR § 825.304)

(a) **Proper notice required.** In all cases, in order for the onset of an employee's FMLA leave to be delayed due to lack of required notice, it must be clear that the employee had actual notice of the FMLA notice requirements. This condition would be satisfied by the employer's proper posting of the required notice (*see* Appendix B) at the worksite where the employee is employed and the employer's provision of the required notice in either an employee handbook or employee distribution.

(b) **Foreseeable leave—thirty (30) days.** When the need for FMLA leave is foreseeable at least thirty (30) days in advance and an employee fails to give timely advance notice with no reasonable excuse, the employer may delay FMLA coverage until thirty (30) days after the date the employee provides notice. The need for leave and the approximate date leave would be taken shall have been clearly foreseeable to the employee thirty (30) days in advance of the leave. For example, knowledge that an employee would receive a telephone call about the availability of a child for adoption at some unknown point in the future would not be sufficient to establish the leave was clearly foreseeable thirty (30) days in advance.

(c) **Foreseeable leave—less than thirty (30) days.** When the need for FMLA leave is foreseeable fewer than thirty (30) days in advance and an employee fails to give notice as soon as practicable under the particular facts and circumstances, the extent to which an employer may delay FMLA coverage for leave depends on the facts of the particular case. For example, if an employee reasonably should have given the employer two (2) weeks notice but instead only provided one week notice, then the employer may delay FMLA-

protected leave for one week. Thus, if the employer elects to delay FMLA coverage and the employee nonetheless takes leave one week after providing the notice, such as a week before the two week notice period has been met, the leave will not be FMLA-protected.

(d) **Unforeseeable leave.** When the need for FMLA leave is unforeseeable and an employee fails to give notice in accordance with section 31-51rr-34 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, the extent to which an employer may delay FMLA coverage for leave depends on the facts of the particular case. For example, if it may have been practicable for an employee to have given the employer notice of the need for leave very soon after the need arises consistent with the employer's policy, but instead the employee provided notice two (2) days after the leave began, then the employer may delay FMLA coverage of the leave by two (2) days.

(e) **Waiver of notice.** An employer may waive employees' FMLA notice obligations or the employer's own internal rules on leave notice requirements. If an employer does not waive the employee's obligations under its internal leave rules, the employer may take appropriate action under its internal rules and procedures for failure to follow its usual and customary notification rules, absent unusual circumstances, as long as the actions are taken in a manner that does not discriminate against employees taking FMLA leave and the rules are not inconsistent with section 31-51rr-34(a) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies.

(Effective May 12, 2014)

Sec. 31-51rr-36. Certification, general rule (29 CFR § 825.305)

(a) **General.** An employer may require that an employee's leave to care for the employee's covered family member with a serious health condition, or due to the employee's own serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform one or more of the essential functions of the employee's position, be supported by a certification issued by the health care provider of the employee or the employee's family member. An employer may also require that an employee's leave because of a qualifying exigency or to care for a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness be supported by a certification. An employer must give notice of a requirement for certification each time a certification is required; such notice must be written notice whenever required by section 31-51rr-31(c) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies. An employer's oral request to an employee to furnish any subsequent certification is sufficient.

(b) **Timing.** In most cases, the employer should request that an employee furnish certification at the time the employee gives notice of the need for leave or within five (5) business days thereafter, or, in the case of unforeseen leave, within five (5) business days after the leave commences. The employer may request certification at some later date if the employer later has reason to question the appropriateness of the leave or its duration. The employee must provide the requested certification to the employer within fifteen (15) calendar days after the employer's request, unless it is not practicable under the particular circumstances to do so despite the employee's diligent, good faith efforts or the employer

provides more than fifteen (15) calendar days to return the requested certification.

(c) **Complete and sufficient certification.** The employee must provide a complete and sufficient certification to the employer if required by the employer in accordance with sections 31-51rr-37, 31-51rr-40 and 31-51rr-41 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies. The employer shall advise an employee whenever the employer finds a certification incomplete or insufficient, and shall state in writing what additional information is necessary to make the certification complete and sufficient. A certification is considered incomplete if the employer receives a certification, but one or more of the applicable entries have not been completed. A certification is considered insufficient if the employer receives a complete certification, but the information provided is vague, ambiguous, or non-responsive. The employer shall provide the employee with seven (7) calendar days, unless not practicable under the particular circumstances despite the employee's diligent good faith efforts, to cure any such deficiency. If the deficiencies specified by the employer are not cured in the resubmitted certification, the employer may deny the taking of FMLA leave. A certification that is not returned to the employer is not considered incomplete or insufficient, but constitutes a failure to provide certification.

(d) **Consequences.** At the time the employer requests certification, the employer shall also advise an employee of the anticipated consequences of an employee's failure to provide adequate certification. If the employee fails to provide the employer with a complete and sufficient certification, despite the opportunity to cure the certification as provided in subsection (c) of this section, or fails to provide any certification, the employer may deny the taking of FMLA leave. It is the employee's responsibility either to furnish a complete and sufficient certification or to furnish the health care provider providing the certification with any necessary authorization from the employee or the employee's family member in order for the health care provider to release a complete and sufficient certification to the employer to support the employee's FMLA request. This provision will apply in any case where an employer requests a certification permitted by these regulations, whether it is the initial certification, a recertification, a second or third opinion, or a fitness for duty certificate, including any clarifications necessary to determine if such certifications are authentic and sufficient.

(e) **Annual medical certification.** Where the employee's need for leave due to the employee's own serious health condition, or the serious health condition of the employee's covered family member, lasts beyond a single leave year, the employer may require the employee to provide a new medical certification in each subsequent leave year. Such new medical certifications are subject to the provisions for authentication and clarification set forth in section 31-51rr-38 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, including second and third opinions.

