

Wisconsin Human Resources Handbook

Chapter 724

Family and Medical Leave

Sec. 724.010	Introduction	Sec. 724.120	Substitution of Paid Leave
Sec. 724.020	Applicability of this Chapter	Sec. 724.130	Certification
Sec. 724.030	Statutory and Rule Authority	Sec. 724.140	Continuation of Benefits
Sec. 724.040	Definitions	Sec. 724.150	Return from Leave
Sec. 724.050	Eligibility Requirements	Sec. 724.160	Prohibited Acts
Sec. 724.060	Leave Entitlements—Reasons and Duration	Sec. 724.170	Civil Action
Sec. 724.070	Leave Request, Scheduling and Approval Process	Sec. 724.180	Posting Notice/Notice to Employees
Sec. 724.080	Intermittent Leave	Sec. 724.190	Administrative Information
Sec. 724.090	Overtime/Additional Hours	Attachment #1	FMLA Toolkit (Links to Forms and Posters)
Sec. 724.100	Alternative Employment	Attachment #2	Index
Sec. 724.110	Recordkeeping		

Sec. 724.010 Introduction

This handbook chapter was developed to provide information about family and medical leave provisions under the Wisconsin Family and Medical Leave Act (WFMLA), and the federal Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA), as amended. Application of these laws must be coordinated with leave benefits provided under administrative rule (or public safety collective bargaining agreement, if applicable). The provision of the WFMLA, FMLA, administrative rule, or collective bargaining agreement which provides the most generous benefit to the employee must be applied. If an employee meets the eligibility requirements for both the WFMLA and the FMLA, the employer must comply with both laws simultaneously. If an employee is eligible under only one law, then the employer needs only to comply with that one law (in addition to administrative rules and/or collective bargaining agreement). Agencies also must be mindful of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAAA), Wisconsin Fair Employment Act (WFEA), and any other applicable laws which may apply in a particular situation.

Employees who use leave benefits provided under the WFMLA and/or FMLA will simultaneously use leave benefits provided under the administrative rules or collective bargaining agreement wherever applicable. *All qualifying leaves run concurrently.*

The information provided in this handbook chapter should not serve as the sole family and medical leave resource. Refer to section 724.030 of this handbook chapter for a list of leave-related statutory and rule references. Cites for the corresponding federal regulation, statute, administrative rule, or court case have been provided in brackets to facilitate further research. As laws may change, always verify information with the corresponding regulations, statutes, etc., to confirm it is still current prior to making FMLA decisions.

An index has been provided as Attachment 2 for ease of reference.

Note: Hyperlinks are provided in the FMLA Toolkit in Attachment 1 to all FMLA forms and posters referenced in this handbook chapter. The [FMLA Toolkit](#) is also available on the Department of Administration, Division of Personnel Management (DPM) website.

Sec. 724.020 Applicability of this Handbook Chapter

The WFMLA and the FMLA leave provisions as explained in this handbook chapter are applicable only to agencies as defined in s. 230.03(3), Wis. Stats., and individuals who meet the definition of “employee” under section 724.040 of this handbook chapter. This includes employees in the classified and unclassified civil service who are employed on a full-time, part-time, seasonal, or sessional basis in permanent, project, or limited term positions.

Other employers and agencies, and individuals who do *not* meet the definition of “employee” may be covered by WFMLA or FMLA provisions, but the Department of Administration, Division of Personnel Management (DPM) does not have the responsibility to oversee the administration of their leave benefits.

Sec. 724.030 Statutory and Rule Authority

1. Wisconsin Family and Medical Leave Law
 - a. Section 103.10, Wis. Stats., sets forth the state law provisions for granting family/medical leaves of absence to employees of the State of Wisconsin.
 - b. Chapter DWD 225, Wis. Adm. Code, Rules of the Department of Workforce Development (DWD), sets forth the rules to be followed in the administration of the family/medical leave benefits under s. 103.10, Wis. Stats.

Note: Texts of the Wisconsin FMLA law and DWD rules may be accessed online through the Equal Rights Division of DWD.

2. Federal Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 as amended
 - a. Public Law 103-3, Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, as amended, 29 U.S.C. ss. 2601, *et seq.*, sets forth the federal law provisions for granting family/medical leaves of absence to employees of the State of Wisconsin.
 - b. Title 29, Chapter V, Part 825 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), sets forth the policies to be followed in the administration of the family leave benefits under Public Law 103-3.

Note: Texts of the federal FMLA law and Department of Labor regulations may be accessed online through the Wage and Hour Division of the Department of Labor.

3. Related Statutes/Administrative Code
 - a. Section 230.35, Wis. Stats., sets forth the provisions for granting annual leave, holiday, and sick leave benefits to classified and eligible unclassified employees.
 - b. Chapter ER 18, Wis. Adm. Code, sets forth the rules to be followed in the administration of annual leave, holidays, and sick leave benefits under s. 230.35, Wis. Stats.
 - c. Chapter ER-MRS 16, Wis. Adm. Code, sets forth the rules regarding restoration rights of employees upon return from approved leave without pay.
4. Other

- a. Chapter 716 of the Wisconsin Human Resources Handbook provides more specific information regarding the annual leave and holiday policies applicable to employees covered by s. 230.35, Wis. Stats.
- b. The public safety collective bargaining agreement may contain provisions regarding the accrual and use of annual leave, holidays, and sick leave by represented employees and rights of represented employees upon return from approved leave without pay that will supersede statutory and rule provisions.

Sec. 724.040 Definitions

For purposes of this chapter, the following definitions apply:

1. **Active duty:** See “Covered active duty.”
2. **Child** means:
 - a. **WFMLA** [s. 103.10(1)(a), Wis. Stats.]

A natural, adopted, or foster child, a stepchild, or a legal ward to whom any of the following applies:

- 1) The individual is less than 18 years of age.
- 2) The individual is 18 years of age or older and cannot care for himself or herself because of a serious health condition.

- b. **FMLA** [29 USC s. 2611(12); 29 CFR s. 825.102, see “Son or daughter”]

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 age 18, or age 18 or older and “incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability” at the time that FMLA leave is to commence.

Also see the [DOL Administrator’s Interpretation No. 2010-3](#) regarding persons standing in loco parentis, and [Interpretation No. 2013-1](#) regarding an individual 18 years of age or older and incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability. (Links to both of these DOL documents are also provided in the FMLA Toolkit on the DOA/DPM website.)

3. **Christian Science practitioner** means:

- a. **WFMLA** [s. 103.10(1)(am), Wis. Stats.]

A Christian Science practitioner residing in this state who is listed as a practitioner in the Christian Science journal.

- b. **FMLA** [29 CFR s. 825.102, see “health care provider”]

Christian Science practitioners listed with the First Church of Christ, Scientist in Boston, Massachusetts.

4. **Continuing treatment by a health care provider** means:

- a. **WFMLA** [s. 103.10(1)(g)2., Wis. Stats.; MPI WI Machining Div. v. DILHR and Schimmel, 159 Wis. 2d 358, 464 N.W.2d 79 (Ct. App. 1990)]

Direct, continuous and first-hand contact by a health care provider subsequent to the initial outpatient contact.

b. **FMLA** [29 CFR ss. 825.102, 825.113 & 825.115]

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

- 1) Incapacity and treatment: A period of incapacity (i.e., inability to work, attend school or perform other regular daily activities due to the serious health condition, treatment therefore, or recovery therefrom) of more than three consecutive, full calendar days, and any subsequent treatment or period of incapacity relating to the same condition, that also involves:
 - a) Treatment two or more times, within 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 (e.g., physical therapist) under orders of, or on referral by, a health care provider; or
 - b) 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. A regimen of continuing treatment includes, for example, a course of prescription medication (such as an antibiotic) or therapy requiring special equipment (such as oxygen).
 - c) The requirements in a. and b. for treatment by a health care provider mean an in-person visit to a health care provider. The first in-person treatment visit must take place within seven days of the first day of incapacity. The need for additional treatment visits or a regimen of continuing treatment shall be determined by the health care provider.
- 2) Pregnancy or prenatal care: Any period of incapacity due to pregnancy or for prenatal care.
- 3) 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:
 - a) 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;
 - b) Continues over an extended period of time (including recurring episodes of a single underlying condition); and
 - c) May cause episodic rather than a continuing period of incapacity (e.g., asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, etc.).
- 4) 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 must be under the continuing supervision of, but need not be receiving active treatment by, a health care provider (e.g., Alzheimer’s, a severe stroke, or the terminal stages of a disease, etc.).
- 5) 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:

- a) Restorative surgery after an accident or other injury; or
 - b) A condition that would likely result in a period of incapacity of more than three consecutive full calendar days in the absence of medical intervention or treatment, such as cancer (chemotherapy, radiation, etc.), severe arthritis (physical therapy), kidney disease (dialysis).
- 6) Absences attributable to incapacity under paragraphs 2 or 3 of this definition 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 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.

5. **Covered active duty or call to covered active duty status** means:

a. **WFMLA**

This term is not applicable to WFMLA.

b. **FMLA** [29 USC s. 2611(14); 29 CFR ss. 825.102 & 825.126] The CFR definition is given here, as it is much more detailed than the USC definition.

- 1) In the case of a member of the Regular Armed Forces, duty during the deployment of the member with the Armed Forces to a foreign country; and,
- 2) In the case of a member of the Reserve components of the Armed Forces, 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 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).

6. **Covered service member / Covered veteran** means:

a. **WFMLA**

No definition. These terms are not applicable to WFMLA.

b. **FMLA** [29 USC s. 2611(15); 29 CFR ss. 825.102, 825.122(a) & 825.127(b)]

- 1) Covered service member means 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; or
- 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.

7. **Domestic partner** means:

a. **WFMLA** [s. 103.10(1)(ar), Wis. Stats.]

“Domestic partner” has the meaning given in s. 40.02(21c), **or** s. 770.01(1), Wis. Stats.

- 1) “Domestic partnership” under s. 40.02(21d), Wis. Stats., means a relationship between 2 individuals, who submitted an affidavit of domestic partnership to the department before September 23, 2017, that satisfies all of the following:
 - a) Each individual is at least 18 years old and otherwise competent to enter into a contract.
 - b) Neither individual is married to, or in a domestic partnership with, another individual.
 - c) The two individuals are not related by blood in any way that would prohibit marriage under s. 765.03, Wis. Stats.
 - d) The two individuals consider themselves to be members of each other’s immediate family.
 - e) The two individuals agree to be responsible for each other’s basic living expenses.
 - f) The two individuals share a common residence. Two individuals may share a common residence even if any of the following applies:
 - (1) Only one of the individuals has legal ownership of the residence.
 - (2) One or both of the individuals have one or more additional residences not shared with the other individual.
 - (3) One of the individuals leaves the common residence with the intent to return.
- 2) Under s. 770.01, Wis. Stats., a “domestic partner” means an individual who signed and filed a declaration of domestic partnership in the office of the register of deeds of the county in which one of the partners resides no later than April 1, 2018. The criteria for a domestic partnership under s. 770.05, Wis. Stats., are (all must apply):
 - a) The individuals are members of the same sex.

- b) Each individual is at least 18 years old and capable of consenting to the domestic partnership.
- c) Neither individual is married to, or in a domestic partnership with, another individual.
- d) The two individuals are not nearer of kin to each other than second cousins, whether of the whole or half blood or by adoption.
- e) The two individuals share a common residence. Two individuals may share a common residence even if any of the following applies:
 - (1) Only one of the individuals has legal ownership of the residence.
 - (2) One or both of the individuals have one or more additional residences not shared with the other individual.
 - (3) One of the individuals leaves the common residence with the intent to return.

b. **FMLA**

No definition. This term is not applicable to the FMLA.

8. **Employee** means:

a. **WFMLA** [s. 103.10(1)(b), Wis. Stats.]

“Employee” includes any individual employed in this state by the State of Wisconsin.

b. **FMLA** [29 USC s. 2611(3); 29 CFR s. 825.102, 29 USC s. 203.]

In the case of an individual employed by a public agency, “employee” includes any individual employed by a State, political subdivision of a State, or an interstate governmental agency, other than such an individual—

- 1) Who is not subject to the civil service laws of the State, political subdivision, or agency which employs the employee; and
 - 2) Who—
 - a) Holds a public elective office of the State, political subdivision, or agency,
 - b) Is selected by the holder of such an office to be a member of their personal staff,
 - c) Is appointed by such an office holder to serve on a policy making level,
 - d) Is an immediate adviser to such an officeholder with respect to the constitutional or legal powers of the office of such officeholder, or
 - e) Is an employee in the legislative branch or legislative body of that State, political subdivision, or agency and is not employed by the legislative library of such State, political subdivision, or agency.
- b. For purposes of both WFMLA and FMLA, the policies of this chapter apply only to employees that meet the definitions in a., or b., above, respectively, and meet the definition of “employee” or “state employee” as defined at s. 230.03(10h), Wis. Stats.

