



2026

2025 HR COMPLIANCE YEAR IN REVIEW AND LOOK AHEAD

This guide provides a review of 2025's most impactful developments along with tools and resources to support you in 2026. Our goal is to help you understand what changed, why it matters, and what steps should be taken to stay compliant and prepared for the year ahead.



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Legal Updates

Arizona Heat Safety Guidelines

Reminder Arizona: Executive Order to Develop Heat Safety Guidelines by 2026

Arizona's Executive Order 2025-09 directs state agencies to create industry-specific heat safety guidelines by December 31, 2025, with implementation expected before summer 2026.

Key Changes:

- › Workplace Heat Safety Task Force will define what constitutes a heat hazard and outline practical protections (water, shade, rest breaks, training, acclimatization).
- › Current enforcement continues under the Heat Stress State Emphasis Program until new standards take effect.
- › Recognition Program for employers exceeding basic safety requirements.

Why This Matters:

These changes require employers to act now by implementing heat safety measures, updating policies for upcoming standards, and protecting workers to reduce legal and reputational risks.

Click the Tools and Resources button below to access a guide to help employers prepare and implement heat illness prevention measures before summer 2026 to ensure compliance and protect workers.

[Full Update](#)[View Tools and Resources](#)

California AI Transparency Act

California to Enact AI Transparency Act

California's AI Transparency Act, effective January 1, 2026, requires large generative AI providers to offer a free tool to identify AI-generated content, with non-compliance penalties of \$5,000 per violation.

Key Changes:

- › **Mandatory AI Disclosure Tool:** Providers must offer a free tool to identify AI-generated content.
- › **Third-Party Compliance:** If using licensed GenAI systems, providers must ensure compliance or cease use immediately if requirements aren't met.
- › **Penalties:** \$5,000 per violation, attorney's fees and costs, and liability can extend to both provider and third-party licensee.

Why This Matters:

These changes introduce strict transparency requirements for generative AI providers, signaling increased regulatory oversight and accountability. Businesses must develop or integrate AI detection tools, monitor third-party compliance, and prepare for financial and legal risks, as violations can result in \$5,000 penalties per incident plus legal costs.

[Full Update](#)

California Business Opt-Out Signals

California to Mandate for Business Opt-Out Signals for Consumers in Browsers and Mobile Systems

California's AB 3048, effective January 1, 2026, will require browsers and mobile operating systems to include a setting that lets consumers send an opt-out preference signal to businesses they interact with.

Key Changes:

- › **Opt-Out Preference Signal:** Browsers and mobile OS must allow consumers to send an opt-out signal to businesses.
- › **Compliance Requirement:** Businesses cannot develop or maintain browsers or mobile OS without this feature.
- › **Regulatory Oversight:** California Privacy Protection Agency (CPPA) will issue regulations and updates.

Why This Matters:

These changes strengthen consumer privacy rights by requiring browsers and mobile operating systems to support opt-out signals, meaning businesses must update technology and compliance processes to avoid enforcement actions and maintain trust in a rapidly evolving privacy landscape.

Click the Tools and Resources button below to access a website implementation guide to help website and app operators implement signal processing, update consent tools, and maintain regulatory compliance for consumer privacy rights.

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California Employment Agreements

California Bans “Stay-or-Pay” Employment Agreements

California's AB 692, effective January 1, 2026, bans most “stay-or-pay” employment agreements that require employees to repay costs if they leave, with limited exceptions and penalties of \$5,000 per worker plus damages and attorney's fees.

Key Changes:

- › **Prohibition:** Employers cannot require employees to repay costs (training, relocation, education) or impose penalties if employment ends.
- › **Exceptions:** Limited allowances for government loan programs, approved apprenticeships, and certain discretionary payments (e.g., signing bonuses) under strict conditions (separate agreement, prorated, interest-free, voluntary deferral option).
- › **Enforcement:** Private right of action; penalties include \$5,000 per worker, actual damages, injunctive relief, and attorney's fees.