(Effective May 12, 2014)

Sec. 31-51rr-37. Content of medical certification for leave taken because of an employee's own serious health condition or the serious health condition of a family member (29 CFR § 825.306)

(a) **Required information.** When leave is taken because of an employee's own serious health condition, or the serious health condition of a family member, an employer may require an employee to obtain a medical certification from a health care provider that sets forth the following information:

(1) The name, address, telephone number, and fax number of the health care provider and type of medical practice/specialization;

(2) The approximate date on which the serious health condition commenced, and its probable duration;

(3) A statement or description of appropriate medical facts regarding the patient's health condition for which FMLA leave is requested. The medical facts shall be sufficient to support the need for leave. Such medical facts may include information on symptoms, diagnosis, hospitalization, doctor visits, whether medication has been prescribed, any referrals for evaluation or treatment, or any other regimen of continuing treatment;

(4) If the employee is the patient, information sufficient to establish that the employee cannot perform the essential functions of the employee's job as well as the nature of any other work restrictions, and the likely duration of such inability;

(5) If the patient is a covered family member with a serious health condition, information sufficient to establish that the family member is in need of care, and an estimate of the frequency and duration of the leave required to care for the family member;

(6) If an employee requests leave on an intermittent or reduced schedule basis for planned medical treatment of the employee's or a covered family member's serious health condition, information sufficient to establish the medical necessity for such intermittent or reduced schedule leave and an estimate of the dates and duration of such treatments and any periods of recovery;

(7) If an employee requests leave on an intermittent or reduced schedule basis for the employee's serious health condition, including pregnancy, that may result in unforeseeable episodes of incapacity, information sufficient to establish the medical necessity for such intermittent or reduced schedule leave and an estimate of the frequency and duration of the episodes of incapacity; and

(8) If an employee requests leave on an intermittent or reduced schedule basis to care for a covered family member with a serious health condition, a statement that such leave is medically necessary to care for the family member, which can include assisting in the family member's recovery, and an estimate of the frequency and duration of the required leave.

(b) The United States Department of Labor has developed two optional forms (Form WH–380E and Form WH–380F, as revised) for use in obtaining medical certification, including second and third opinions, from health care providers that meets FMLA's certification requirements. (The employer may use the form referenced in Appendix A). Optional form WH–380E is for use when the employee's need for leave is due to the

employee's own serious health condition. Political subdivisions may use the same forms for FMLA certification requirements that they utilize for employees that qualify for federal FMLA (by working 1250 hours in the year immediately preceding the leave). Optional form WH–380F is for use when the employee needs leave to care for a family member with a serious health condition. These optional forms reflect certification requirements so as to permit the health care provider to furnish appropriate medical information. Form WH–380E and WH–380F, as revised, or another form containing the same basic information, may be used by the employer; however, no information may be required beyond that specified in sections 31-51rr-37, 31-51rr-38 and 31-51rr-39 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies. In all instances the information on the form shall relate only to the serious health condition for which the current need for leave exists.

(c) If an employee is on FMLA leave running concurrently with a workers' compensation absence, and the provisions of the workers' compensation statute permit the employer or the employer's representative to request additional information from the employee's workers' compensation health care provider, the FMLA does not prevent the employer from following the workers' compensation provisions and information received under those provisions may be considered in determining the employee's entitlement to FMLA-protected leave. Similarly, an employer may request additional information in accordance with a paid leave policy or disability plan that requires greater information to qualify for payments or benefits, provided that the employer informs the employee that the additional information only needs to be provided in connection with receipt of such payments or benefits. Any information received pursuant to such policy or plan may be considered in determining the employee's entitlement to FMLA-protected leave. If the employee fails to provide the information required for receipt of such payments or benefits, such failure will not affect the employee's entitlement to take unpaid FMLA leave.

(d) If an employee's serious health condition may also be a disability within the meaning of the ADA, as amended, or CFEPA, the FMLA does not prevent the employer from following the procedures for requesting medical information under the ADA or CFEPA. Any information received pursuant to these procedures may be considered in determining the employee's entitlement to FMLA-protected leave.

(e) While an employee may choose to comply with the certification requirement by providing the employer with an authorization, release, or waiver allowing the employer to communicate directly with the health care provider of the employee or his or her covered family member, the employee shall not be required to provide such an authorization, release, or waiver. In all instances in which certification is requested, it is the employee's responsibility to provide the employer with complete and sufficient certification and failure to do so may result in the denial of FMLA leave.

(Effective May 12, 2014)

Sec. 31-51rr-38. Authentication and clarification of medical certification for leave taken because of an employee's own serious health condition or the serious health condition of a family member; second and third opinions (29 CFR § 825.307)

(a) **Clarification and authentication.** If an employee submits a complete and sufficient certification signed by the health care provider, the employer may not request additional information from the health care provider. However, the employer may contact the health care provider for purposes of clarification and authentication of the medical certification (whether initial certification or recertification) after the employer has given the employee an opportunity to cure any deficiencies as set forth in section 31-51rr-36(c) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies. To make such contact, the employer shall use a health care provider, a human resources professional, a leave administrator, or a management official. Under no circumstances, however, may the employee's direct supervisor contact the employee's health care provider. For purposes of these regulations, "authentication" means providing the health care provider with a copy of the certification and requesting verification that the information contained on the certification form was completed and/or authorized by the health care provider who signed the document; no additional medical information may be requested. "Clarification" means contacting the health care provider to understand the handwriting on the medical certification or to understand the meaning of a response. Employers may not ask health care providers for additional information beyond that required by the certification form. The requirements of the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) Privacy Rule (*see* 45 CFR parts 160 and 164), which governs the privacy of individually-identifiable health information created or held by HIPAA-covered entities, shall be satisfied when individually-identifiable health information of an employee is shared with an employer by a HIPAA-covered health care provider. If an employee chooses not to provide the employer with authorization allowing the employer to clarify the certification with the health care provider, and does not otherwise clarify the certification, the employer may deny the taking of FMLA leave if the certification is unclear. It is the employee's responsibility to provide the employer with a complete and sufficient certification and to clarify the certification if necessary.

(b) **Second opinion**.

(1) An employer who has reason to doubt the validity of a medical certification may require the employee to obtain a second opinion at the employer's expense. Pending receipt of the second (or third) medical opinion, the employee is provisionally entitled to the benefits of the Act, including maintenance of group health benefits. If the certifications do not ultimately establish the employee's entitlement to FMLA leave, the leave shall not be designated as FMLA leave and may be treated as paid or unpaid leave under the employer's established leave policies. In addition, the consequences set forth in section 31-51rr-36(d) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies will apply if the employee or the employee's family member fails to authorize his or her health care provider to release all relevant medical information pertaining to the serious health condition at issue if requested

by the health care provider designated to provide a second opinion in order to render a sufficient and complete second opinion.