9. **Employment status** means:

- a. For purposes of both the WFMLA & FMLA [s. ER 18.01(3), Wis. Adm. Code]

The status of a person in the civil service under s. 230.08, Wis. Stats., while in pay status or on:

- 1) Approved leave of absence without pay;
- 2) Military leave;
- 3) Leave to serve in the unclassified service;
- 4) Leave of absence due to injury or illness arising out of state employment and covered by worker's compensation under Ch. 102, Wis. Stats., or s. 230.36, Wis. Stats.;
- 5) Temporary layoff; or
- 6) Layoff prior to July 1, 2016 and subsequent restoration under s. ER-MRS 22.10 within three years (or as specified in the applicable collective bargaining agreement).

10. **Equivalent position** means:

- a. WFMLA [s. 103.10(8)(a)2., Wis. Stats.]

A position having equivalent compensation, benefits, working shift, hours of employment, and other terms and conditions of employment.

- b. FMLA [29 CFR s. 825.215]

A position 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.

11. **Family leave** means:

- a. WFMLA [s. 103.10(3)(b), Wis. Stats.]

Absence from employment due to the birth of the employee's natural child, the placement of a child with the employee for adoption or as a precondition to adoption under s. 48.90(2), Wis. Stats., but not both, or to care for the employee's child, spouse, domestic partner, or parent who has a serious health condition.

- b. FMLA [29 CFR s. 825.112(a)] *The FMLA does not distinguish between "family leave" and "medical leave."*

Absence from employment:

- 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 military member on covered active duty or has been notified of an impending call or order to covered active duty status.
- 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 covered service member.

12. **Family member** means:

- a. ***WFMLA*** [s. 103.10(1)(a), (ar), (f), (h) Wis. Stats.]

For purposes of this handbook chapter, "family member," with regard to the WFMLA, encompasses "spouse," "parent," "child," and "domestic partner" as each is separately defined under the WFMLA.

- b. ***FMLA*** [29 USC s. 2611(7), (12), (13); 29 CFR S. 825.102

For purposes of this handbook chapter, "family member" with regard to the FMLA encompasses "spouse," "parent," and "son or daughter" as each is separately defined under the FMLA.

Note: The relationships considered as family members differ between the WFMLA and FMLA, and both are different from the definitions of "immediate family" found at s. ER 18.01(4), Wis. Adm. Code, and in the public safety collective bargaining agreement, which are not used for WFMLA or FMLA purposes.

13. **Health care provider** means:

- a. ***WFMLA*** [s. 103.10(1)(e), Wis. Stats.]

A person described under s. 146.81(1) (a) to (p), Wis. Stats., except s. 146.81(1)(hp), Wis. Stats. Health care providers include:

- 1) Nurses licensed under Ch. 441, Wis. Stats.
- 2) Chiropractors licensed under Ch. 446, Wis. Stats.
- 3) Dentists licensed under Ch. 447, Wis. Stats.
- 4) Physicians, physician assistants, perfusionists, or respiratory care practitioners, licensed or certified under subch. II of Ch. 448, Wis. Stats.
- 5) Physical therapists or physical therapist assistants licensed under subch. III of Ch. 448, Wis. Stats.
- 6) Podiatrists licensed under subch. IV of Ch. 448, Wis. Stats.
- 7) Dietitians certified under subch. V of Ch. 448, Wis. Stats.
- 8) Athletic trainers licensed under subch. VI of Ch. 448, Wis. Stats.
- 9) Occupational therapists or occupational therapy assistants licensed under subch. VII of Ch. 448, Wis. Stats.
- 10) Optometrists licensed under Ch. 449, Wis. Stats.
- 11) Pharmacists licensed under Ch. 450, Wis. Stats.

- 12) Acupuncturists certified under Ch. 451, Wis. Stats.
 - 13) Psychologists licensed under Ch. 455, Wis. Stats.
 - 14) Social workers, marriage and family therapists, or professional counselors certified or licensed under Ch. 457, Wis. Stats.
 - 15) Speech-language pathologists or audiologists licensed under subch. II of Ch. 459, Wis. Stats., or speech and language pathologists licensed by the Department of Public Instruction.
 - 16) A partnership of any providers specified under 1) to 15), above.
 - 17) A corporation or limited liability company of any providers specified under 1) to 15), above, that provides health care services.
 - 18) A cooperative health care association organized under s. 185.981, Wis. Stats., that directly provides services through salaried employees in its own facility.
 - 19) Hospices licensed under subch. IV of Ch. 50, Wis. Stats.
 - 20) Inpatient health care facilities, as defined in s. 50.135(1), Wis. Stats.
 - 21) Community-based residential facilities, as defined in s. 50.01(1g), Wis. Stats.
 - 22) Rural medical centers, as defined in s. 50.50(11), Wis. Stats.
- b. **FMLA** [29 USC s. 2611(6); 29 CFR s. 825.102]
- 1) Doctors of medicine or osteopathy authorized to practice medicine or surgery by the state in which the doctor practices.
 - 2) 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) licensed to practice in the state and performing within the scope of their practice as defined under state law.
 - 3) Nurse practitioners, nurse-midwives, physician assistants and clinical social workers who are authorized to practice in Wisconsin and who are performing within the scope of their practice as defined under state law.
 - 4) Christian Science Practitioners listed with the First Church of Christ, Scientist in Boston, Mass.
 - 5) Any health care provider from whom the employer or the employer's group health plan will accept certification of the existence of a serious health condition to substantiate a claim for benefits.
 - 6) 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 their practice as defined under such law.
14. ***In loco parentis*** means:
- a. **WFMLA**

No definition. This term is not applicable to WFMLA.

- b. **FMLA** [29 CFR s. 825.122(d)(3),]

Persons with day-to-day responsibilities to care for and financially support a child, or in the case of an employee, who had such responsibility for the employee when the employee was a child. A biological or legal relationship is not necessary.

Also see the [DOL Administrator's Interpretation No. 2010-3](#) regarding persons standing in loco parentis, concluding that "either day-to-day care or financial support may establish an in loco parentis relationship where the employee intends to assume the responsibilities of a parent with regard to a child. In all cases, whether an employee stands in loco parentis to a child will depend on the particular facts.

15. **Incapable of self-care** means:

- a. **WFMLA**

No definition. This term is not applicable to WFMLA.

- b. **FMLA** [29 CFR ss. 825.102 & 825.122(d)(1)]

The individual requires active assistance or supervision to provide daily self-care in three or more 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, etc.

16. **Intermittent leave** means:

- a. **WFMLA** [s. 103.10(3)(d), Wis. Stats., s. DWD 225.02(1)]

While the WFMLA does not use the term "intermittent leave," it allows "partial absence from employment." The Administrative Code provides that medical or family leave may be taken in non-continuous increments if the employer allows any other leave to be taken in increments of less than a full workday.

- b. **FMLA** [29 USC s. 2612(b); 29 CFR ss. 825.102, 825.202(a)]

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 months, such as for chemotherapy. (See also definition of "reduced leave schedule.")

17. **Medical leave** means:

- a. **WFMLA** [s. 103.10(4)(a), Wis. Stats.]

Absence from employment due to a serious personal health condition which makes the employee unable to perform their employment duties.

- b. **FMLA** [29 USC s. 2612(a)(1)(d)]

The FMLA does not distinguish between “family leave” and “medical leave” for purposes of leave allotment, but provides leave for an employee to care for their own serious health condition.

18. **Parent** means:

- a. **WFMLA** [s. 103.10(1)(f), Wis. Stats.]

A natural parent, foster parent, adoptive parent, stepparent, or legal guardian of an employee or of an employee’s spouse or domestic partner.

- b. **FMLA** [29 USC s. 2611(7); 29 CFR s. 825.102] *Also see the DOL Administrator’s Interpretation No. 2010-3 regarding persons standing in loco parentis.*

An employee’s biological, adoptive, step, or foster parent, or someone who stood *in loco parentis* to the employee when the employee was a child.

19. **Parent of a covered service member** means:

- a. **WFMLA**

No definition. This term is not applicable to WFMLA.

- b. **FMLA** [29 CFR s. 825.102, 825.122(j)]

A covered service member’s biological, adoptive, step, or foster parent, or any other individual who stood *in loco parentis* to the covered service member. This term does not include parents “in-law.”

20. **Qualifying exigency (pertains to military family members)** means:

- a. **WFMLA**

No definition. This term is not applicable to the WFMLA.

- b. **FMLA** [29 CFR s. 825.126]

Generally, an urgent requirement or pressing need for which FMLA leave may be taken, arising out of the fact that an eligible employee’s spouse, son, daughter, or parent is a military member on covered active duty or has been notified of an impending call or order to covered active duty. A qualifying exigency may be any of the following:

- 1) To address any issue arising from a short-notice deployment (seven days’ notice or less).
- 2) To attend any official ceremony or event sponsored by the military related to the covered active duty or call to covered active duty.
- 3) To attend family support 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.
- 4) To change childcare arrangements for the child(ren) of the military member.
- 5) To provide childcare on a short-term, urgent basis for the child(ren) of the military member.
- 6) To enroll in or transfer to a new school or daycare the child(ren) of the military member.

- 7) To attend meetings with school or daycare staff regarding discipline, parent-teacher conferences, or counselors regarding the child(ren) of the military member.
- 8) To make or update financial or legal arrangements related to the deployment of the military member.
- 9) To act as the military member's representative for obtaining, arranging, or appealing military service benefits; the period of eligibility extends 90 days past the termination of the military member's covered active duty status.
- 10) To attend counseling for the employee, military member, or child(ren) of the military member.
- 11) To spend time with a military member who is on temporary rest and recuperation leave; limit of fifteen calendar days of leave for each instance of rest and recuperation leave.
- 12) To attend arrival ceremonies, reintegration briefings and events, and any other official military ceremony or program for a period of 90 days following the termination of the military member's covered active duty status.
- 13) To address issues that arise from the death of the military member while on covered active duty status.
- 14) To arrange for alternative care for a parent of the military member when the parent is incapable of self-care.
- 15) 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.
- 16) To admit to or transfer to a care facility a parent of the military member.
- 17) 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 (but not for routine or regular meetings).
- 18) By mutual agreement of the employer and employee, any other event arising out of the covered active duty or call to covered active duty status of the military member.

21. **Reduced leave schedule** means:

a. **WFMLA**

No definition. See the definition of "intermittent leave" for information about employees taking leave in non-continuous increments under the WFMLA.

b. **FMLA** [29 CFR ss. 825.102 & 825.202(a)]

A leave schedule that reduces an employee's usual number of working hours per workweek or hours per workday. A reduced leave schedule is a change in the employee's schedule for a period of time, normally from full-time to part-time. A reduced leave schedule is a type of intermittent leave.

22. **Serious health condition** means:

a. **WFMLA** [s. 103.10(1)(g), Wis. Stats.]

A disabling physical or mental illness, injury, impairment or condition involving any of the following:

- 1) Inpatient care in a hospital, as defined in s. 50.33(2), Wis. Stats., nursing home, as defined in s. 50.01(3), Wis. Stats., or hospice.
- 2) Outpatient care that requires continuing treatment or supervision by a health care provider.

b. **FMLA** [29 USC s. 2611(11); 29 CFR ss. 825.102, 825.113-.115, 825.119 & 825.120]

An illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves:

- 1) Inpatient care (i.e., an overnight stay) in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical care facility, including any period of incapacity (defined to mean inability to work, attend school or perform other regular daily activities due to the serious health condition, treatment therefore, or recovery therefrom), or any subsequent treatment in connection with such inpatient care.
- 2) Continuing treatment by a health care provider, as defined above.
- 3) Treatment for purposes of 1) and 2), above, (inpatient care and continuing treatment by a health care provider, respectively), includes, but is not limited to, examination to determine if a serious health condition exists and evaluations of the condition. Treatment does not include routine physical exams, eye exams, or dental exams.
- 4) Substance abuse may be a serious health condition if the conditions in 1) or 2), above, are met. Leave may be taken only for treatment for substance abuse and not because of the employee's use of the substance.
- 5) Restorative dental or plastic surgery after an injury or removals of cancerous growths are serious health conditions if the conditions in 1) or 2), above, are met.
- 6) Mental illness or allergies may be serious health conditions if the conditions in 1) or 2), above, are met.
- 7) Absences attributable to pregnancy or to a chronic serious health condition 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 consecutive, full calendar days.
- 8) 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, etc., are examples of conditions that do not meet the definition of a serious health condition.
- 9) Conditions for which cosmetic treatments are administered (e.g., most treatments for acne or plastic surgery) are not serious health conditions unless inpatient hospital care is required or unless complications develop.