Why This Matters:

California employers must eliminate repayment clauses in employment agreements by January 2026, as most “stay-or-pay” provisions will be illegal—failure to comply can result in lawsuits, \$5,000 penalties per worker, and attorney's fees, making it critical to review and update contracts now.

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California Pay Data Reporting Requirements

California Expands Pay Data Reporting Requirements for 2026

California's SB 464 changes pay data reporting for employers with 100 or more employees by introducing mandatory penalties and data storage requirements (2026) and expanded job categories (2027) to advance pay equity and transparency.

Key Changes:

- › **Separate Demographic Data Storage Effective January 1, 2026**
 - Demographic data (race, ethnicity, sex) must be stored apart from personnel files.
 - Deadline for annual pay data reporting is May 13, 2026.
 - **Mandatory Penalties:**
 - \$100 per employee for first violation
 - \$200 for repeat violations.
- › **Expanded Job Categories Effective January 1, 2027**
 - Increase from 10 EEO-1 categories to 23 SOC-based categories (e.g., Chief Executives, Computer & Mathematical, Health Care Practitioners).
 - Employers must reclassify roles and update systems accordingly.

Why This Matters:

These changes increase compliance risk with mandatory penalties, require new systems for secure demographic data storage, add complexity through expanded job categories, and demand coordination with labor contractors to avoid costly violations.

Click the Tools and Resources button below to access a step-by-step checklist, timeline, and compliance calendar to help employers plan, organize, and execute pay data reporting accurately and on time for the 2026 cycle.

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California Personnel Records

California Expands Access to Personnel Records

California's SB 513, effective January 1, 2026, expands the definition of personnel records and strengthens employee access rights.

Key Changes:

- › **Expanded Definition:** Includes education and training documentation with details like provider name, date, duration, competencies, and certifications.
- › **Access Rights:** Employees and authorized representatives can inspect or request copies; employers must respond within 30–35 days.
- › **Retention and Delivery:** Records must be kept for three years post-termination; copies mailed to former employees upon cost reimbursement.
- › **Limits and Exceptions:** One request per year for former employees; exemptions for certain records.
- › **Penalties:** Noncompliance may result in \$750 fines, injunctive relief, and attorney fees.

Why This Matters:

These changes broaden personnel record requirements, mandate timely access, and impose penalties—requiring employers to update recordkeeping and compliance processes.

Click the Tools and Resources button below to access a compliance guide to help employers update recordkeeping policies, implement compliant workflows, and train HR teams to meet the January 1, 2026, mandate.

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Los Angeles, California: Olympic Wage Ordinance

Los Angeles, California: Olympic Wage Ordinance Enacted

Los Angeles' Olympic Wage Ordinance, effective July 1, 2025, will incrementally raise minimum wages for tourism-related workers ahead of the 2028 Olympics.

Key Changes:

- › **Wage Increases:**
 - \$22.50/hour in 2025
 - Increased to \$25/hour starting July 1, 2026.
 - Increased to \$27.50/hour starting July 1, 2027.
 - Increased to \$30/hour starting July 1, 2028.
- › **Healthcare Payments:** Increase from \$5.95 to \$8.35/hour starting July 2025, with annual adjustments.
- › **Coverage:** Applies to hotel workers with 60 or more rooms, airport employees, and other tourism roles.
- › **Compliance Provisions:**
 - Right-to-cure violations within 30 days.
 - Hardship exemption for small concessionaires at LAX (no exemption for hotels).

Why This Matters:

These changes mandate steep annual wage and benefit increases for tourism workers through 2028, requiring employers to plan for higher labor costs and compliance obligations.

Click the Tools and Resources button below to access a guide to help employers operationalize compliance with new wage and benefit requirements and avoid penalties through structured workflows and audits.