(2) The employer is permitted to designate the health care provider to furnish the second opinion, but the selected health care provider may not be employed on a regular basis by the employer. The employer may not regularly contract with or otherwise regularly utilize the services of the health care provider furnishing the second opinion unless the employer is located in an area where access to health care is extremely limited, such as a rural area where no more than one or two doctors practice in the relevant specialty in the vicinity.

(c) **Third opinion.** If the opinions of the employee's and the employer's designated health care providers differ, the employer may require the employee to obtain certification from a third health care provider, again at the employer's expense. This third opinion shall be final and binding. The third health care provider must be designated or approved jointly by the employer and the employee. The employer and the employee must each act in good faith to attempt to reach agreement on whom to select for the third opinion provider. If the employer does not attempt in good faith to reach agreement, the employer will be bound by the first certification. If the employee does not attempt in good faith to reach agreement, the employee will be bound by the second certification. For example, an employee who refuses to agree to see a doctor in the specialty in question may be failing to act in good faith. On the other hand, an employer that refuses to agree to any doctor on a list of specialists in the appropriate field provided by the employee and whom the employee has not previously consulted may be failing to act in good faith. In addition, the consequences set forth in section 31-51rr-36(d) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies will apply if the employee or the employee's family member fails to authorize his or her health care provider to release all relevant medical information pertaining to the serious health condition at issue if requested by the health care provider designated to provide a third opinion in order to render a sufficient and complete third opinion.

(d) **Copies of opinions.** The employer is required to provide the employee with a copy of the second and third medical opinions, where applicable, upon request by the employee. Requested copies are to be provided within five (5) business days unless extenuating circumstances prevent such action.

(e) **Travel expenses.** If the employer requires the employee to obtain either a second or third opinion the employer must reimburse an employee or family member for any reasonable "out of pocket" travel expenses incurred to obtain the second and third medical opinions. The employer may not require the employee or family member to travel outside normal commuting distance for purposes of obtaining the second or third medical opinions except in very unusual circumstances.

(f) **Medical certification abroad.** In circumstances in which the employee or a family member is visiting in another country, or a family member resides in another country, and a serious health condition develops, the employer shall accept a medical certification as well as second and third opinions from a health care provider who practices in that country. Where a certification by a foreign health care provider is in a language other than English,

the employee must provide the employer with a written translation of the certification upon request.

(Effective May 12, 2014)

Sec. 31-51rr-39. Recertifications for leave taken because of an employee's own serious health condition or the serious health condition of a family member (29 CFR § 825.308)

(a) **Thirty (30)-day rule.** An employer may request recertification no more often than every thirty (30) days and only in connection with an absence by the employee, unless subsections (b) or (c) of this section apply.

(b) **More than thirty (30) days.** If the medical certification indicates that the minimum duration of the condition is more than thirty (30) days, an employer must wait until that minimum duration expires before requesting a recertification, unless subsection (c) of this section applies. For example, if the medical certification states that an employee will be unable to work, whether continuously or on an intermittent basis, for forty (40) days, the employer must wait forty (40) days before requesting a recertification. In all cases, an employer may request a recertification of a medical condition every six (6) months in connection with an absence by the employee. Accordingly, even if the medical certification indicates that the employee will need intermittent or reduced schedule leave for a period in excess of six (6) months, such as for a lifetime condition, the employer would be permitted to request recertification every six (6) months in connection with an absence.

(c) **Less than thirty (30) days.** An employer may request recertification in less than thirty (30) days if:

(1) The employee requests an extension of leave;

(2) Circumstances described by the previous certification have changed significantly, such as the duration or frequency of the absence, the nature or severity of the illness, or complications. For example, if a medical certification stated that an employee would need leave for one (1) to two (2) days when the employee suffered a migraine headache and the employee's absences for his or her last two migraines lasted four (4) days each, then the increased duration of absence might constitute a significant change in circumstances allowing the employer to request a recertification in less than thirty (30) days. Likewise, if an employee had a pattern of using unscheduled FMLA leave for migraines in conjunction with his or her scheduled days off, then the timing of the absences also might constitute a significant change in circumstances sufficient for an employer to request a recertification more frequently than every thirty (30) days; or

(3) The employer receives information that casts doubt upon the employee's stated reason for the absence or the continuing validity of the certification. For example, if an employee is on FMLA leave for four (4) weeks due to the employee's knee surgery, including recuperation, and the employee plays in company softball league games during the employee's third week of FMLA leave, such information may be sufficient to cast doubt upon the continuing validity of the certification allowing the employer to request a

recertification in less than thirty (30) days.

(d) **Timing.** The employee must provide the requested recertification to the employer within the timeframe requested by the employer, which must allow at least fifteen (15) calendar days after the employer's request, unless it is not practicable under the particular circumstances to do so despite the employee's diligent, good faith efforts.

(e) **Content.** The employer may ask for the same information when obtaining recertification as that permitted for the original certification. The employee has the same obligations to participate and cooperate, including providing a complete and sufficient certification or adequate authorization to the health care provider, in the recertification process as in the initial certification process. As part of the information allowed to be obtained on recertification for leave taken because of a serious health condition, the employer may provide the health care provider with a record of the employee's absence pattern and ask the health care provider if the serious health condition and need for leave is consistent with such a pattern.

(f) Any recertification requested by the employer shall be at the employee's expense unless the employer provides otherwise. No second or third opinion on recertification may be required.

(Effective May 12, 2014)

Sec. 31-51rr-40. Certification for leave taken because of a qualifying exigency (29 CFR § 825.309)

(a) **Active Duty Orders.** The first time an employee requests leave because of a qualifying exigency arising out of the covered active duty or call to covered active duty status or notification of an impending call or order to covered active duty of a military member, an employer may require the employee to provide a copy of the military member's active duty orders or other documentation issued by the military which indicates that the military member is on covered active duty or call to covered active duty status, and the dates of the military member's covered active duty service. This information need only be provided to the employer once. A copy of new active duty orders or other documentation issued by the military may be required by the employer if the need for leave because of a qualifying exigency arises out of a different covered active duty or call to covered active duty status or notification of an impending call or order to covered active duty of the same or a different military member;

(b) **Required information.** An employer may require that leave for any qualifying exigency specified in section 31-51rr-13 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies be supported by a certification from the employee that sets forth the following information:

(1) A statement or description, signed by the employee, of appropriate facts regarding the qualifying exigency for which FMLA leave is requested. The facts shall be sufficient to support the need for leave. Such facts shall include information on the type of qualifying exigency for which leave is requested and any available written documentation which supports the request for leave; such documentation, for example, may include a copy of a

meeting announcement for informational briefings sponsored by the military, a document confirming an appointment with a counselor or school official, or a copy of a bill for services for the handling of legal or financial affairs;

(2) The approximate date on which the qualifying exigency commenced or will commence;

(3) If an employee requests leave because of a qualifying exigency for a single, continuous period of time, the beginning and end dates for such absence;

(4) If an employee requests leave because of a qualifying exigency on an intermittent or reduced schedule basis, an estimate of the frequency and duration of the qualifying exigency;

(5) If the qualifying exigency involves meeting with a third party, appropriate contact information for the individual or entity with whom the employee is meeting (such as the name, title, organization, address, telephone number, fax number, and email address) and a brief description of the purpose of the meeting; and

(6) If the qualifying exigency involves *Rest and Recuperation* leave, a copy of the military member's rest and recuperation orders, or other documentation issued by the military which indicates that the military member has been granted rest and recuperation leave, and the dates of the military member's rest and recuperation leave.

(c) The United States Department of Labor has developed an optional form (Form WH–384) for employees' use in obtaining a certification that meets FMLA's certification requirements. (The employer may use the form referenced in Appendix A). This optional form reflects certification requirements so as to permit the employee to furnish appropriate information to support his or her request for leave because of a qualifying exigency. Form WH–384, or another form containing the same basic information, may be used by the employer; however, no information may be required beyond that specified in this section.

(d) **Verification.** If an employee submits a complete and sufficient certification to support his or her request for leave because of a qualifying exigency, the employer may not request additional information from the employee. However, if the qualifying exigency involves meeting with a third party, the employer may contact the individual or entity with whom the employee is meeting for purposes of verifying a meeting or appointment schedule and the nature of the meeting between the employee and the specified individual or entity. The employee's permission is not required in order to verify meetings or appointments with third parties, but no additional information may be requested by the employer. An employer also may contact an appropriate unit of the Department of Defense to request verification that a military member is on covered active duty or call to covered active duty status or has been notified of an impending call or order to covered active duty; no additional information may be requested and the employee's permission is not required.

(Effective May 12, 2014)

Sec. 31-51rr-41. Certification for leave taken to care for a covered servicemember (military caregiver leave) (29 CFR § 825.310)

(a) **Required information from health care provider.** When leave is taken to care for a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness, an employer may require an employee to obtain a certification completed by an authorized health care provider of the covered servicemember. For purposes of leave taken to care for a covered servicemember, any one of the following health care providers may complete such a certification:

(1) A United States Department of Defense (DOD) health care provider;

(2) A United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care provider;

(3) A DOD TRICARE network authorized private health care provider;

(4) A DOD non-network TRICARE authorized private health care provider; or

(5) Any health care provider as defined in section 31-51rr-1(15) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies.

(b) If the authorized health care provider is unable to make certain military-related determinations outlined below, the authorized health care provider may rely on determinations from an authorized DOD representative, such as a DOD Recovery Care Coordinator, or an authorized VA representative. An employer may request that the health care provider provide the following information:

(1) The name, address, and appropriate contact information, such as telephone number, fax number, and/or email address, of the health care provider, the type of medical practice, the medical specialty, and whether the health care provider is one of the following:

(A) A DOD health care provider;

(B) A VA health care provider;

(C) A DOD TRICARE network authorized private health care provider;

(D) A DOD non-network TRICARE authorized private health care provider; or

(E) A health care provider as defined in section 31-51rr-1(15) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies.

(2) Whether the covered servicemember's injury or illness was incurred in the line of duty on active duty or, if not, whether the covered servicemember's injury or illness existed before the beginning of the servicemember's active duty and was aggravated by service in the line of duty on active duty;

(3) The approximate date on which the serious injury or illness commenced, or was aggravated, and its probable duration; and

(4) A statement or description of appropriate medical facts regarding the covered servicemember's health condition for which FMLA leave is requested. The medical facts must be sufficient to support the need for leave.

(A) In the case of a current member of the Armed Forces, such medical facts must include information on whether the injury or illness may render the covered servicemember medically unfit to perform the duties of the servicemember's office, grade, rank, or rating and whether the member is receiving medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy.

(B) In the case of a covered veteran, such medical facts shall include:

(i) Information on whether the veteran is receiving medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy for an injury or illness that is the continuation of an injury or illness that was incurred or aggravated when the covered veteran was a member of the Armed Forces and rendered the servicemember medically unfit to perform the duties of the servicemember's office, grade, rank, or rating; or

(ii) Information on whether the veteran is receiving medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy for an injury or illness that is a physical or mental condition for which the covered veteran has received a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Service-Related Disability Rating (VASRD) of fifty (50) percent or greater, and that such VASRD rating is based, in whole or in part, on the condition precipitating the need for military caregiver leave; or

(iii) Information on whether the veteran is receiving medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy for an injury or illness that is a physical or mental condition that substantially impairs the covered veteran's ability to secure or follow a substantially gainful occupation by reason of a disability or disabilities related to military service, or would do so absent treatment; or

(iv) Documentation of enrollment in the Department of Veterans Affairs Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers.

(5) Information sufficient to establish that the covered servicemember is in need of care, as described in section 31-51rr-12 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, and whether the covered servicemember will need care for a single continuous period of time, including any time for treatment and recovery, and an estimate as to the beginning and ending dates for this period of time;

(6) If an employee requests leave on an intermittent or reduced schedule basis for planned medical treatment appointments for the covered servicemember, whether there is a medical necessity for the covered servicemember to have such periodic care and an estimate of the treatment schedule of such appointments; or

(7) If an employee requests leave on an intermittent or reduced schedule basis to care for a covered servicemember other than for planned medical treatment, whether there is a medical necessity for the covered servicemember to have such periodic care, which can include assisting in the covered servicemember's recovery, and an estimate of the frequency and duration of the periodic care.