23. **Serious injury or illness** means:

a. **WFMLA**

No definition. This term is not applicable to WFMLA.

b. **FMLA** [29 U.S.C. s. 2611(18); 29 CFR ss. 825.102 & 825.127(c)]

- 1) In the case of a current member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, 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 that may render the service 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, 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 service member unable to perform the duties of the service member'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 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.

24. **Son or daughter**

a. **WFMLA**

See the definition of "child."

b. **FMLA** [29 USC s. 2611(12); 29 CFR s. 825.102]

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 age 18, or age 18 or older and incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability at the time that FMLA leave is to commence.

Also see the [DOL Administrator's Interpretation No. 2010-3](#) regarding persons standing in loco parentis, and [Interpretation No. 2013-1](#) regarding an individual 18 years of age or older and incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability. (Links to both of these DOL documents are also provided in the FMLA Toolkit and on the DOA/DPM website.)

25. **Son or daughter of a covered service member** means:

a. **WFMLA**

No definition. This term is not applicable to WFMLA.

- b. **FMLA** [29 CFR ss. 825.102 & 825.127(d)(1)]

A covered service member's biological, adopted, or foster child, stepchild, legal ward, or a child for whom the covered service member stood *in loco parentis* and who is of any age.

26. **Son or daughter on covered active duty or call to covered active duty status** means:

- a. **WFMLA**

No definition. This term is not applicable to WFMLA.

- b. **FMLA** [29 CFR ss. 825.102, 825.126(a)(5)]

The employee's biological, adopted, or foster child, stepchild, legal ward, or a child for whom the covered employee stood *in loco parentis* who is on covered active duty or call to covered active duty status, and who is of any age.

27. **Spouse** means:

- a. **WFMLA** [s. 103.10(1)(h), Wis. Stats.]

An employee's legal husband or wife.

- b. **FMLA** [29 USC s. 2611(13); 29 CFR ss. 825.102, 825.122(b)]

Spouse, as defined in the statute, means a husband or wife. For purposes of this definition, husband or wife refers to the other person with whom an individual entered into marriage as defined or recognized under state law for purposes of marriage in the State in which the marriage was entered into or, in the case of a marriage entered into outside of any State, if the marriage is valid in the place where entered into and could have been entered into in at least one State. This definition includes an individual in a same-sex or common law marriage that either:

- 1) Was entered into in a State that recognizes such marriages; or
- 2) If entered into outside of any State, is valid in the place where entered into and could have been entered into in at least one State.

Note: As of October 6, 2014, the State of Wisconsin recognizes same-sex marriages under **WFMLA** and **FMLA**, including same-sex marriages validly entered into in other states or countries, and same-sex marriages conducted in Wisconsin on or after October 6, 2014, or during the period from June 6 to June 13, 2014.

28. **Twelve (12)-month period** means:

- a. **WFMLA** [s. DWD 225.01(1)(m), Wis. Adm. Code]

A calendar year commencing immediately after midnight on January 1 and ending at midnight on December 31 each year (for the purpose of delineating the period in which an employee may use their annual allotment of family or medical leave).

- b. **FMLA** [29 CFR ss. 825.127(e)(1) & 825.200(b)(1)]

By policy choice, the calendar year. However, for the sole purpose of defining the "single 12-month period" during which up to 26 workweeks of leave may be taken to care for a service member, the 12-

month period begins on the first day the employee takes FMLA leave to care for the service member and ends 12 months after that date.

The special single 12-month period will usually overlap with the preceding and subsequent regular 12-month periods, and in certain circumstances may overlap with another single 12-month period. Regardless of overlapping, each regular 12-month period and special single 12-month period is considered independently for determining FMLA leave eligibility and counting FMLA leave used within the applicable 12-month period.

29. **Veteran:** See the definition for Covered service member / Covered veteran

30. **Week** means:

a. **WFMLA** [s. DWD 225.01(1)(o), 225.02(2), Wis. Adm. Code]

“Week” means 7 consecutive calendar days for the purpose of establishing whether an employee has been employed for more than 52 consecutive weeks and worked at least 1,000 hours during the preceding 52-week period.

For purposes of partial absence leave, “week” means 5 days of leave which would otherwise be workdays for the requesting employee. For administrative purposes, this is interpreted to mean the number of hours in the employee’s regularly scheduled workweek.

- 1) For full-time employees on standard work schedules, this means 40 hours.
- 2) For part-time employees and employees on flexible schedules such that the number of hours varies from week to week, week normally means the employee’s budgeted percentage of full-time equivalency (FTE) times 40 hours. For employees who are regularly scheduled in advance to work more than 80 hours in a two-week pay period, a week equals the typical number of hours scheduled in each two-week pay period divided by two.
- 3) For seasonal, sessional, and school year employees, week means the projected average number of hours the employee is scheduled to work each calendar week of the current period of appointment.

Note. An FMLA week and a WFMLA week will typically equal the same number of hours.

b. **FMLA** [29 CFR s. 825.205(b)]

The employee’s normally scheduled workweek. 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 week is calculated as the weekly average of the hours scheduled over the 12 months prior to the beginning of the leave period (including any hours for which the employee took leave of any type).

Sec. 724.050 Eligibility Requirements

Note: In determining the eligibility of an employee under 1., 2., and 3., below, all three branches of WI state government are considered “the State” as a single employer. Therefore, any combination of service in the executive branch (including the University of Wisconsin System), the legislative branch, and judicial branch counts towards eligibility requirements for duration of employment and quantity of hours worked or in pay status, as applicable.

However, employment by a state authority does NOT qualify as state service, because employees of authorities are not included as part of the state civil service under s. 230.08, Wis. Stats., or s. 36.115(4), Wis. Stats. State

authorities include the University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics (UW Health), the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority, the Wisconsin Health and Educational Facilities Authority, the Wisconsin Aerospace Authority, and the Fox River Navigational System Authority.

1. Eligibility for leave:

a. **WFMLA** [s. 103.10(2)(c), Wis. Stats.; DWD 225.01(3)-(4)]

Employees are eligible for leave provided the employee:

- 1) Has been employed by the State for more than 52 consecutive weeks (see 2. below); **and**
- 2) Has worked for the State for at least 1,000 hours (*including* paid leave) during the preceding 52 week period.

b. **FMLA** [29 USC s. 2611(2); 29 CFR ss. 825.102, 825.110]

1) Employees are eligible for leave provided the employee:

- a) Has been employed by the State for at least 12 months (which need not be 12 consecutive months). However, employment periods prior to a break in service of seven years or more need not be counted, except as set forth under 2), below; **and**
- b) Has worked for the State at least 1,250 hours (**not including** paid leave) during the 12 months immediately preceding the beginning of the requested leave.

Note: Pursuant to the federal Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA), an employee returning from fulfilling their 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. The employee's pre-service work schedule can generally be used for calculations.

- 2) Employment periods preceding a break in service seven years or more need not be counted in determining whether the employee has been employed by the state for at least 12 months, except:
 - a) Preceding service must be counted if the break in service was caused by the employee fulfilling their military service obligation covered under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA).
 - b) Preceding service must be counted if a written agreement exists concerning the state's intention to rehire the employee after the break in service.
- 3) Determination of whether an employee has worked for at least 1,250 hours in the past 12 months and has been employed by the employer for a total of at least 12 months must be made as of the date leave commences.
- 4) The employee must be informed of their eligibility within five business days of when the employer acquires knowledge that an employee's leave may be for an FMLA-qualifying reason, absent extenuating circumstances.
- 5) If an employee is on non-FMLA leave at the time he or she meets the eligibility requirements, any portion of the leave taken for an FMLA-qualifying reason after the employee meets the eligibility requirement is FMLA leave.

2. “Employed by” means to be in “employment status,” as defined in section 724.040 of this handbook chapter.

- a. **WFMLA** [s. DWD 225.01(3), Wis. Adm. Code]

An employee is deemed to have been employed by the State for more than 52 consecutive weeks if the employee has been in employment status with the State during each of those 52 weeks, irrespective of the number of hours worked in each week. The 52 weeks do not necessarily have to be the 52 weeks immediately preceding the requested leave.

- b. **FMLA** [29 USC s. 2611(3); 29 CFR ss. 825.102, 825.110(b)]

An employee is deemed to have been employed by the State for at least 12 months if the employee has been in employment status with the State during each of those 12 months, irrespective of the number of hours worked in each month. The 12 months do not have to be consecutive months nor do they necessarily have to be the 12 months immediately preceding the requested leave, except that employment periods prior to a break in service of seven years or more need not be counted except in limited circumstances noted in 1./b.(2), above.

3. Minimum number of required hours worked in the preceding 12 months:

- a. **WFMLA** [s. DWD 225.01(4), Wis. Adm. Code]

1,000 Hours. A person shall be deemed to have “worked for the employer for at least 1,000 hours during the preceding 52-week period” if the number of hours actually *worked* in that period *plus* the number of hours for which the employee was paid for accrued leave (e.g., sick leave, annual leave, personal/legal holiday, etc.) equals at least 1,000 hours.

- b. **FMLA** [29 USC s. 2611(2)(A)(ii); 29 CFR s. 825.110(c)]

1,250 Hours. A person shall be deemed to have “worked for the employer for at least 1,250 hours in the 12-month period immediately preceding the beginning of the requested leave” if the number of hours actually *worked* in that period, *not including* hours for which paid leave was used, equals at least 1,250 hours. An employee returning from fulfilling their 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.

4. Other leave benefits:

WFMLA & FMLA [WFMLA: s. 103.10(2)(a)-(b); FMLA: 29 CFR ss. 825.700-702]

Employees who do not meet these eligibility requirements may be eligible for other leave benefits under s. 230.35, Wis. Stats., Ch. ER 18, Wis. Adm. Code, or the public safety collective bargaining agreement.

Sec. 724.060 Leave Entitlements—Reasons and Duration

1. Reasons for leave:

- a. **WFMLA** [ss. 103.10(3)&(4), Wis. Stats.]

Eligible employees are entitled to use leave under WFMLA when taken for the following purposes:

- 1) *Family leave* may be taken for the birth of the employee's natural child, if the leave begins within 16 weeks before or after the child's birth.
- 2) *Family leave* may be taken for the placement of a child with the employee for adoption or as a precondition to adoption, but not both, if the leave begins within 16 weeks before or after the child's placement.
- 3) *Family leave* may be taken to care for the employee's child, spouse, domestic partner, or parent (including parent in-law or domestic partner's parent) with a serious health condition.
- 4) *Medical leave* may be taken for the serious health condition of the employee that makes the employee unable to perform the functions of their position.

For 1) and 2), above, see section 724.070 1.f., of this handbook chapter, for further explanation of the 16-week requirement.

- b. **FMLA** [29 USC s. 2612(a)(1), (3); 29 CFR ss. 825.112(a), 825.120 and 825.121]

Eligible employees may use leave under FMLA when taken for the following purposes:

- 1) For the birth of the employee's child *and* to care for the newborn child. Leave to bond with the healthy newborn child may be taken starting with the date of birth but must conclude within 12 months following birth.
- 2) For placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care. Leave may begin before the placement as needed for the placement process to proceed, but must be concluded within 12 months following placement. Employees must be informed of their agency's policy regarding intermittent adoption or foster care leave at the time FMLA is requested.
- 3) To care for the employee's child, spouse, or parent (*not* including parent in-law) with a serious health condition, including both physical care and psychological comfort and reassurance. This also includes situations where the employee may be needed to fill in for others who are caring for the family member or covered service member, or to make arrangements for changes in care, such as transfer to a nursing home.
- 4) For the serious health condition of the employee that makes the employee unable to perform any one or more of the essential functions of the employee's position. An employee who must 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.
- 5) A pregnant employee is entitled to FMLA leave for incapacity due to pregnancy for prenatal care, or for their own serious health condition following the birth of the child. The employee is entitled to leave for incapacity due to pregnancy even though they do not receive treatment from a health care provider during the absence, and even if the absence does not last for more than three consecutive calendar days. For example, a pregnant employee may be unable to report to work because of severe morning sickness.
- 6) For any qualifying exigency arising from the fact that the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent is a military member on covered active duty or has been notified of an impending call or order to covered active duty. Refer to the definition of "qualifying exigency" in section 724.040 of this handbook chapter and the federal regulations at s. 825.126 for more information on the following types of qualifying exigencies.