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Connecticut Retirement Program Compliance and Enforcement

Connecticut Expands Compliance and Enforcement for MyCT Savings Retirement Program

Connecticut's Public Act 25-30 strengthens enforcement of the MyCT Savings retirement program effective July 1, 2025, requiring auto-enrollment for employers with 5 or more employees and introducing penalties for noncompliance.

Key Changes:

- › **Mandatory Auto-Enrollment:** Employers must enroll employees or certify an existing qualified plan; default contributions start at three percent with automatic escalation.
- › **Three-strike enforcement process for employers who fail to comply.**
 - Three notices of noncompliance
 - **If noncompliance continues, annual penalties will apply.**
 - \$500 for employers with 5-24 employees
 - \$1,000 for employers with 25-99 employees
 - \$1,500 for employers with 100+ employees
- › **Saver's Match Integration:** Accounts must accept federal Saver's Match contributions.
- › **Expanded Coverage:** Personal care attendants included starting July 1, 2026.

Why This Matters:

These changes mandate auto-enrollment, introduce escalating penalties for noncompliance, and expand coverage—requiring employers to update systems and processes to avoid fines and support employee retirement security.

Click the Tools and Resources button below to access a guide to help employers implement retirement program obligations, avoid fines, and prepare for phased changes.

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Delaware Pay Transparency Law

Delaware Enacts Pay Transparency Law Effective 2027

Delaware's HB 105 requires employers with 26 or more employees to include pay ranges and benefits in job postings starting September 26, 2027, and maintain related records for compliance.

Key Changes:

- › **Job Posting Requirements and Special Cases:**
 - All internal and external job postings must disclose salary range, benefits, and compensation details.
 - Commission-based and tipped roles require clear disclosure.
- › **Penalties:**
 - **First Offense:** Written Warning
 - **Subsequent Offenses:** \$500-\$10,000 per violation.
 - **Anti-retaliation Penalties Apply.**
- › Job descriptions and wage history must be maintained for three years and available to the Delaware Department of Labor.

Why This Matters:

These changes mandate salary and benefits disclosure in job postings, require recordkeeping, and impose steep penalties—demanding employers update hiring practices and compliance systems.

Click the Tools and Resources button below to access a compliance package to help employers prepare policies, templates, and workflows to meet pay transparency requirements and avoid penalties.

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Maine Paid Family and Medical Leave Program

Maine DOL Publishes Final Rule for the Paid Family and Medical Leave Program

Maine finalized rules for its Paid Family and Medical Leave program, requiring all employers with at least one Maine-based employee to begin payroll contributions on January 1, 2025, with benefits available starting May 1, 2026.

Key Changes:

- › **Mandatory Coverage:** Applies to any employer with at least one Maine-based employee, including employee leasing arrangements.
- › **Payroll Tax:** 1% total premium split between employer and employee.
 - **Employers with 15 or more employees:** Employer pays full premium (may deduct up to 50% from wages).
 - **Employers with 15 or less employees:** Employer pays 50% (may deduct up to 50% from wages).
- › **Employer Responsibilities:**
 - Register on state portal for wage reporting and premium payments.
 - Manage leave requests and compliance.
- › **Leave Entitlement:** Up to 12 weeks paid leave for eligible employees.
- › **Private Plan Option:** Employers can apply for an equivalent private plan (valid for 3 years).
- › **Job Protection:** Employees with 120+ days of service must be reinstated after leave.

Why This Matters:

These changes introduce new legal and financial obligations for employers, including payroll contributions, reporting requirements, and job protection rules, which require immediate planning to ensure compliance and avoid penalties while preparing for workforce impacts starting in 2026.

Click the Tools and Resources button below to access a guide to help employers prepare systems, train staff, and implement processes to meet contribution, reporting, and benefit requirements and to help implement required processes and meet all PFML obligations.

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Maryland Earned Wage Access

Maryland Enacts Earned Wage Access Regulations

Maryland's HB 1294 establishes a regulatory framework for Earned Wage Access (EWA) providers effective October 1, 2025, with annual reporting starting July 1, 2026.