(c) **Required information from employee and/or covered servicemember**. In addition to the information that may be requested under subsection (b) of this section, an employer may also request that such certification set forth the following information provided by an employee and/or covered servicemember:

(1) The name and address of the employer of the employee requesting leave to care for a covered servicemember, the name of the employee requesting such leave, and the name of the covered servicemember for whom the employee is requesting leave to care;

(2) The relationship of the employee to the covered servicemember for whom the employee is requesting leave to care;

(3) Whether the covered servicemember is a current member of the Armed Forces, the

National Guard or Reserves, and the covered servicemember's military branch, rank, and current unit assignment;

(4) Whether the covered servicemember is assigned to a military medical facility as an outpatient or to a unit established for the purpose of providing command and control of members of the Armed Forces receiving medical care as outpatients, such as a medical hold or warrior transition unit, and the name of the medical treatment facility or unit;

(5) Whether the covered servicemember is on the temporary disability retired list;

(6) Whether the covered servicemember is a veteran, the date of separation from military service, and whether the separation was other than dishonorable. The employer may require the employee to provide documentation issued by the military which indicates that the covered servicemember is a veteran, the date of separation, and that the separation is other than dishonorable. Where an employer requires such documentation, an employee may provide a copy of the veteran's Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty issued by the U.S. Department of Defense (DD Form 214) or other proof of veteran status; and

(7) A description of the care to be provided to the covered servicemember and an estimate of the leave needed to provide the care.

(d) The United States Department of Labor has developed optional forms (WH–385, WH–385–V) for employees' use in obtaining certification that meets FMLA's certification requirements. (The employer may use the form referenced in Appendix A). These optional forms reflect certification requirements so as to permit the employee to furnish appropriate information to support his or her request for leave to care for a covered servicemember with a serious injury or illness. WH–385, WH–385–V, or another form containing the same basic information, may be used by the employer; however, no information may be required beyond that specified in this section. In all instances the information on the certification must relate only to the serious injury or illness for which the current need for leave exists. An employer may seek authentication and/ or clarification of the certification under section 31-51rr-38 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies. Second and third opinions under section 31-51rr-38 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies are not permitted for leave to care for a covered servicemember when the certification has been completed by one of the types of health care providers identified in section 31-51rr-41(a)(1) to 31-51rr-41(a)(4), inclusive, of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies. However, second and third opinions under section 31-51rr-38 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies are permitted when the certification has been completed by a health care provider as defined in section 31-51rr-1(15) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies that is not one of the types identified in section 31-51rr-41(a)(1)–(4) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies. Additionally, recertifications under section 31-51rr-39 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies are not permitted for leave to care for a covered servicemember. An employer may require an employee to provide confirmation of covered family relationship to the seriously injured or ill servicemember pursuant to section 31-51rr-10(c) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies.

(e) An employer requiring an employee to submit a certification for leave to care for a

covered servicemember shall accept as sufficient certification, in lieu of the Department's optional certification forms (WH–385) or an employer's own certification form, invitational travel orders (ITOs) or invitational travel authorizations (ITAs) issued to any family member to join an injured or ill servicemember at his or her bedside. An ITO or ITA is sufficient certification for the duration of time specified in the ITO or ITA. During that time period, an eligible employee may take leave to care for the covered servicemember in a continuous block of time or on an intermittent basis. An eligible employee who provides an ITO or ITA to support his or her request for leave may not be required to provide any additional or separate certification that leave taken on an intermittent basis during the period of time specified in the ITO or ITA is medically necessary. An ITO or ITA is sufficient certification for an employee entitled to take FMLA leave to care for a covered servicemember regardless of whether the employee is named in the order or authorization.

(1) If an employee will need leave to care for a covered servicemember beyond the expiration date specified in an ITO or ITA, an employer may request that the employee have one of the authorized health care providers listed under section 31-51rr-41(a) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies complete the United State Department of Labor optional certification form (WH–385) or an employer's own form, as requisite certification for the remainder of the employee's necessary leave period.

(2) An employer may seek authentication and clarification of the ITO or ITA under section 31-51rr-38 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies. An employer may not utilize the second or third opinion process outlined in section 31-51rr-38 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies or the recertification process under section 31-51rr-39 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies during the period of time in which leave is supported by an ITO or ITA.

(3) An employer may require an employee to provide confirmation of covered family relationship to the seriously injured or ill servicemember pursuant to section 31-51rr-10(c) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies when an employee supports his or her request for FMLA leave with a copy of an ITO or ITA.

(f) An employer requiring an employee to submit a certification for leave to care for a covered servicemember must accept as sufficient certification of the servicemember's serious injury or illness documentation indicating the servicemember's enrollment in the Department of Veterans Affairs Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers. Such documentation is sufficient certification of the servicemember's serious injury or illness to support the employee's request for military caregiver leave regardless of whether the employee is the named caregiver in the enrollment documentation.

(1) An employer may seek authentication and clarification of the documentation indicating the servicemember's enrollment in the Department of Veterans Affairs Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers under section 31-51rr-38 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies. An employer may not utilize the second or third opinion process outlined in section 31-51rr-38 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies or the recertification process under section 31-51rr-39 of the Regulations of

Connecticut State Agencies when the servicemember's serious injury or illness is shown by documentation of enrollment in this program.

(2) An employer may require an employee to provide confirmation of covered family relationship to the seriously injured or ill servicemember pursuant to section 31-51rr-10(c) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies when an employee supports his or her request for FMLA leave with a copy of such enrollment documentation. An employer may also require an employee to provide documentation, such as a veteran's Form DD–214, showing that the discharge was other than dishonorable and the date of the veteran's discharge.

(g) Where medical certification is requested by an employer, an employee may not be held liable for administrative delays in the issuance of military documents, despite the employee's diligent, good-faith efforts to obtain such documents. In all instances in which certification is requested, it is the employee's responsibility to provide the employer with complete and sufficient certification and failure to do so may result in the denial of FMLA leave.

(Effective May 12, 2014)

Sec. 31-51rr-42. Intent to return to work (29 CFR § 825.311)

(a) An employer may require an employee on FMLA leave to report periodically on the employee's status and intent to return to work. The employer's policy regarding such reports may not be discriminatory and shall take into account all of the relevant facts and circumstances related to the individual employee's leave situation.

(b) If an employee gives unequivocal notice of intent not to return to work, the employer's obligations under FMLA to maintain health benefits (subject to COBRA requirements) and to restore the employee cease. However, these obligations continue if an employee indicates he or she may be unable to return to work but expresses a continuing desire to do so.