- a) Short-notice deployment of seven days or less.
 - b) Military events and related activities.
 - c) Childcare and school activities.
 - d) Financial and legal arrangements.
 - e) Counseling.
 - f) Rest and recuperation, with a limit of 15 calendar days of leave for each instance.
 - g) Post-deployment activities within 90 days after the termination of covered active duty.
 - h) Parental care.
 - i) Additional activities by mutual agreement of the agency and employee.
- 7) To care for a covered service member (which includes certain veterans – see the definition of “covered service member” in section 724.040) with a serious injury or illness if the employee is the spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin of the service member.

2. Length of leave:

- a. **WFMLA** [ss. 103.10(3)&(4), Wis. Stats., s. DWD 225.02, Wis. Adm. Code]

During a calendar year, eligible employees may not take more than:

- 1) Six weeks of family leave for birth or placement of a child, as specified under 1.a.1) and 2), above. An employee is limited to a total of six weeks of leave for each birth or placement event, even if the eligibility period extends across two calendar years.
- 2) Two weeks of family leave to care for a family member, as specified under 1.a.3), above.
- 3) Two weeks of medical leave for the employee’s own serious health condition, as specified in 1.a.4), above.

Note: Because the WFMLA specifies different leave entitlements for different purposes, an employee may have WFMLA leave available even after exhausting all FMLA leave. For example, if an employee has a serious illness which causes the employee to be absent from work for 12 weeks in one year, thereby using up all 12 weeks of FMLA leave, this employee has used only the 2 weeks of WFMLA leave specified for the employee’s own serious health condition. The employee has not used any of the WFMLA 2 weeks of family leave to care for a family member with a serious health condition, or any of the WFMLA 6 weeks of family leave for birth or placement of a child.

- b. **FMLA** [29 USC s. 2612(a)(1), (3)-(4); 29 CFR ss. 825.200 & 825.127(e)]

- 1) Eligible employees are entitled to use 12 workweeks of unpaid leave for FMLA-qualifying purposes during each calendar year, except in the special case of leave to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness. See 2), below.

Note: Federal regulations provide that spouses who are both eligible for FMLA leave and are both employed with the same employer, are permitted to take only a combined total of 12 weeks of leave

during a calendar year under certain circumstances. However, denying married state employees their full 12-week FMLA leave entitlement would be a violation of Wisconsin's Fair Employment Law, therefore, this spousal restriction is unavailable to state agencies.

- 2) Eligible employees are entitled to use 26 workweeks of unpaid leave during a "single 12-month period" to care for a covered service member (including a covered veteran) with a serious injury or illness. This single 12-month period begins on the first day the employee takes FMLA leave to care for the service member and ends 12 months after that date.

During this single 12-month period, an eligible employee's FMLA leave entitlement is limited to a combined total of 26 workweeks of FMLA leave for any qualifying reason. However, during this single 12-month period, no more than 12 weeks of leave may be taken for any FMLA-qualifying reason(s) other than to care for a covered service member.

- 3) Multiple or overlapping single 12-month periods: The 26-workweek leave entitlement is to be applied on a per-covered-service member, per-injury basis such that an eligible employee may be entitled to take more than one period of 26 workweeks of leave if the leave is to care for a different covered service member or to care for the same service member with a subsequent serious injury or illness. If one single 12-month period overlaps with another, the employee is limited to 26 workweeks of FMLA leave in each single 12-month period considered independently.
- 4) Interaction of special single 12-month period with regular calendar year FMLA entitlement: State employees receive the regular 12-workweek FMLA entitlement on a per-calendar-year basis. The special single 12-month period to care for a covered service member will rarely coincide with the calendar year, and therefore creates a situation where the single 12-month period overlaps with both the previous and the subsequent calendar year FMLA periods. Agencies should consider each single 12-month period and calendar year period independently for counting FMLA leave. For regular calendar year periods, leave to care for a covered service member that occurred during the special single 12-month period should not be counted against the employee's regular 12-week entitlement for the calendar year. Leave taken after the single 12-month period to care for the service member who is the employee's FMLA family member, may be counted toward the 12-weeks of FMLA leave in the calendar year.

Sec. 724.070 Leave Request, Scheduling and Approval Process

Note: Hyperlinks are provided in the FMLA Toolkit in Attachment 1 to all FMLA forms and posters referenced in this handbook chapter. Alternatively, see the [FMLA Toolkit](#) on the DOA/DPM website.

When an employee requests leave for the first time in a calendar year for a purpose that may be covered under the WFMLA or FMLA, agencies should start the administrative process by asking the employee to complete the form [Family and Medical Leave-Employee Request](#) (DOA-15322). Agencies may require this form again if an employee's leave request changes substantially from an earlier request within the same year.

1. **WFMLA** [ss. 103.10(4) & (6), Wis. Stats., ss. DWD 225.02(1), (3), (4), (6), (7) & (8), Wis. Adm. Code]
 - a. If an employee intends to take family leave for the birth or adoption of a child, the employee shall, in a reasonable and practicable manner, give the employing agency advance notice of the expected birth or placement.
 - b. If an employee intends to take family leave because of the planned medical treatment or supervision of a family member, or medical leave for the planned medical treatment of the employee, the employee shall do all of the following:

- 1) Make a reasonable effort to schedule the medical treatment or supervision so that it does not unduly disrupt the agency's operation, subject to the approval of the health care provider of the family member.
 - a) The employee shall provide the employing agency with a proposed schedule for the leave with reasonable promptness after the employee learns of the probable necessity of the leave.
 - b) Except where precluded by the need for health care consultation or treatment, the proposed schedule shall be sufficiently definite so that the employing agency is able to schedule replacement employees, to the extent replacement employees need to be scheduled, to cover the absence of the employee taking the leave.
- 2) Give the employing agency advance notice of the medical treatment or supervision in a reasonable and practicable manner. The notice shall:
 - a) Identify the planned dates of the leave.
 - b) Be given to the employing agency by the employee with reasonable promptness after the employee learns of the probable necessity of the leave.
 - c) An employing agency may require that notice of leave be in writing if the requirement is a written policy, if it governs all employees of the employing agency, and if the employee has been made aware of the policy.
 - d) Family leave requested by an employee may be denied by the employing agency if the employee substantially fails to provide the employing agency with proper notice of that leave.
 - e) An employee may schedule medical leave (leave due to the employee's own serious health condition) as medically necessary.
 - f) An employee may begin family leave for birth or placement no earlier than 16 weeks before the estimated date of birth of a natural child or placement of an adoptive child and no later than 16 weeks after the actual date of birth or placement. If leave for these purposes is taken incrementally, all non-continuous increments must begin within 16 weeks of the actual birth or placement.
 - g) Leave available during a calendar year shall be used within that calendar year. No more than six weeks of leave may be used by an employee for the birth or adoption of any one child, even if eligibility for leave extends into another calendar year. Birth or adoption of more than one child at the same time is considered a single event. When this occurs, an employee does not receive an additional six weeks of leave for each additional child.
 - h) An employee may take family or medical leave in non-continuous increments (i.e., partial absence from employment). A partial absence must be in a time increment which is compatible with DPM and agency policies governing absences from employment for purposes other than WFMLA leave. The shortest increment permissible is the shortest increment the employing agency allows to be taken by that employee for any other type of non-emergency leave.
 - i) Conclusion of Leave: Family or medical leave available during the calendar year must be used within that calendar year. If not used, the employee's entitlement to the leave expires at the end of the calendar year in which the leave was earned.

2. **FMLA** [29 USC s. 2612(e); 29 CFR ss. 825.127(e)(4) & 825.300-825.304]
- a. Employees are required to provide agencies at least 30 days' advance notice of the need to take leave if the need for leave is foreseeable (e.g., birth of a child, planned medical treatment). If 30 days' notice is not practicable, the employee must provide notice as soon as practicable. If an employee fails to provide timely notice as required, the agency may deny the leave request until up to 30 days after the date notice is actually provided, based on the amount of additional notice the employee could reasonably have provided.
 - b. Employees are required to comply with agency and/or workplace usual and customary notice and procedural requirements for requesting leave, absent unusual circumstances, such as in the case of a medical emergency. If an employee does not comply with the agency/workplace usual notice and procedural requirements, and no unusual circumstances justify the failure to comply, FMLA-protected leave may be delayed or denied.
 - c. When the need for leave is foreseeable for the planned medical treatment of the employee, a family member, or a covered service member, the employee shall make a reasonable effort to schedule the treatment so as not to disrupt unduly the operations of the employer, subject to the approval of the health care provider of the employee or the health care provider of the family member or service member.
 - d. Upon receipt of the employee's request for leave, the agency must provide the employee with a copy of the [Notice of Eligibility and Rights & Responsibilities](#) within five business days.

Note: See section 724.110 of this handbook chapter regarding Recordkeeping. Agencies must keep copies of records related to FMLA leave for three years under RDA HR000157.

Note: The FMLA regulations require three types of notice to an employee taking leave that may qualify as FMLA leave: notice of eligibility, notice of rights and responsibilities, and designation notice. Since the notice of eligibility and the notice of rights and responsibilities are to be provided to the employee at the same time, they are combined here into a single step, and included as Parts A and B on a single form, [Notice of Eligibility and Rights & Responsibilities](#) (DOA-15325). The final required notice, notice of designation, may be given to the employee at the same time as the notices of eligibility and rights & responsibilities if the agency has sufficient information at that time to designate leave as FMLA leave.

- e. Notice to employee of eligibility and rights & responsibilities: Agencies should use the [FMLA Notice of Eligibility and Rights & Responsibilities](#) form, which satisfies the information requirements of the FMLA regulations and is also compatible with WFMLA leave administration. Agencies must provide notice of eligibility and notice of rights and responsibilities within five days of an employee request for leave that may qualify as FMLA leave, or within five days from when the agency acquires knowledge that an employee's leave may be for an FMLA qualifying reason.
 - 1) The eligibility notice must state whether the employee is eligible for FMLA leave. If the employee is not eligible for FMLA leave, the notice must state at least one reason the employee is not eligible. Notification of eligibility may be oral or in writing, and must be in a language understood by the employee.
 - 2) 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 12-month period. No further notice to the employee of FMLA eligibility during the applicable 12-month period is required unless both the following are true: the employee provides notice of a subsequent need for FMLA leave due to a different FMLA-qualifying reason; and the employee's eligibility status has changed.

- 3) The notices of eligibility and rights and responsibilities must be in a language understood by the employee. The *Rights and Responsibilities* must be in writing.
 - 4) The rights and responsibilities notice must detail the specific expectations and obligations of the employee and explain any consequences of a failure to meet these obligations.
 - 5) The rights and responsibilities notice must be accompanied by any medical certification form or other certification form the agency will require.
- f. Designation notice: Agencies should use the [Designation Notice](#) form (DOA-15324), which satisfies the information requirements of the FMLA regulations and is also compatible with WFMLA leave administration.

Note: In all circumstances, it is the agency's responsibility to designate leave, paid or unpaid, as FMLA-qualifying, and to give notice of the designation to the employee. Therefore, agencies must obtain enough information from the employee or the employee's spokesperson to determine if leave should be considered leave under FMLA. Refer to section 724.130 of this handbook chapter, entitled "Certification" for information detailing employer rights and employee obligations regarding certification of leave as FMLA leave.

- 1) When the agency has enough information to determine whether the leave is being taken for an FMLA-qualifying reason (e.g., after receiving a certification), the agency must notify the employee in writing whether or not the leave will be designated and counted as FMLA leave within five business days, absent extenuating circumstances. Only one designation notice is required for each FMLA-qualifying reason per applicable 12-month period.
 - 2) If the agency will require the employee to present a fitness-for-duty certification to be restored to employment, the agency must provide notice of such requirement with the designation notice. Refer to Section 724.150 2./f. for details on the process and requirements for fitness-for-duty certification.
 - 3) If the information provided by the agency to the employee in the designation notice changes (e.g., the employee exhausts the FMLA leave entitlement), the agency shall provide written notice of the change within five business days of receipt of the employee's first notice of need for leave subsequent to any change.
 - 4) The agency must notify the employee of the amount of leave counted against the employee's FMLA leave entitlement. If it is not possible in advance to determine the amount of leave, then the agency 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 30-day period in which leave was taken. The notice of the amount of FMLA leave taken may be oral or in writing. If oral, it shall be confirmed in writing, no later than the next payday which occurs at least one week later. Written notice may be in any form.
 - 5) If leave would qualify as both leave to care for a covered service member during a single 12-month period and leave to care for a family member with a serious health condition, the leave shall be designated and counted as leave to care for a covered service member, and not as leave to care for a family member with a serious health condition.
- g. Retroactive designation: If an agency does not designate leave in a timely manner, the agency may retroactively designate leave as FMLA leave with appropriate notice to the employee provided that the employer's failure to timely designate leave does not cause harm or injury to the

employee. In all cases, an employer and an employee can mutually agree that leave be retroactively designated as FMLA leave.