Key Changes:

- › All EWA providers must be licensed under Maryland's Consumer Loan Law unless exempt.
- › **Defined EWA Models:**
 - Employer-Integrated
 - Consumer-Directed
- › Consumer protections require at least one free access option, cap expedited transfer fees, make tips voluntary, ban interest and collections, and mandate clear disclosures with overdraft reimbursement.
- › **Oversight:** Office of Financial Regulation monitors compliance and receives annual reports.

Why This Matters:

These changes mandate licensing, enforce strict consumer protections, and introduce oversight—requiring providers to update practices to avoid penalties and maintain trust.

Click Tools and Resources button below to access a compliance report package to help organizations document incidents, corrective actions, and compliance status to meet Maryland's regulatory requirements and prepare accurate annual reports.

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Maryland Online Data Privacy Act Reminder

Reminder Maryland: Online Data Privacy Act Effective October 1, 2025; Enforcement Begins April 2026

Maryland's Online Data Privacy Act (MODPA) took effect October 1, 2025, with enforcement starting April 1, 2026, introducing strict consumer data rights and significant penalties for violations.

Key Changes:

- › Enforcement timeline begins April 2026 with a 60-day cure period applying until April 2027
- › Follow the **L.O.C.K.E.D.** framework to stay aligned with MODPA's requirements—Limit data use, Opt-out options, Correct inaccuracies, Know what's collected, Equal treatment, Delete on request.
- › **Penalties enforced by the Attorney General**
 - Up to \$10,000 per violation
 - \$25,000 for repeat offenses

Why This Matters:

These changes impose steep penalties for non-compliance, require significant updates to data handling and consumer rights processes, and help protect privacy to maintain trust and reduce legal risk.

Click the Tools and Resources button below to access a guide to help employers assess applicability, update data practices, implement rights workflows, and prepare for enforcement.

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Michigan Supreme Court

Michigan Supreme Court: Revives ESTA and IWOWA as Originally in the Ballots

The Michigan Supreme Court has reinstated the original Earned Sick Time Act (ESTA) and Improved Workforce Opportunity Wage Act (IWOWA), requiring all Michigan employers to provide expanded paid sick leave and comply with higher minimum wage rates starting February 2025.

Key Changes:

- › **Paid Sick Leave (ESTA):**
 - All employers must provide 1 hour of paid sick time per 30 hours worked, up to 72 hours annually.
 - **Employers with fewer than 10 employees:** 40 hours paid and 32 hours unpaid.
- › **Minimum Wage (IWOWA):** Increases to \$12.48/hour on February 21, 2025, with annual increases through 2028 and includes phase-out of tipped wage.
- › **Legal Context:** Legislature's prior amendments voided; original ballot initiatives reinstated.

Why This Matters:

Michigan employers face major compliance changes: they must provide expanded paid sick leave and pay higher minimum wages starting February 2025, which will increase labor costs, require policy updates, and create legal risk if not implemented on time.

[Full Update](#)

Michigan Working Hours for Minors

Reminder for Michigan Employers: Reduced Working Hours for Minors (Effective March 31, 2026)

Under Public Act 196 of 2024 (HB 5594), youth employment laws are changing to modernize work permits and strengthen protections for minors.

Key Changes:

- › **Reduced Hours for Ages 14-15**
 - **School Year (Labor Day to May 31)**
 - 7:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. Only
 - Max three hours per day.
 - **Summer (June 1 to Labor Day)**
 - Until 9:00 p.m.
- › **New Online Work Permit System by October 1, 2026**
 - Employers must register with LEO, submit employment details, and report terminations.
 - LEO will maintain a public database of authorized employers.
 - Non-compliance may result in removal and loss of hiring privileges.

Why This Matters:

These changes impact recruiting, scheduling, and compliance for youth development.

Click the Tools and Resources button below to access a compliance guide to help employers lawfully hire and manage minors while meeting state labor standards.