(c) It may be necessary for an employee to take more leave than originally anticipated. Conversely, an employee may discover after beginning leave that the circumstances have changed and the amount of leave originally anticipated is no longer necessary. An employee may not be required to take more FMLA leave than necessary to resolve the circumstance that precipitated the need for leave. In both of these situations, the employer may require that the employee provide the employer notice within two (2) business days of the changed circumstances where foreseeable. The employer may also obtain information on such changed circumstances through requested status reports.

(Effective May 12, 2014)

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)

Sec. 31-51rr-44. Failure to provide certification (29 CFR § 825.313)

(a) **Foreseeable leave.** In the case of foreseeable leave, if an employee fails to provide certification in a timely manner as required by section 31-51rr-36 of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, then an employer may deny FMLA coverage until the required certification is provided. For example, if an employee has fifteen (15) days to provide a certification and does not provide the certification for forty-five (45) days without sufficient reason for the delay, the employer can deny FMLA protections for the thirty (30)-day period following the expiration of the fifteen (15)-day time period, if the employee takes leave during such period.

(b) **Unforeseeable leave.** In the case of unforeseeable leave, an employer may deny FMLA coverage for the requested leave if the employee fails to provide a certification within

fifteen (15) calendar days from receipt of the request for certification unless not practicable due to extenuating circumstances. For example, in the case of a medical emergency, it may not be practicable for an employee to provide the required certification within fifteen (15) calendar days. Absent such extenuating circumstances, if the employee fails to timely return the certification, the employer can deny FMLA protections for the leave following the expiration of the fifteen (15)-day time period until a sufficient certification is provided. If the employee never produces the certification, the leave is not FMLA leave.

(c) **Recertification.** An employee shall provide recertification within the time requested by the employer, which must allow at least fifteen (15) calendar days after the request, or as soon as practicable under the particular facts and circumstances. If an employee fails to provide a recertification within a reasonable time under the particular facts and circumstances, then the employer may deny continuation of the FMLA leave protections until the employee produces a sufficient recertification. If the employee never produces the recertification, the leave is not FMLA leave. Recertification does not apply to leave taken for a qualifying exigency or to care for a covered servicemember.

(d) **Fitness-for-duty certification.** When requested by the employer pursuant to a uniformly applied policy for similarly-situated employees, the employee shall provide medical certification, at the time the employee seeks reinstatement at the end of FMLA leave taken for the employee's serious health condition, that the employee is fit for duty and able to return to work if the employer has provided the required notice; the employer may delay restoration until the certification is provided. Unless the employee provides either a fitness-for-duty certification or a new medical certification for a serious health condition, the employee may be terminated.

(Effective May 12, 2014)

Sec. 31-51rr-45. Recordkeeping requirements (29 CFR § 825.500)

(a) FMLA provides that covered employers shall make, keep, and preserve records pertaining to their obligations under section 31-51rr of the Connecticut General Statutes in accordance with the recordkeeping requirements of section 11(c) of the FLSA and in accordance with these regulations. These regulations establish no requirement for the submission of any records unless specifically requested by a Labor Departmental official.

(b) No particular order or form of records is required. These regulations establish no requirement that any employer revise its computerized payroll or personnel records systems to comply. However, employers must keep the records specified by these regulations for not less than three (3) years and make them available for inspection, copying, and transcription by representatives of the Labor Department upon request. The records may be maintained and preserved on microfilm or other basic source document of an automated data processing memory provided that adequate projection or viewing equipment is available, that the reproductions are clear and identifiable by date or pay period, and that extensions or transcriptions of the information required herein can be and are made available upon request. Records kept in computer form must be made available for transcription or

copying.

(c) Covered employers who have eligible employees must maintain records that must disclose the following:

(1) Basic payroll and identifying employee data, including name, address, and occupation; rate or basis of pay and terms of compensation; daily and weekly hours worked per pay period; additions to or deductions from wages; and total compensation paid.

(2) Dates FMLA leave is taken by FMLA eligible employees. Leave must be designated in records as FMLA leave; leave so designated may not include an employer plan which is not also covered by FMLA.

(3) If FMLA leave is taken by eligible employees in increments of less than one full day, the hours of the leave.

(4) Copies of employee notices of leave furnished to the employer under FMLA, if in writing, and copies of all written notices given to employees as required under FMLA and these regulations. Copies may be maintained in employee personnel files.

(5) Any documents describing employee benefits or employer policies and practices regarding the taking of paid and unpaid leaves.

(6) Premium payments of employee benefits.

(7) Records of any dispute between the employer and an eligible employee regarding designation of leave as FMLA leave, including any written statement from the employer or employee of the reasons for the designation and for the disagreement.

(d) Covered employers with no eligible employees must maintain the records set forth in subsection (c)(1) of this section.

(e) If FMLA-eligible employees are not subject to FLSA's recordkeeping regulations for purposes of minimum wage or overtime compliance, an employer need not keep a record of actual hours worked, provided that:

(1) Eligibility for FMLA leave is presumed for any employee who has been employed for at least twelve (12) months; and

(2) With respect to employees who take FMLA leave intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule, the employer and employee agree on the employee's normal schedule or average hours worked each week and reduce their agreement to a written record maintained in accordance with subsection (b) of this section.

(g) Records and documents relating to certifications, recertifications or medical histories of employees or employees' family members, created for purposes of FMLA, shall be maintained as confidential medical records in separate files/records from the usual personnel files. If the federal Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 (GINA) is applicable, records and documents created for purposes of FMLA containing family medical history or genetic information as defined in GINA shall be maintained in accordance with the confidentiality requirements of Title II of GINA, which permit such information to be disclosed consistent with the requirements of FMLA. If the ADA, as amended, or CFEPA is also applicable, such records shall be maintained in conformance with ADA and CFEPA confidentiality requirements, except that:

(1) Supervisors and managers may be informed regarding necessary restrictions on the work or duties of an employee and necessary accommodations;

(2) First aid and safety personnel may be informed if the employee's physical or medical condition might require emergency treatment; and

(3) Government officials investigating compliance with FMLA or other pertinent law shall be provided relevant information upon request.