- h. Dispute Resolution: 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 must be documented.
- i. Conclusion of Leave: Leave available during the calendar year must be used within that calendar year. Leave available during a single 12-month period to care for a covered service member must be used within that single 12-month period. If not used, the employee's entitlement to the leave expires at the end of the 12-month period in which the leave was earned. An employee's entitlement to leave for birth, adoption, or foster care expires 12 months after the date of birth, placement for adoption or foster care.

Sec. 724.080 Intermittent Leave

- 1. **WFMLA** [s. 103.10(3)(d), (4), (6), Wis. Stats., s. DWD 225.02(3)-(5), Wis. Adm. Code]
 - a. An employee who takes intermittent family or medical leave shall attempt to schedule all absences so as not to unduly disrupt the employing agency's operation.
 - 1) An employee is deemed to have scheduled intermittent leave for birth or adoption in a manner that does not unduly disrupt the employing agency's operations if:
 - a) The employee provides the employing agency with notice of the employee's proposed schedule of intermittent leave which is at least as much notice as the shortest notice that the employee is required to give the employing agency for the taking of any other non-emergency or non-medical leave, *and*
 - b) The schedule is sufficiently definite for the employing agency to be able to schedule replacement employees, to the extent replacement employees are required, to cover for the absences.

Note: Any period of WFMLA leave for the birth of a child or placement of a child for adoption must begin within 16 weeks before or after the birth or placement.

- 2) An employee is deemed to have made a reasonable effort to schedule intermittent leave for purposes other than birth or adoption in a manner that does not unduly disrupt the employing agency operations if:
 - a) The employee provides the employing agency with a proposed schedule for the intermittent leave with reasonable promptness after the employee learns of the probable necessity for the leave, *and*
 - b) Except where precluded by the need for health care consultation or treatment, if that proposed schedule is sufficiently definite that the employing agency is able to schedule replacement employees, to the extent replacement employees need to be scheduled, to cover the absence of the employee taking the leave.
 - c) An employing agency may require an employee to provide written notice of scheduled leave if the requirement is a written policy, it governs all employees of the employing agency and the employee has been made aware of the policy.
- 2. **FMLA** [29 USC s. 2611(9), s. 2612(b); 29 CFR ss. 825.202-.206]

- a. Intermittent leave or leave on a reduced work schedule:
 - 1) *Must* be granted when medically necessary to care for, or to provide psychological comfort to, a family member with a serious health condition or a covered service member with a serious injury or illness.
 - 2) *Must* be granted when medically necessary for the employee's own serious health condition.
 - 3) *Must* be granted when necessary because of a qualifying exigency.
 - 4) *May* be granted when taken as bonding leave for the birth, adoption, or foster care placement of the employee's healthy child.

<p>Note: It is the policy of the State of Wisconsin to grant, when at all possible, requests for bonding provided:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) The request was submitted in accordance with agency leave request guidelines;2) All requested leave concludes within 12 months following the date of birth or placement; and3) The scheduling of leave is based upon operational needs.
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- b. An employee needing an intermittent or reduced leave schedule for planned medical treatment must make a reasonable effort to schedule the treatment so as not to unduly disrupt the agency's operations.
- c. Only the amount of leave actually taken may be counted toward the 12 workweeks of leave. For example, if an employee who normally works five eight-hour days per week takes one day off, the employee would use eight hours of FMLA entitlement.
- d. 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 12 months prior to the beginning of the leave period would be used for calculating the employee's leave entitlement.
- e. When an employee takes intermittent leave or has reduced leave schedule, the agency must 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. 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. In all cases, employees may not be charged FMLA leave for periods during which they are working.
- f. 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 and there is no equivalent position 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 agency must follow the same protocol for employees who are not able to commence or end work mid-way through a shift but are not under the protections of FMLA.
- g. Leave without pay for any number of hours taken as intermittent leave for documented FMLA-qualifying purposes **will not** affect an eligible employee's FLSA exempt status.
- h. In certain circumstances (*see Section 724.100—Alternative Employment*) an employee requesting intermittent or reduced schedule leave may be required temporarily to transfer to a position with equivalent pay and benefits which better accommodates recurring periods of leave.

Sec. 724.090 Overtime/Additional Hours

1. **WFMLA**
 - a. An employee may have a WFMLA qualified event that may limit them from working more than a certain number of hours on a shift, in a day or in a week that result in unanticipated absences. If an employee would be required to work overtime/additional hours, but does not work them due to the employee's unanticipated absence due to their WFMLA qualified event, the number of hours not worked should be counted as WFMLA time used. For example, if an employee would have been required to work for 48 hours in a particular week, but due to their WFMLA qualified event the employee is unable to work more than 40 hours that week, the employee would utilize eight hours of WFMLA leave out of the 48 hour workweek.
 - b. The employee may not substitute paid leave for WFMLA unpaid leave for required overtime/additional hours not worked except to the extent that such use of paid leave in lieu of working the required overtime/additional hours would be available to a similarly situated employee without a WFMLA serious health condition who was unable to work overtime/additional hours.
2. **FMLA** (29 CFR s. 825.205(c))
 - a. If an employee normally would be required to work overtime/additional hours, but is unable to do so because of an FMLA-qualifying reason that limits the employee's ability to work overtime/additional hours, 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 an intermittent or reduced leave schedule. For example, if an employee would normally be required to work for 48 hours in a particular week, but due to a serious health condition the employee is unable to work more than 40 hours that week, the employee would utilize eight hours of FMLA leave out of the 48-hour workweek ($8/48 = 1/6$ workweek).
 - b. Voluntary overtime/additional hours ("as needed" or not part of usual workweek) that an employee does not work due to a FMLA qualifying reason may not be counted against the employee's FMLA leave entitlement.
 - c. The employee may not substitute paid leave for FMLA unpaid leave for required overtime/additional hours not worked except to the extent that such paid leave would be available to the employee in lieu of working the required overtime/additional hours regardless of FMLA eligibility.

Sec. 724.100 Alternative Employment

1. **WFMLA** [s. 103.10(10), Wis. Stats.]

The employing agency and an employee with a serious health condition are not prohibited from mutually agreeing to alternative employment for the employee while the serious health condition lasts. No period of alternative employment with the State reduces the employee's right to family or medical leave.

2. **FMLA** [29 CFR s. 825.204]
 - a. If an employee requests intermittent leave or leave on a reduced schedule that is foreseeable based on planned medical treatment or if the agency has approved use of intermittent bonding leave for birth, adoption, or foster care. The agency may require the employee to transfer temporarily 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. The alternative position must have equivalent pay and benefits but it need not have equivalent duties. The 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.

- b. Transfer to an alternative position may require compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, other Federal or State law, or the public safety collective bargaining agreement.
- c. When the employee no longer needs to continue on intermittent or a reduced leave schedule, he or she must be placed in the same or equivalent job as the job held at the time the leave commenced.

Sec. 724.110 Recordkeeping

1. WFMLA

While WFMLA does not provide any specific requirements for the retention of WFMLA related records, the [General Records Schedule: Human Resources and Related Records](#) provides for a three (3) year retention for requests and related records. See RDA HR000157 for more information.

2. FMLA [29 USC s. 2616(b); 29 CFR s. 825.500]

FMLA provides that agencies shall make, keep, and preserve records pertaining to their obligations under the Act in accordance with the recordkeeping requirements of section 11(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and in accordance with Department of Labor regulations. Agencies are required to keep records for no less than three years of all leave taken under FMLA. These records must disclose the following:

- a. Basic payroll and identifying employee data, including name, address, and occupation; rate of pay and terms of compensation (i.e., salary vs. hourly); daily and weekly hours worked per pay period; additions to or deductions from wages; and total compensation paid.
- b. Dates FMLA leave is taken by employees. Leave must be designated in records as FMLA leave; leave so designated may not include other leave provided under state law or by collective bargaining agreement or administrative code which does not simultaneously qualify as leave under FMLA.
- c. The hours of the leave, if FMLA leave is taken in increments of less than one full day.
- d. Copies of employee notices of leave furnished to the agency under FMLA and copies of all notices given to employees as required under FMLA. These copies will be maintained in the employee's medical file. Medical records are strictly confidential and **must** be kept separate from personnel files.
- e. Any documents (including written and electronic records) describing employee benefits or agency policies and practices regarding the taking of paid and unpaid leave.
- f. Premium payments of employee benefits.
- g. Records of any dispute between the agency and an employee regarding designation of leave as FMLA leave, including any written statement from the agency or employee of the reasons for the designation and for the disagreement.
- h. Records and documents relating to medical certification, recertification or medical histories of employees or employees' family members, created for purposes of FMLA, must be maintained as

confidential medical records in separate files from the usual personnel files. If the 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 (*see* 29 CFR 1635.9), which permit such information to be disclosed consistent with the requirements of FMLA. If the ADA, as amended, is also applicable, such records must be maintained in conformance with ADA confidentiality requirements (*see* 29 CFR 1630.14(c)(1)), 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, when appropriate, if the employee's physical or medical condition might require emergency treatment.
- 3) Government officials investigating compliance with FMLA shall be provided relevant information upon request.

Sec. 724.120 Substitution of Paid Leave

1. **WFMLA** [s. 103.10(5)(b), Wis. Stats.; ss. DWD 225.03 & 225.031, Wis. Adm. Code]
 - a. At the employee's option, an employee may substitute, for portions of family leave or medical leave, accrued paid or unpaid leave of any other type provided by the employer. However, an employee may not substitute paid leave for required overtime/additional hours not worked due to a medical restriction on working such overtime/additional hours, except to the extent a similarly situated employee without a medical restriction would be allowed to substitute paid leave in lieu of working the overtime/additional hours. See section 724.090 of this handbook chapter for more information on overtime/additional hours and the WFMLA.
 - b. Employees may use accrued sick leave during absences for which accrued sick leave is otherwise unavailable. For example, an employee's absence due to birth or adoption may result in simultaneous use of family leave and sick leave, to the extent to which the employee chooses to use accrued sick leave.
 - c. An employee's use of family leave for purposes of birth or adoption shall result in simultaneous use of parental leave granted under ss. ER 18.14(2)(d) and (e), Wis. Adm. Code, or the applicable collective bargaining agreement.
 - d. An employee is eligible to continue using accrued sick leave as long as the employee meets the eligibility requirements of s. ER 18.03(4), Wis. Adm. Code, or the applicable collective bargaining agreement.
 - e. The employing agency *may not require* an employee to substitute sick leave, annual leave, personal or legal holidays, or compensatory time off credits for unpaid family/medical leave.
 - f. An employee who uses accrued sick leave credits in accordance with s. ER 18.03(4), Wis. Adm. Code, or the applicable collective bargaining agreement, for a purpose that would qualify for leave under the WFMLA shall be deemed to have used WFMLA leave.
 - g. Any period that an employee is absent from work while on worker's compensation leave or s. 230.36, Wis. Stats., hazardous duty disability paid leave should not be counted as time used under the WFMLA (though it may be counted under the federal FMLA).

2. **FMLA** [29 CFR s. 825.207]
- a. Generally, FMLA leave is unpaid. However, FMLA permits employees to request the use of accumulated annual leave, personal/legal holidays, compensatory time, or a combination thereof, during all or part of unpaid FMLA leave. Such substitution of paid leave during a period of FMLA leave may be subject to the terms and conditions of the agency's normal leave policy and an applicable labor agreement, and the employee must then satisfy any requirements of the paid leave policy or labor agreement to substitute any such paid leave. If an employee does not comply with the requirements in the agency's paid leave policy or applicable labor agreement, the employee is not entitled to substitute accrued paid leave, but the employee remains entitled to take unpaid FMLA leave.
 - b. Employees may substitute sick leave in addition to the leave noted in a., above, for all or any part of unpaid FMLA leave needed to care for a family member with a serious health condition or for the employee's own serious health condition. Use of sick leave is allowed only to the extent the circumstances meet the requirements for use of sick leave under s. ER 18.03, Wis. Adm. Code, or the applicable collective bargaining agreement, and the employee complies with agency and labor agreement procedures for requesting and using sick leave.
 - c. When an employee chooses to substitute accrued paid leave, the agency must inform the employee that the employee must satisfy any procedural requirements of the paid leave policy only in connection with receipt of such payment. This may be accomplished in the rights and responsibilities notice provided to the employee along with the FMLA eligibility notice.
 - d. Agencies may not discriminate against employees on FMLA leave in the administration of their paid leave policies.
 - e. Agencies may not require the use of unused accumulated annual leave, personal/legal holidays, sick leave, or a combination thereof, for portions of unpaid FMLA leave prior to use of leave without pay.