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Minnesota Paid Leave

Minnesota Releases Guidance for Equivalent Plans for Paid Leave

Minnesota has issued guidance for Equivalent Paid Leave Plans, allowing employers to use private or self-insured plans that meet or exceed state benefits when the Paid Leave Program takes effect January 1, 2026.

Key Changes:

- › **Equivalent Plans:** Must match or exceed state coverage, including job protections and benefit levels.
- › **Application Process:** Employers can apply for exemptions starting spring 2025; approved plans avoid state premiums but require quarterly reporting and employee notices.
- › **Coverage Rules:** Plans must cover all employees, allow up to 26 weeks post-separation, and cannot impose extra restrictions.
- › **Cost Limits:** Employee premiums cannot exceed state plan rates.
- › **Compliance Options:** Employers may pay into the state plan, administer a private plan, or purchase a qualifying plan from an insurer.

Why This Matters:

These changes give employers options to meet paid leave requirements through equivalent plans, requiring timely applications, compliance updates, and cost planning before 2026.

Click the Tools and Resources button below to access a guide to help employers create and implement an approved equivalent plan that meets or exceeds Minnesota Paid Leave standards.

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Missouri Insurance Data Security Act

Missouri Enacts the Insurance Data Security Act

Missouri's Insurance Data Security Act, effective January 1, 2026, requires all licensed insurers and producers to implement comprehensive cybersecurity programs, report significant breaches within four business days, and meet phased compliance deadlines for security programs (2027) and third-party oversight (2028).

Key Changes:

- › **Mandatory Security Program:** Licensees must implement a written information security program based on risk assessments, including administrative, technical, and physical safeguards.
- › **Incident Response and Reporting:** Cybersecurity events must be investigated and reported to the Department of Commerce and Insurance within four business days if significant.
- › **Third-Party Oversight:** Licensees must monitor vendors' data practices and ensure compliance by 2028.
- › **Compliance Obligations:** Annual certifications, employee training, breach recordkeeping for three years, and enforcement authority granted to the Department.

Why This Matters:

Missouri's new law imposes strict cybersecurity and breach reporting requirements on insurers and licensees, requiring them to implement risk-based security programs, monitor third-party vendors, and certify compliance annually—failure to meet phased deadlines could result in regulatory investigations, penalties, and reputational damage.

Click the Tools and Resources button below to access a guide to help insurers and related entities build security programs, train staff, and establish reporting and vendor management processes to meet statutory obligations.

[Full Update](#)

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New York City Earned Safe and Sick Time Act

New York City Updates Earned Safe and Sick Time Act

New York City's ESSTA amendment, effective February 22, 2026, expands covered leave reasons, adds a 32-hour unpaid leave bank, introduces 20 hours of paid prenatal leave, and requires updated policies, notices, and pay statement tracking for all employers with NYC employees.

Key Changes:

- › **Expanded Leave Reasons:** Includes public disasters, workplace violence, legal/social services, and caregiving.
- › **New Unpaid Leave Bank:** 32 hours annually, available immediately, tracked separately from paid leave.
- › **Paid Prenatal Leave:** 20 hours per year; employers must update policies, notices, and pay statements to show balances.
- › **Tracking and Reporting:** Paid and unpaid leave balances must appear on pay statements; assume paid leave unless employee specifies otherwise.
- › **Temporary Schedule Change Law:** Removes mandatory schedule changes; requests allowed but approval discretionary.

Why This Matters:

This matters because NYC employers must revise leave policies, implement new tracking and reporting systems, and comply with expanded employee protections, including unpaid leave and paid prenatal leave—failure to meet these requirements by February 2026 can result in fines, legal exposure, and operational disruptions.

Click the Tools and Resources button below to access a checklist to help employers systematically implement policy, payroll, and communication changes to meet NYC's amended leave law and avoid penalties.