(Effective May 12, 2014)

Sec. 31-51rr-46. Interaction with employer's policies (29 CFR § 825.700)

(a) An employer must observe any employment benefit program or plan that provides greater family or medical leave rights to employees than the rights established by the FMLA. Conversely, the rights established by the Act may not be diminished by any employment benefit program or plan. For example, a provision of a CBA which provides for reinstatement to a position that is not equivalent because of seniority and may provide lesser pay is superseded by FMLA. If an employer provides greater unpaid family leave rights than are afforded by FMLA, the employer is not required to extend additional rights afforded by FMLA, such as maintenance of health benefits other than through COBRA, to the additional leave period not covered by FMLA.

(b) Nothing in this Act prevents an employer from amending existing leave and employee benefit programs, provided they comply with FMLA. However, nothing in the Act is intended to discourage employers from adopting or retaining more generous leave policies.

(Effective May 12, 2014)

Sec. 31-51rr-47. Interaction with Federal and State anti-discrimination laws (29 CFR § 825.702)

(a) Nothing in FMLA modifies or affects any Federal or State law prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability, such as under Title VII of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended by the federal Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978, or any protected class under CFEPA.

(b) If an employee is a qualified individual with a disability within the meaning of the ADA or an applicable state law, the employer must make reasonable accommodations, barring undue hardship, in accordance with the ADA or applicable state law. At the same time, the employer must afford an employee his or her FMLA rights. ADA's "disability" and FMLA's "serious health condition" are different concepts, and must be analyzed separately. FMLA entitles eligible employees to twelve (12) weeks of leave in any twelve (12)-month period due to their own serious health condition, whereas the ADA allows an indeterminate amount of leave, barring undue hardship, as a reasonable accommodation. FMLA requires employers to maintain employees' group health plan coverage during FMLA leave on the same conditions as coverage would have been provided if the employee had been continuously employed during the leave period, whereas ADA does not require maintenance of health insurance unless other employees receive health insurance during

leave under the same circumstances.

(c) (1) A reasonable accommodation under the ADA or applicable state law might be accomplished by providing an individual with a disability with a part-time job with no health benefits, assuming the employer did not ordinarily provide health insurance for part-time employees. However, FMLA would permit an employee to work a reduced leave schedule until the equivalent of twelve (12) workweeks of leave were used, with group health benefits maintained during this period. FMLA permits an employer to temporarily transfer an employee who is taking leave intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule for planned medical treatment to an alternative position, whereas the ADA allows an accommodation of reassignment to an equivalent, vacant position only if the employee cannot perform the essential functions of the employee's present position and an accommodation is not possible in the employee's present position, or an accommodation in the employee's present position would cause an undue hardship. The examples in the following subsections of this section demonstrate how the two laws would interact with respect to a qualified individual with a disability.

(2) A qualified individual with a disability who is also an "eligible employee" entitled to FMLA leave requests ten (10) weeks of medical leave as a reasonable accommodation, which the employer grants because it is not an undue hardship. The employer advises the employee that the ten (10) weeks of leave is also being designated as FMLA leave and will count towards the employee's FMLA leave entitlement. This designation does not prevent the parties from also treating the leave as a reasonable accommodation and reinstating the employee into the same job, as required by the ADA, rather than an equivalent position under FMLA, if that is the greater right available to the employee. At the same time, the employee would be entitled under FMLA to have the employer maintain group health plan coverage during the leave, as that requirement provides the greater right to the employee.

(3) If the same employee needed to work part-time on a reduced leave schedule after returning to his or her same job, the employee would still be entitled under FMLA to have group health plan coverage maintained for the remainder of the two(2)-week equivalent of FMLA leave entitlement, notwithstanding an employer policy that part-time employees do not receive health insurance. This employee would be entitled under the ADA to reasonable accommodations to enable the employee to perform the essential functions of the part-time position. In addition, because the employee is working a part-time schedule as a reasonable accommodation, the FMLA's provision for temporary assignment to a different alternative position would not apply. Once the employee has exhausted his or her remaining FMLA leave entitlement while working the reduced (part-time) schedule, if the employee is a qualified individual with a disability, and if the employee is unable to return to the same full-time position at that time, the employee might continue to work part-time as a reasonable accommodation, barring undue hardship; the employee would then be entitled to only those employment benefits ordinarily provided by the employer to part-time employees.

(4) At the end of the FMLA leave entitlement, an employer is required under FMLA to

reinstate the employee in the same or an equivalent position, with equivalent pay and benefits, to that which the employee held when leave commenced. The employer's FMLA obligations would be satisfied if the employer offered the employee an equivalent full-time position. If the employee were unable to perform the essential functions of that equivalent position even with reasonable accommodation, because of a disability, the ADA or an applicable state law may require the employer to make a reasonable accommodation at that time by allowing the employee to work part-time or by reassigning the employee to a vacant position, barring undue hardship.

(d) (1) If FMLA entitles an employee to leave, an employer may not, in lieu of FMLA leave entitlement, require an employee to take a job with a reasonable accommodation. However, ADA or an applicable state law may require that an employer offer an employee the opportunity to take such a position. An employer may not change the essential functions of the job in order to deny FMLA leave.

(2) An employee may be on a workers' compensation absence due to an on-the-job injury or illness which also qualifies as a serious health condition under FMLA. The workers' compensation absence and FMLA leave may run concurrently, subject to proper notice and designation by the employer. At some point the health care provider providing medical care pursuant to the workers' compensation injury may certify the employee is able to return to work in a "light duty" position. If the employer offers such a position, the employee is permitted but not required to accept the position. As a result, the employee may no longer qualify for payments from the workers' compensation benefit plan, but the employee is entitled to continue on unpaid FMLA leave either until the employee is able to return to the same or equivalent job the employee left or until the twelve (12)-week FMLA leave entitlement is exhausted. If the employee returning from the workers' compensation injury is a qualified individual with a disability, he or she will have rights under the ADA or may have rights under an applicable state law.

(e) If an employer requires certifications of an employee's fitness for duty to return to work, as permitted by FMLA under a uniform policy, it must comply with the ADA or any applicable state law requirement that a fitness for duty physical be job-related and consistent with business necessity.

(f) Under Title VII of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended by the federal Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978, or an applicable state law, an employer should provide the same benefits for women who are pregnant as the employer provides to other employees with short-term disabilities. Because Title VII does not require employees to be employed for a certain period of time to be protected, an employee employed for less than twelve (12) months by the employer and, therefore, not an "eligible" employee under FMLA, may not be denied maternity leave if the employer normally provides short-term disability benefits to employees with the same tenure who are experiencing other short-term disabilities.