Note: Although FMLA law allows employers to require that employees use accrued paid leave during FMLA leave, state agencies may not require state employees to substitute accrued paid leave.

- f. Under no circumstances will employees be entitled to additional family and/or medical leave as a result of the substitution of paid leave for unpaid leave under FMLA.
- g. Any leave, with or without pay, designated as leave under FMLA will count against the employee's FMLA entitlement.
- h. Use of paid leave under circumstances which do *not* qualify as FMLA leave will not count against the 12 weeks of FMLA leave to which the employee is entitled. For example, paid sick leave used for a medical condition which is not a serious health condition does not count against the 12 weeks of FMLA leave entitlement.
- i. Worker's compensation. When a serious health condition results from injury to an employee while on the job, the employee's FMLA entitlement will run concurrently with the worker's compensation absence and/or hazardous duty leave under Section 230.36 Wis. Stats. If the health care provider treating the employee for the worker's 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 offer of a light duty job. As a result, the employee may lose worker's compensation payments or hazardous duty disability leave payments, but is entitled to remain on unpaid FMLA leave until the 12-week entitlement is exhausted. The employee may substitute accrued paid leave for unpaid FMLA leave in accordance with section 724.120 of this handbook chapter.

Sec. 724.130 Certification

1. **WFMLA** [ss. 103.10(7) & (12)(c), Wis. Stats., s. DWD 225.02(9), Wis. Adm. Code]
 - a. The employing agency may require an employee to provide certification if the employee requests medical leave, or requests family leave to care for a family member because the family member has a serious health condition.
 - c. The required certification shall be issued by the health care provider or Christian Science practitioner of the employee or family member, whichever is appropriate.
 - d. No employing agency may require certification stating more than the following:
 - 1) That the employee or family member has a serious health condition.
 - 2) The date the serious health condition commenced and its probable duration.
 - 3) Within the knowledge of the health care provider or Christian Science practitioner, the medical facts regarding the serious health condition.
 - 4) If the employee requests medical leave, an explanation of the extent to which the employee is unable to perform their employment duties.
 - d. The employing agency may require the employee to obtain the opinion of a second health care provider, chosen and paid for by the employing agency, concerning any information certified under c., above.
 - e. If two or more health care providers disagree about any of the information required to be certified, DWD may appoint another health care provider to examine the employee or family member. DWD shall notify the employee and the employing agency of the appointment. The employing agency and the employee shall each pay 50 percent of the cost of the examination and opinion.
 - f. Except where emergency health care consultation or treatment is required, an employing agency may deny a requested leave where the agency has made a proper request for certification as to that leave, and the employee fails or refuses to provide the requested certification.

Note: The federal Department of Labor (DOL) provides detailed medical certification forms for use under the federal FMLA. One form is for the employee's serious health condition (WH-380-E) and another form is for a family member's serious health condition (WH-380-F). (The DOL has additional certification forms to certify the serious injury or illness of a current service member or covered veteran, and for qualifying exigencies related to the foreign deployment of a military service member.) Although the WFMLA restricts employers from requiring information beyond the subjects listed in 1.c., above, the detailed questions on the federal FMLA medical certification forms solicit information that remains within the permissible subjects under the WFMLA. Therefore, it has been determined that agencies will use the federal FMLA forms for leave covered under both the WFMLA and FMLA.

2. **FMLA** [29 USC s. 2613; 29 CFR ss. 825.305-825.313]
 - a. Certification—General Rules
 - 1) Medical certification may be required when leave under FMLA is requested for the serious health condition of the employee or the employee's family member, or to care for a covered service member with a serious illness or injury. Also, certification (non-medical) may be required for FMLA leave because of a qualifying exigency. If the agency is requiring medical certification, or certification of the need for leave for a qualifying exigency, the employee must be provided with written notice that such certification is required as part of

the rights and responsibilities notice. For subsequent certifications in the same calendar year where it is not necessary to provide a rights and responsibilities notice to the employee, an oral request to an employee is sufficient. The agency has the option, in requiring certification of the employee's own serious health condition, to provide a description of the essential functions of the employee's position for the health care provider to review.

- 2) The agency should request certification within five business days after the employee provides notice of the need for leave, or, in the case of unforeseen leave, within five business days after the leave commences. The agency may request certification at some later date if the employer later has reason to question the appropriateness of the leave or its duration.
- 3) At the time the agency requests certification, the agency must also advise an employee of the anticipated consequences of an employee's failure to provide adequate certification, including the denial of FMLA leave.
- 4) Employees must be allowed at least 15 calendar days to return the certification unless it is not practicable under the particular circumstances despite the employee's diligent, good faith efforts. The agency must advise the employee of the possible consequences of failure to provide adequate certification. Should an employee fail to provide timely certification, leave may be denied.
- 5) The employee must provide a complete and sufficient certification, if required by the agency. A certification is considered incomplete if the agency receives a certification, but one or more of the applicable entries have not been completed. A certification is considered insufficient if the agency receives a complete certification, but the information provided is vague, ambiguous, or non-responsive.
- 6) The agency shall advise an employee whenever it finds a certification incomplete or insufficient, and shall state in writing what additional information is necessary to make the certification complete and sufficient. The agency must provide the employee with seven 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 are not cured, the agency may deny the taking of FMLA leave.
- 7) The agency may require an employee on FMLA leave to report periodically on the employee's status and intent to return to work.
- 8) Where the employee's need for leave due to a serious health condition lasts beyond a single leave year, the agency may require the employee to provide a new medical certification in each subsequent leave year.

b. Medical certification

- 1) Medical certification for leave relating to a serious health condition may require the following:
 - Contact information for the health care provider and the provider's type of medical practice/specialization,
 - The approximate date on which the serious health condition commenced, and its probable duration,
 - Sufficient medical facts to support the need for requested leave,
 - If the employee is the patient, sufficient information to establish that the employee cannot perform essential functions of the job, the nature of any other work restrictions, and the likely duration of the incapacity,

- If the patient is a covered family member with a serious health condition, sufficient information to show the family member is in need of care, and an estimate of the frequency and duration of leave needed to provide care, including the medical necessity for any requested intermittent or reduced schedule leave.
- 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.

Note: Agencies should provide to the employee or health care provider a standard federal form to collect the medical certification information.

- 2) An employee may choose to comply with the certification requirement by providing the agency with an authorization, release, or waiver allowing the agency to communicate directly with the health care provider of the employee or the employee's covered family member. However, the employee *may not be required* to provide such an authorization, release, or waiver. In all cases 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.
- 3) If an employee submits a complete and sufficient certification signed by the health care provider, the agency may not request additional information from the employee's health care provider. However, the agency may contact the employee's health care provider for purposes of *clarification* and *authentication* of the medical certification (or recertification) after the agency has given the employee an opportunity to cure any deficiencies, as set forth in a.4), above. To make such contact, the agency must use a health care provider, human resources professional, a leave administrator, or a management official of the agency. *Under no circumstances, however, may the employee's direct supervisor contact the employee's health care provider.* "**Authentication**" means providing the health care provider with a copy of the certification and requesting verification it was completed and/or authorized by the health care provider who signed the document. "**Clarification**" means contacting the health care provider, with the employee's permission per Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act privacy rules, to understand the handwriting on the medical certification or to understand the meaning of a response. Agencies may not ask health care providers for additional information beyond that required by the certification form. If an employee chooses not to provide the employer with authorization allowing the agency to clarify the certification with the health care provider, and does not otherwise clarify the certification, the agency may deny FMLA leave.
- 4) The appointing authority, at the agency's expense, may request a second opinion by a health care provider who is designated by the appointing authority. The agency may not regularly contract with or otherwise regularly utilize the services of the health care provider furnishing the second opinion, unless located in an area where access to health care is extremely limited. FMLA leave may be denied if the employee or employee's family member fails to authorize the health care provider to release all relevant medical information if requested by the health care provider designated to provide a second (or third) opinion.
- 5) Pending receipt of the second (or third) opinion, the employee is provisionally entitled to FMLA benefits.
- 6) In the event that the two medical opinions differ, a third opinion by a health care provider mutually agreed upon by the employee and the appointing authority will be final and binding. The third opinion will also be at the agency's expense.

- 7) The agency is required to provide the employee with a copy of the second and third opinions, if requested by the employee. Absent extenuating circumstances, the requested copies are to be provided within five business days.
 - 8) When an employee's need for leave for the employee's own serious health condition or for the serious health condition of a family member lasts beyond the end of the leave year, the agency may require the employee to provide a new medical certification in each subsequent leave year.
- c. Medical recertification
- 1) Recertification may be requested as specified in 2) through 4), below. The employee must provide the recertification within the timeframe requested by the agency, which must allow at least 15 calendar days unless it is not practicable under the particular circumstances to do so despite the employee's good faith efforts. Any recertification will be at the employee's expense unless the agency provides otherwise. No second or third opinion on recertification may be required.
 - 2) Recertification may be requested no more often than every 30 days in connection with an absence for a serious health condition, except that an agency may request recertification in less than 30 days if:
 - a) The employee requests an extension of leave.
 - b) Circumstances described by the previous certification have changed significantly.
 - c) The agency receives information that casts doubt upon the employee's stated reason for the absence.
 - 3) If the minimum duration of the period of incapacity specified on a certification furnished by a health care provider is more than 30 days, recertification may not be requested until that minimum duration has passed or six months have passed, unless one of the conditions set forth in 2), above, is met.
 - 4) For FMLA leave taken intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule basis, recertification may not be requested in less than the minimum period specified on the certification as necessary for the leave (including treatment) or until six months have passed, unless one of the conditions set forth in 2), above, is met.
 - 5) When requiring recertification for a serious health condition, the agency 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.
- d. Certification for leave taken to care for a covered service member (military caregiver leave)
- 1) When leave is taken to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness (which may be a current service member or covered veteran), an agency may require an employee to obtain a certification completed by an authorized health care provider of the covered service member (except as noted in 3) and 4), following). The federal Department of Labor provides optional forms for this purpose:
 - WH-385 - [*Certification for Serious Injury or Illness of Current Service member*](#)
 - WH-385-V - [*Certification for Serious Injury or Illness of a Veteran for Military Caregiver Leave*](#)

For purposes of leave to care for a covered service member, any one of the following health care providers may complete such a certification:

- a) A United States Department of Defense (“DOD”) health care provider;
 - b) A United States Department of Veterans Affairs (“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) Any health care provider authorized for FMLA leave generally. If an agency uses a certification form other than WH-385 or WH-385-V, the form must comply with the requirements and limitations covered in s. 825.310, Title 29, CFR. In any case, an agency may seek authentication and/or clarification of the medical certification.
- 2) For military caregiver leave, an agency is not allowed to seek second and third medical opinions if the health care provider is one of those listed in 1) a) to d), above.
 - 3) In lieu of federal form WH-385, WH-385-V, or other certification form, an agency must accept as sufficient certification “invitational travel orders” (ITOs) or “invitational travel authorizations” (ITAs) issued to any family member to join an injured or ill service member at their 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 service member in a continuous block of time or on an intermittent basis. An ITO or ITA is sufficient certification regardless of whether the employee is named in the order or authorization. An agency may seek authentication and/or clarification of the ITO or ITA.
 - 4) In lieu of federal form WH-385, WH-385-V, or other certification form, an agency must accept as sufficient certification of the service member’s serious injury or illness documentation indicating the service member’s enrollment in the Department of Veterans Affairs Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers. Such documentation is sufficient certification to support the employee’s request for military caregiver leave regardless of whether the employee is the named caregiver in the enrollment documentation. An agency may seek authentication and/or clarification of this enrollment documentation.
 - 5) An agency may not request recertification of leave to care for a covered service member.
 - 6) An agency may require the employee to provide reasonable documentation or statement of family relationship to the covered service member, such as a birth certificate, court document, or a signed statement from the employee.
 - 7) An agency may 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.
- e. Certification for leave taken because of a qualifying exigency
- 1) 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 agency may require the employee to provide a copy of the active duty orders or other documentation issued by the military indicating the covered active duty or call to covered active duty status, and the dates of active duty service. This information needs to be provided to the employer only

once, except when leave is needed due to a different, later covered active duty or call to covered active duty status. An agency 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).