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Oregon Paid Leave, Family Leave, and Sick Time

Oregon Updates Paid Leave, Family Leave, and Sick Time Laws

Oregon's SB 69, effective September 26, 2025, updates Paid Leave Oregon, the Oregon Family Leave Act, and sick time laws to expand leave eligibility, allow sick time for PLO-covered reasons, clarify childcare provisions, and grant BOLI enforcement authority starting January 1, 2026.

Key Changes:

- › **Expanded Sick Leave:** Employees can use paid sick time for any reason covered under Paid Leave Oregon (PLO), including serious health conditions, bonding, and domestic violence-related leave.
- › **Child Care Clarification:** OFLA leave applies to children under 18 or those with significant impairments; includes school/childcare closures during public health emergencies.
- › **Return-to-Work Certification:** Employers may require fitness-for-duty certification after PLO medical leave if applied uniformly.
- › **Benefit Coordination:** Employment Department may share PLO benefit amounts with employers to prevent overpayment.
- › **Flight Crew Eligibility:** Flight crew employees based in Oregon qualify for OFLA leave under federal service-hour rules.
- › **Enforcement Shift:** BOLI will oversee job protection and anti-retaliation provisions starting January 2026.

Why This Matters:

Oregon employers must update leave policies and HR processes to comply with expanded sick time usage, clarified childcare provisions, and new coordination requirements—plus prepare for BOLI enforcement starting January 2026, which increases the risk of penalties for non-compliance.

[Full Update](#)

Texas AI and Health Data Storage

Texas Enacts New Rules on AI and Health Data Storage for Providers

Texas SB 1188, effective September 1, 2025 (with data storage rules enforceable January 1, 2026), sets new requirements for EHR data handling and AI use in healthcare.

Key Changes:

- › **EHR Requirements:**
 - Requires a fixed field for a patient’s “biological sex at birth.”
 - Gender identity must appear in a separate, optional field.
 - Parents and guardians are granted full access to minors’ health records unless restricted by law.
- › **Data Security:**
 - All EHRs must be stored within the U.S. or its territories, including cloud and third-party systems.
 - Access limited to individuals with legitimate need; providers must implement privacy safeguards.
- › **AI Use:** AI tools allowed for diagnosis and treatment planning with human oversight and providers must review recommendations and disclose AI use to patients.
- › **Penalties:** Civil fines up to \$250,000 for misuse of protected health information.

Why This Matters:

These changes mandate new EHR fields, enforces U.S.-based data storage, regulate AI use with oversight, and impose steep penalties—requiring healthcare providers to update systems and strengthen compliance.

[Full Update](#)

Utah Health Care Service Platforms

Utah Enacts Framework for Health Care Services Platforms

Utah’s SB 0228 creates a regulatory framework for health care services platforms, effective May 7, 2025, with mandatory registration starting January 1, 2026.

Key Changes:

- › **Registration and Fees:** Platforms must register with the state and pay applicable fees.
- › **Recordkeeping:** Maintain proof of worker licensing, training, background checks, and liability insurance.
- › **Insurance Requirement:** Platforms must carry liability coverage.
- › **Prohibited Practices:**
 - Non-compete agreements
 - Fees for employment offers
 - Restrictions on accepting shifts through other platforms.
- › **Enforcement:** Non-compliance can lead to denial, suspension, or revocation of registration.

Why This Matters:

These changes mandate registration, enforce strict compliance and worker protections, and prohibit restrictive practices—requiring platforms to update systems and policies to avoid penalties.

[Full Update](#)

Washington Fair Chance Act

Washington Amends the Fair Chance Act for Employees with Criminal Records

Washington's HB 1747 expands the Fair Chance Act starting July 1, 2026, restricting when and how employers can consider criminal history in hiring and employment decisions.