(g) Under the federal Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994, 38 U.S.C. 4301–4333 (USERRA), veterans are entitled to receive all rights and

benefits of employment that they would have obtained if they had been continuously employed. Therefore, under USERRA, a returning service member would be eligible for FMLA leave if the months and hours that he or she would have worked for the civilian employer during the period of military service, combined with the months employed and the hours actually worked, meet the FMLA eligibility threshold of twelve (12) months and nine hundred fifty (950) hours of employment.

(Effective May 12, 2014)

Sec. Appendix A.

Forms to use for the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) for Paraprofessionals

(Sec. 31-51rr-1*et seq.*of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies)

United States Department of Labor Wage and Hour Division (WHD)

http://www.dol.gov/whd/forms/index.htm

WH-380-E: FMLA Certification of Health Care Provider for Employee's Serious Health Condition

WH-380-E Form & Instruction

WH-380-F: FMLA Certification of Health Care Provider for Family Member's Serious Health Condition

WH-380-F Form & Instruction

WH-381: FMLA Notice of Eligibility and Rights & Responsibilities

WH-381 Form & Instruction

WH-382: FMLA Designation Notice

WH-382 Form & Instruction

WH-384: FMLA Certification of Qualifying Exigency For Military Family Leave

WH-384 Form & Instruction

WH-385: FMLA Certification for Serious Injury or Illness of Covered Servicemember — for Military Family Leave

WH-385 Form & Instruction

WH-385V: FMLA Certification for Serious Injury or Illness of a Veteran for Military Caregiver Leave

WH-385V Form & Instruction

(Effective May 12, 2014)

Sec. APPENDIX B.

Sections 31-51r through 31-51w of the Connecticut General Statutes

An Act Concerning Family and Medical Leave Benefits for Certain Municipal Employees

Basic Leave Entitlement

FMLA requires covered employers to provide up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave to eligible employees for the following reasons:

- For incapacity due to pregnancy, prenatal medical care or child birth;
- To care for the employee's child after birth, or placement for adoption or foster care;
- To care for the employee's spouse, son or daughter, or parent, who has a serious health condition; or
- For a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the employee's job.

Military Family Leave Entitlements

Eligible employees with a spouse, son, daughter, or parent on active duty or call to active duty status in the National Guard or Reserves in support of a contingency operation may use their 12-week leave entitlement to address certain qualifying exigencies. Qualifying exigencies may include attending certain military events, arranging for alternative childcare, addressing certain financial and legal arrangements, attending certain counseling sessions, and attending post-deployment reintegration briefings.

FMLA also includes a special leave entitlement that permits eligible employees to take up to 12 weeks of leave to care for a covered servicemember during a single 12-month period. A covered servicemember is a current member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, who has a serious injury or illness incurred in the line of duty on active duty that may render the servicemember medically unfit to perform his or her duties for which the servicemember is undergoing medicaltreatment, recuperation, or therapy; or is in outpatient status; or is on the temporary disability retired list.

Benefits and Protections

During FMLA leave, the employer must maintain the employee's health coverage under any "group health plan" on the same terms as if the employee had continued to work. Upon return from FMLA leave, most employees must be restored to their original or equivalent positions with equivalent pay, benefits, and other employment terms.

Use of FMLA leave cannot result in the loss of any employment benefit that accrued prior to the start of an employee's leave.

Eligibility Requirements

Employees are eligible if they have worked for a political subdivision for at least one year and for 950 hours over the previous 12 months.

Definition of Serious Health Condition

A serious health condition is an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves either an overnight stay in a medical care facility, or continuing treatment by a health care provider for a condition that either prevents the employee from performing the functions of the employee's job, or prevents the qualified family member from participating in school or other daily activities.

Subject to certain conditions, the continuing treatment requirement may be met by a period of incapacity of more than 3 consecutive calendar days combined with at least two visits to a health care provider or one visit and a regimen of continuing treatment, or incapacity due to pregnancy, or incapacity due to a chronic condition. Other conditions may meet the definition of continuing treatment.

Use of Leave

An employee does not need to use this leave entitlement in one block. Leave can be taken intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule when medically necessary. Employees must make reasonable efforts to schedule leave for planned medical treatment so as not to unduly disrupt the employer's operations. Leave due to qualifying exigencies may also be taken on an intermittent basis.

Substitution of Paid Leave for Unpaid Leave

Employees may choose or employers may require use of accrued paid leave while taking FMLA leave. In order to use paid leave for FMLA leave, employees must comply with the employer's normal paid leave policies.

Employee Responsibilities

Employees must provide 30 days advance notice of the need to take FMLA leave when the need is foreseeable. When 30 days notice is not possible, the employee must provide notice as soon as practicable and generally must comply with an employer's normal call-in procedures.

Employees must provide sufficient information for the employer to determine if the leave may qualify for FMLA protection and the anticipated timing and duration of the leave. Sufficient information may include that the employee is unable to perform job functions, the family member is unable to perform daily activities, the need for hospitalization or continuing treatment by a health care provider, or circumstances supporting the need for military family leave. Employees also must inform the employer if the requested leave is for a reason for which FMLA leave was previously taken or certified. Employees also may be required to provide a certification and periodic recertification supporting the need for leave.

Employer Responsibilities

Covered employers must inform employees requesting leave whether they are eligible under FMLA. If they are, the notice must specify any additional information required as well as the employees' rights and responsibilities. If they are not eligible, the employer must provide a reason for the ineligibility.

Covered employers must inform employees if leave will be designated as FMLA-protected and the amount of leave counted against the employee's leave entitlement. If the employer determines that the leave is not FMLA-protected, the employer must notify the employee.

Unlawful Acts by Employers

FMLA makes it unlawful for any employer to:

- Interfere with, restrain, or deny the exercise of any right provided under FMLA;
- Discharge or discriminate against any person for opposing any practice made unlawful by FMLA or for involvement in any proceeding under or relating to FMLA.

Enforcement

An employee may file a complaint with the Connecticut Department of Labor.

FMLA does not affect any Federal or State law prohibiting discrimination, or supersede

any State or local law or collective bargaining agreement which provides greater family or medical leave rights.

(Effective May 12, 2014)