- 2) The agency may require that leave for any qualifying exigency be supported by a certification from the employee. The federal Department of Labor provides an optional form for this purpose, WH-384 [Certification of Qualifying Exigency for Military Family Leave](#). If an agency wishes to use a different form, the form must comply with the requirements and limitations set forth in the federal regulations in 29 CFR s. 825.309.
- 3) The general rules for certification described in a., above, apply for leave taken because of a qualifying exigency. If the qualifying exigency involves meeting with a third party, the employer may contact the individual or entity with whom the employee is meeting to verify the meeting or appointment schedule and its purpose.

3. WFMLA and FMLA

A Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA) notice should be included with all requests to health care providers for medical information. The statement may be included on the medical certification form and fitness-for-duty form, or it may be provided in a letter or memo that accompanies the request for medical information. Providing a GINA notice gives a “safe harbor” when genetic information is inadvertently acquired that may not be necessary for a complete medical certification under the FMLA.

Starting in May 2015, federal FMLA medical certification forms include a concise GINA notice. Where a federal medical certification form is not being used by an agency, the following language should be included in agency requests for medical information related to administration of the federal and/or WI FMLA.

Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 Notification

The Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 (GINA) prohibits employers and other entities covered by GINA Title II from requesting or requiring genetic information of an individual or family member of the individual, except as specifically allowed by this law including, but not limited, to when the employee requests leave for a family member's health condition to (1) document appropriate use of sick leave; and (2) where "family medical history" is required to the extent necessary to make the medical certification complete and sufficient under the FMLA and WFMLA.

To comply with this law, we are asking that you not provide any genetic information when responding to this request for medical information unless it meets the family member exceptions noted above.

'Genetic information' as defined by GINA, includes an individual's family medical history, the results of an individual's or family member's genetic tests, the fact that an individual or an individual's family member sought or received genetic services, and genetic information of a fetus carried by an individual or an individual's family member or an embryo lawfully held by an individual or family member receiving assistive reproductive services.

Sec. 724.140 Continuation of Benefits

1. Continuation of group health insurance. Agency questions regarding health insurance coverage and premium payment for employees while on FMLA leave should be directed to the Department of Employee Trust Funds, Employer Communications Center, at (608) 266-3285, or toll-free 1-877-533-5020.

Note: Section 40.05(4)(a)3., Wis. Stats., provides that the State will continue to pay a portion of the employee's health insurance premium for not more than the first three months of an *unpaid* leave of absence. This three-month period would normally be equal to or longer than an employee's family/medical leave, unless two periods of FMLA unpaid leave are used back-to-back from the end of one calendar into the beginning of the next year. Consequently, an employee's group health insurance coverage will usually be maintained under Ch. 40, Wis. Stats., during unpaid WFMLA or FMLA leave. However, the employee remains responsible for the employee share of monthly premiums.

a. **WFMLA** [s. 103.10(9)(b), Wis. Stats.]

An employee's group health insurance coverage must be maintained under the conditions that applied immediately before the FMLA leave began.

b. **FMLA** [29 USC s. 2614(a)(2), (c); 29 CFR ss. 825.209 - 825.213]

- 1) An employee's coverage under any group health plan must be maintained under the same conditions as coverage would have been provided if the employee had been continuously employed during the entire FMLA leave period.
- 2) If leave under FMLA is taken in part or in whole without pay, the agency must advise the employee of eligibility for group health insurance continuation under the provisions of FMLA, the cost of coverage, and when and where to send the premium payments, if applicable.
- 3) Employees will be subject to any change in group health insurance plans or benefits that affect all employees.
- 4) Employees must be given notice of any opportunity for any change in plans or benefits that are available to all employees.
- 5) An employee may choose not to retain group health plan coverage during FMLA leave. However, when an employee returns from FMLA leave, the employee is entitled to be restored on the same terms as prior to taking the leave, including family coverage, without any qualifying period, physical examination, exclusion of pre-existing conditions, etc.

2. Continuous service:

WFMLA & FMLA [s. 103.10(9)(a), Wis. Stats.; 29 USC s. 2614(a)(3); 29 CFR s. 825.215(d)(2)]

Employees are not *entitled* under WFMLA or FMLA to accrue continuous service (seniority) while on unpaid leave. Therefore, the following will apply:

- a. **Employees Other Than Public Safety**. In accordance with s. ER 18.02(2)(b)1., Wis. Adm. Code, the continuous service of an employee shall not be interrupted if the employee was on an approved leave of absence. Since WFMLA and/or FMLA leave is approved leave of absence, it does not interrupt continuous service.
- b. **Represented Public Safety Employees**. Refer to the provisions of the public safety collective bargaining agreement for information regarding the continuous service of an employee upon return from approved leave of absence without pay.

3. Creditable Service:

WFMLA & FMLA [s. 103.10(9), Wis. Stats.; 29 USC s. 2614(3); 29 CFR s. 825.215(d)(4)]

In accordance with s. 40.02(17), Wis. Stats., creditable service for retirement purposes will *not* continue to accrue while the employee is on unpaid leave.

4. Benefits accrued prior to leave:

a. **WFMLA** [s. 103.10(8)(b), Wis. Stats.]

No employer may, because an employee received family leave or medical leave, reduce or deny an employment benefit which accrued to the employee before their leave began or, consistent with s. 103.10(9), Wis. Stats., accrued after their leave began.

b. **FMLA** [29 USC s. 2614(2); 29 CFR s. 825.215(d)(2)]

Although employees will not accrue additional benefits during leave without pay under FMLA, benefits accrued prior to leave will be restored at the same levels upon return to work. For example, paid annual leave, sick leave, or personal holidays which are not substituted for FMLA leave must be available to the employee upon return from leave.

Sec. 724.150 Return from Leave

1. **WFMLA** [ss. 103.10(8) & (9), Wis. Stats.]

- a. An employee returning from WFMLA leave shall be immediately placed in a position as follows:
- 1) If the position which the employee held immediately before the leave began is vacant when the employee returns, the employee will be placed in that position.
 - 2) If the position which the employee held immediately before the leave began is not vacant when the employee returns, the employee will be placed in an equivalent position having equivalent compensation, benefits, working shift, hours of employment, and other terms and conditions of employment.
 - 3) **Project, Limited Term, and Unclassified Employees:** When a project, limited term, or unclassified employee returns from leave, the employee shall immediately be placed in a position pursuant to 1) or 2), above. If the appointment period for the position which the employee held immediately before the WFMLA leave began has expired, the employee shall have no right to reemployment.
- b. If an employee wishes to return to work before the end of the scheduled leave, the agency will place the employee as specified in 1.a., above, within a reasonable time not exceeding the duration of the leave as scheduled.
- c. An employee returning from WFMLA leave is not entitled to any right, employment benefit, or employment position to which the employee would not have been entitled had the employee not taken leave.

2. **FMLA** [29 USC s. 2614; 29 CFR ss. 825.214 - 825.216, 825.311(c), 825.312]

- a. An employee returning from FMLA leave is entitled to be returned to the same position the employee held when leave began, or to an equivalent position with equivalent benefits, pay, and other terms and conditions of employment. An employee is entitled to such placement even if the employee has been replaced or the position has been restructured to accommodate the employee's absence.

- b. 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 agency may require that the employee provide the agency reasonable notice (*i.e.*, within two business days) of the changed circumstances where foreseeable. The agency may also obtain information on such changed circumstances through requested status reports.
- c. An employee has no greater right to restoration or to other benefits and conditions of employment than if the employee had been continuously employed during the FMLA leave period. To deny restoration to an employee returning from FMLA leave, the agency must be able to show that the employee would not otherwise have been employed if leave had not been taken, e.g., that the employee would have been laid off.

Note: In the event of a layoff, s. ER-MRS 22.06(2), Wis. Adm. Code, indicates that employees who are on an approved leave of absence shall be included in the layoff group. As a result, an employee that is out on FMLA leave would be afforded the same rights and eligibility that they would have received if the leave had not been taken.

- d. 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. However, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements may apply.
- e. Project, Limited Term, and Unclassified Employees: If an employee was hired for a specific term or only to perform work on a discrete project, the agency has no obligation to restore the employee if the employment term or project is over and the agency would not otherwise have continued to employ the employee.
- f. Fitness for Duty Certification:
 - 1) 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 agency may have a uniformly applied policy or practice that requires all similarly situated employees (*i.e.*, same occupation, 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.
 - 2) An agency 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 must certify that the employee is able to resume work. Additionally, an agency 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 agency must provide the employee with a list of the essential functions of the employee's job no later than with the FMLA designation notice, and must indicate in the designation notice that the certification must address the employee's ability to perform those essential functions. If the agency satisfies these requirements, the employee's health care provider must certify that the employee can perform the identified essential functions of their job.
 - 3) The FMLA designation notice 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.

- 4) 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 agency) in the fitness-for-duty certification process as in the initial certification process.
 - 5) An agency may contact the employee's health care provider for purposes of clarifying and authenticating the fitness for duty certification in the same manner as for medical certifications. (See section 724.130, 2.b.4 of this handbook chapter.) Clarification may be requested only for the serious health condition for which FMLA leave was taken. The employee's return to work may not be delayed while contact with the health care provider is being made. No second or third opinions on a fitness for duty certification may be required.
 - 6) An agency may not require a fitness for duty certification for absences taken on an intermittent or reduced leave schedule, except if reasonable safety concerns exist the agency may require fitness for duty certification up to once every 30 days.
 - 7) The cost of the certification is to be paid by the employee, and the employee is not entitled to be paid for the time or travel costs spent in acquiring the certification.
 - 8) Provided that proper notice to the employee was given of the need for a fitness-for-duty certification, agencies may deny restoration to employees who fail to provide fitness for duty certification until such time as that certification is provided. Unless the employee provides either a fitness-for-duty certification or a new medical certification for a serious health condition at the time FMLA leave is concluded, the employee may be terminated. Caution: Ensure ADA/WFEA provisions have been reviewed and followed if applicable.
 - 9) If Wisconsin law, Administrative Code, or the terms of a collective bargaining agreement govern an employee's return to work, those provisions shall be applied.
- g. An employee's rights to continued leave, maintenance of health benefits, and restoration cease under FMLA if and when the employment relationship terminates (e.g., layoff or resignation).
 - h. See s. ER-MRS. 16.03(6), Wis. Adm. Code, or the applicable collective bargaining agreement for additional information regarding the restoration rights of employees upon return from a leave of absence without pay.
 - i. Questions regarding the restoration rights of employees under the administrative rules may be directed to the Department of Administration, Bureau of Merit Recruitment and Selection. Questions regarding the restoration rights of represented public safety employees may be directed to the Bureau of Compensation and Employment Relations.

Sec. 724.160 Prohibited Acts

Note: Although WFMLA and FMLA laws provide vast protections for employees, an employee may be disciplined, up to termination, for reasons not related to the FMLA leave (e.g., performance, non-FMLA related absences, etc.). Employees must comply with their employer's usual and customary requirements for requesting leave and provide enough information for their employer to reasonably determine whether the WFMLA or FMLA may apply to the leave request. Prior to issuing discipline, an investigation will take place to determine the relationship, if any, of the proposed discipline to FMLA protections.

1. **WFMLA** [ss. 103.10(11), (12), (13), Wis. Stats.; DWD ss. 225.05-.27, Wis. Adm. Code]
 - a. No person may:
 - 1) Interfere with, restrain or deny the exercise of any right provided under s. 103.10, Wis. Stats. (*the WFMLA leave law*).
 - 2) Discharge or in any other manner discriminate against any individual for opposing a prohibited practice under 1), above.
 - b. The Equal Rights Division (ERD) of the Department of Workforce Development is charged with responsibility for handling complaints charging violations of the rights of state employees under WFMLA leave provisions.
 - 1) An employee who believes that the employee's agency has violated the provisions of the WFMLA may, within 30 days after the violation occurs or the employee should reasonably have known that the violation occurred, whichever is later, file a complaint with ERD alleging the violation.
 - 2) ERD shall investigate the complaint and shall attempt to resolve the complaint by conference, conciliation, or persuasion. If the complaint is not resolved and ERD finds probable cause to believe a violation has occurred, ERD shall proceed with notice and a hearing on the complaint. The hearing shall be held within 60 days after ERD receives the complaint.
 - 3) ERD shall issue its decision and order within 30 days after the hearing. If ERD finds that an employing agency has violated the provisions of the WFMLA, it may order the employing agency to take action to remedy the violation, including providing requested WFMLA leave, restoring an employee, providing back pay accrued not more than two years before the complaint was filed, and paying reasonable actual attorney fees to the complainant.
2. **FMLA** [29 USC ss. 2615-2616; 29 CFR ss. 825.220; 825.400-.401]
 - a. Interference with an employee's rights under the FMLA is prohibited.
 - 1) The agency is prohibited from:
 - a) Interfering with, restraining, or denying the exercise of (or attempts to exercise) any rights provided under the FMLA.
 - b) Discharging or in any other way discriminating against any person for opposing or complaining about any unlawful practice under the FMLA.
 - c) Discharging or in any other way discriminating against any person (whether or not an employee) because that person has:
 - filed any charge, or has instituted (or caused to be instituted) any proceeding under or related to the FMLA,
 - given, or is about to give, any information in connection with an inquiry or proceeding relating to a right under the FMLA, or
 - testified, or is about to testify, in any inquiry or proceeding relating to a right under the FMLA.
 - d) Discriminating or retaliating against an employee or prospective employee for having exercised or attempted to exercise FMLA rights.

- b. Employees cannot waive their prospective rights under the FMLA. However, this does not prevent the settlement or release of FMLA claims by employees based on past employer conduct without the approval of the Department of Labor or a court.
- c. The Wage and Hour Division, Employment Standards Administration, U.S. Department of Labor (U.S. DOL) is charged with responsibility for handling complaints charging violation of the rights of state employees under FMLA leave provisions.
 - 1) An employee who believes that their employing agency has violated the provisions of the FMLA may file a complaint with the Secretary of the U.S. DOL within a reasonable time of when the employee discovers that their FMLA rights have been violated. In no event may a complaint be filed more than two years after the action which is alleged to be a violation of FMLA occurred, or three years in the case of a willful violation.
 - 2) The complaint must be in writing and should include a full statement of the acts and/or omissions, with pertinent dates, which are believed to constitute the violation.

Sec. 724.170 Civil Action

1. **WFMLA** [s. 103.10(13), Wis. Stats.]

An employee may bring an action in circuit court against the State to recover damages caused by violation of employee rights under the WFMLA after the completion of an administrative proceeding. The action must be initiated within the later of the following periods:

- a. Sixty days from the completion of an administrative proceeding, including judicial review, concerning the same violation.
- b. Twelve months after the violation occurred, or the employee should reasonably have known that the violation occurred.

2. **FMLA** [29 USC s. 2617; 29 CFR s. 825.400-.401]

An employee who feels that their rights under FMLA have been violated may in some circumstances file a private lawsuit against the State. The lawsuit must be filed within:

- a. Two years after the last action which the employee contends was in violation of the FMLA.
- b. Three years if the violation was willful.

Sec. 724.180 Posting Notice/Notice to Employees

1. **WFMLA** [s. 103.10(14), Wis. Stats.]

- a. Each employing agency shall post, in one or more conspicuous places where notices to employees are customarily posted, a notice in the form approved by DWD setting forth state employees' rights under the WFMLA. The DWD has a [Family and Medical Leave Law poster](#) and one in [Spanish](#).
- b. Any employing agency who fails to post the required notice shall forfeit not more than \$100 for each offense.

2. **FMLA** [29 USC s. 2619; 29 CFR ss. 825.300, 825.402]
 - a. A notice providing FMLA information for employees must be posted prominently where it can be readily seen and easily read by employees and applicants for employment. Electronic posting is sufficient to meet this posting requirement as long as it otherwise meets the other requirements. Any employing agency that willfully violates the posting requirement may be assessed a civil money penalty by the Wage and Hour Division not to exceed \$110 for each separate offense.
 - b. If an agency has any FMLA-eligible employees, it shall also provide 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. To meet this requirement of general notice to each employee, agencies may duplicate the text of the DOL's prototype notice ([WHD Publication 1420](#)) or may use another format so long as the information provided includes, at a minimum, all of the information contained in that notice.
 - c. Where an agency's workforce is comprised of a significant portion of workers who are not literate in English, the agency shall provide the general notice in a language in which the employees are literate. (Prototypes are available from the nearest office of the Wage and Hour Division or online through the Department of Labor.) Agencies furnishing FMLA notices to sensory-impaired individuals must also comply with all applicable requirements under Federal or State law.
 - d. Agencies must provide the document [Notice of Eligibility and Rights & Responsibilities](#) (DOA-15325, or other FMLA-compliant form) to employees who request FMLA leave or when an agency acquires knowledge that leave may be for an FMLA-qualifying purpose. The document should be provided within five business days, if feasible. This document must be provided to an employee the first time in each 12-month period that an employee takes FMLA leave. The document does not need to be provided again within the same year unless leave is requested for a different reason within the same year **and** the eligibility status of the employee has changed. (See section 724.070 2.d. and e. of this handbook chapter for more detail.)
 - e. If the agency fails to provide the documents specified under d. and e., above, the agency may not take action against an employee for failure to comply with any provision contained in the documents.
 - f. When the agency has enough information to determine whether the leave is being taken for an FMLA-qualifying reason (e.g., after receiving a certification), the agency must notify the employee whether the leave will be counted as FMLA leave within five business days absent extenuating circumstances. If the agency will require the employee to present a fitness-for-duty certification to be restored to employment, the agency must provide notice of such requirement with the designation notice, including providing a list of the essential functions of the employee's position if needed for the fitness-for-duty certification. Agencies may use the form [Designation Notice](#) (DOA-15324, for this purpose. (See section 724.070 2.f. of this handbook chapter for more detail.)

Sec. 724.190 Administrative Information

This chapter was originally published March 1, 1990, as Chapter 724 of the *Wisconsin Personnel Manual*. It was revised in April 1995, via replacement pages attached to DER bulletin CC-POL-17/CBB-3, to incorporate a new legal interpretation of the WI FMLA provision that family leave must commence within 16 weeks before or after the birth or placement of a child. It was republished as Chapter 724 in the *Wisconsin Human Resources Handbook* in August of 1999. Information on the federal Family & Medical Leave Act of 1993 was added.

The chapter was updated in April 2010 to incorporate the military-related additions and revisions to the federal Family & Medical Leave Act and to reflect numerous revisions to the federal FMLA regulations, and also to incorporate changes to the Wisconsin Family and Medical Leave Act under 2009 Wisconsin Act 28 (state budget bill), most notably authorizing leave to care for domestic partners.

This chapter was updated in February 2014 to reflect new U.S. Department of Labor regulations effective March 8, 2013. The new regulations principally addressed the expansion of military caregiver leave to include certain veterans, and expansion of leave due to a qualifying exigency arising from the deployment of a family member in the armed services. In addition, the definition of “spouse” under the federal FMLA was clarified in accordance with the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in UNITED STATES v. WINDSOR, EXECUTOR OF THE ESTATE OF SPYER, ET AL., which held certain provisions in the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) to be unconstitutional. Other revisions were made for completeness and clarification, including the addition of more statutory and regulatory references. This chapter was updated in March 2015 to reflect the recognition of same-sex marriage by the State of Wisconsin, effective October 06, 2014, including recognition of same-sex marriages entered into in Wisconsin from June 6 to June 13, 2014, and to incorporate new U.S. Department of Labor regulations, effective March 27, 2015, which modifies the definition of spouse to include all legally married couples according to the law of the place of celebration.

This handbook chapter was revised February 2016 for minor technical clarifications, to remove excess references to represented employees, and to modify the scope of agencies covered by this chapter in accordance with changes to Chapter 230, Stats. Pursuant to the changes introduced by 2015 Wisconsin Act 55, in July 2015, the Office of State Employment Relations was eliminated, and the functions were transferred into the newly created Department of Administration, Division of Personnel Management. This chapter was updated to reflect the changes in terminology that resulted from the organizational restructuring.

This handbook chapter was reviewed and revised in February 2019 to ensure information is current and correct. Minor technical clarifications were made, and unnecessary duplication was removed. All FMLA forms were also updated during the process.

This chapter was updated in November 2023 to clarify that the three branches of state government are considered a single state employer for determining FMLA eligibility, to adopt gender-neutral language wherever feasible, to update hyperlinks as necessary, and to make other minor clarifications.

ATTACHMENT #1

FMLA TOOLKIT – LINKS TO FORMS AND POSTERS

All of the Wisconsin and federal FMLA forms and documents referenced in this handbook chapter may be accessed online via the hyperlinks listed below. Alternatively, you may find these forms and documents within the FMLA Toolkit accessible on the Department of Administration, Division of Personnel Management website home page at <https://dpm.wi.gov/Pages/FMLA.aspx>.

FORMS

[DOA-15322 Family and Medical Leave – Employee Request](#)

[DOA-15325 Notice of Eligibility and Rights & Responsibilities](#) (two forms combined)

[DOA-15324 FMLA Designation Notice](#)

[DOA-15336 – Fitness for Duty Certification – Return to Work Release](#)

[WH-380-E Certification of Health Care Provider for Employee’s Serious Health Condition \(PDF\)](#) (federal DOL form)

[WH-380-F Certification of Health Care Provider for Family Member’s Serious Health Condition \(PDF\)](#) (federal DOL form)

[WH-384 Certification of Qualifying Exigency For Military Family Leave \(PDF\)](#) (federal DOL form)

[WH-385 Certification for Serious Injury or Illness of Current Service member -- for Military Family Leave \(PDF\)](#) (federal DOL form)

[WH-385-V Certification for Serious Injury or Illness of a Veteran for Military Caregiver Leave](#) (federal DOL form)

[Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act \(GINA\) notification](#) – document containing “safe harbor” language that should be submitted to health care providers with every request for medical information if not using the federal WH-380 forms which now include a GINA notification.

POSTERS / NOTICES

[WFMLA Poster](#) (for posting in the workplace – Spanish and Hmong versions are also available through the DWD Equal Rights Division)

[FMLA poster](#) (for posting in the workplace - federal DOL model – WHD Publication 1420)

DOL ADMINISTRATOR INTERPRETATIONS

[Interpretation No. 2010-3](#) - Regarding person standing in loco parentis

[Interpretation No. 2013-1](#) - Regarding an individual 18 years of age or older and incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability

ATTACHMENT #2

INDEX

Active duty	<i>See</i> Covered active duty	Leave entitlements	20
Activities of daily living	11	Leave request and approval process	23
Advance notice	<i>See</i> Notice of need for leave	Length of leave	21
Alternative employment	28, 29	Medical certification	37, <i>See</i> Certification
Americans with Disabilities Act	1, 30, 44	Medical leave	12, 20
Authentication	38, 40, 45	Medical records	30
Benefits	43, <i>See</i> Continuation of Benefits	Notice of Designation	24, 25, 48
Certification	36, 37, 39	Notice of Eligibility	24, 25, 48
Child	3	Notice of need for leave	24
Christian Science practitioner	3	Notice of Rights & Responsibilities	24, 25, 48
Chronic condition	4, 14	Notice to employees	47
Civil action	47	Overtime hours	28
Clarification	38, 40, 45	Parent	12
Compensatory time	31	Parent of a covered servicemember	12
Conclusion of leave	24, 26	Posting notice	47
Continuation of benefits	45	Pregnancy or prenatal care	4, 14, 21, 38
Continuation of Benefits	41	Prohibited acts	45
Continuing treatment	4, 14	Qualifying exigency	12, 21, 40, 41
Continuous service	42	Reasons for leave	20
Covered active duty	5, 13, 16, 40	Recertification	39, 40
Covered service member	6	Recordkeeping	29
Covered servicemember	21, 22, 39	Reduced leave schedule	14, 24, 26, 27
Covered veteran	6, 15, 17, 22, 39	Regimen of continuing treatment	4
Creditable service	42, 43	Retirement	<i>See</i> Creditable service
Deeming	31	Retroactive designation	26
Definitions	3	Return from leave	43
Department of Workforce Development	46	Second opinion	36, 38, 40
Designation notice	24, 25, 48	Seniority	<i>See</i> Continuous service
Dispute resolution	26	Serious health condition	14
Domestic partner	6, 20	Serious injury or illness	15, 39
Eligibility requirements	18	Simultaneous use of leave benefits	1
Employed by the State	19	Single 12-month period	22
Employee	7	Son or daughter	16
Employment status	8, 19	Son or daughter of a covered service member	16
Equivalent position	8, 43	Son or daughter on covered active duty	16
Family leave	8, 20	Spouse	16
Family member	9	Statutory and rule authority	2
Fitness-for-duty certification	25, 44	Substance abuse	14
FLSA exempt status	28	Substitution of paid leave	30, 31, 32
Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act	30, 41	Twelve-month period	17
Hazardous duty disability	31	Veteran	17
Health care providers	9	Week	17
Health insurance	41	Worker's compensation	8, 31
Hours worked	19, 29		
<i>in loco parentis</i>	3, 11, 12, 16		
Incapable of self-care	11		
Incapacity and treatment	4		
Intermittent leave	11, 24, 26, 27		