Key Changes:

- › Job postings cannot exclude applicants with criminal records and inquiries are allowed after a conditional job offer.
- › **Restrictions:**
 - Arrest records and juvenile convictions cannot be used in employment decisions.
 - Adult convictions may only be considered with a legitimate, documented business reason.
- › **Process:** Employers must provide notice, allow two business days for response, and issue written explanations for adverse decisions.
- › **Training and Policy Updates:** Revise applications, background check procedures, and train hiring staff.
- › **Role Exemptions:**
 - Unsupervised access to children and vulnerable adults
 - Requiring background checks by law
 - Federal contracts that prohibit hiring individuals with criminal records
- › **Penalties Per Affected Individual:**
 - **First Violation:** \$1500
 - **Second Violation:** \$3,000
 - **Subsequent Violations:** Up to \$15,000

Why This Matters:

These changes limit when criminal history can be considered, mandate documented business reasons and notice procedures, and impose steep penalties—requiring employers to overhaul hiring practices and train staff.

[Full Update](#)

Washington Paid Family and Medical Leave

Washington Expands Paid Family and Medical Leave Starting 2026

Washington's HB 1213 expands Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) protections starting January 1, 2026, with phased coverage for smaller employers through 2028.

Key Changes:

- › **Expanded job protection for employees after 180 days of employment, regardless of hours worked:**
 - Effective January 1, 2026, for employers with 25 or more employees
 - Effective January 1, 2027, for employers with 15 or more employees
 - Effective January 1, 2028, for employers with eight or more employees
- › Employers must maintain health coverage during PFML leave.
- › The minimum claim duration lowered from eight hours to four hours.
- › FMLA leave can count toward PFML job protection with proper notice.
- › **Employer Notices and Posters:** Updated requirements for informing employees.
- › **Small Business Grants:** Up to \$3,000 for temporary staffing or wage costs.

Why This Matters:

These changes add phased job protection for smaller employers, require health benefit continuation, shorten leave minimums, and introduce new compliance and notice obligations that impact policies and budgets.

Click the Tools and Resources button below to access a guide to help employers update policies, payroll systems, and compliance processes to meet new PFML obligations and avoid penalties.

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Washington Unemployment Benefits

Washington Extends Unemployment Benefits to Striking Workers

Washington's SB 5041, effective January 1, 2025, allows eligible workers to receive up to six weeks of unemployment benefits during legal strikes or employer lockouts, expiring December 31, 2035.

Key Changes:

- › **Eligibility:** Benefits start 15–21 days after a legal strike begins and capped at six weeks.
- › Repayment is required if the strike is ruled illegal or retroactive pay is received.
- › **Employer Impact:** Benefits charged to employers, potentially raising unemployment tax rates; voluntary payments can offset impact.
- › **Oversight:** Annual reports on strike activity and trust fund impact.

Why This Matters:

These changes provide unemployment benefits to striking workers, impose costs on employers, and require compliance with eligibility and reporting rules—impacting labor relations and financial planning.

[Full Update](#)

Federal: HIPAA Policy and Compliance Updates

New HIPAA Rule: Preparing Policy and Compliance Updates

The new HIPAA Privacy Rule, effective June 25, 2025, requires covered entities to strengthen protections for reproductive health information by updating policies, notices, and attestation processes, with full enforcement starting February 16, 2026.

Key Changes:

- › **Expanded Privacy Protections:** Prohibits use or disclosure of PHI for certain activities related to reproductive healthcare.
- › **New Requirements:**
 - Updated definition of “Reproductive Healthcare.”
 - Signed attestations before disclosing PHI in certain cases.
 - Revised Notice of Privacy Practices (NPP).
- › **Policy and Training Updates:** Employers must update HIPAA policies, procedures, and train staff accordingly.

Why This Matters:

These changes introduce stricter protections for reproductive health information, requiring covered entities to revise policies, update Notices of Privacy Practices, implement attestation processes, and train staff—failure to comply by enforcement deadlines could result in significant penalties and legal exposure.

Click the Tools and Resources button to access a checklist to help organizations implement remaining NPP requirements by February 16, 2026, adjust disclosure protocols, and maintain compliance amid evolving federal and state privacy obligations.

[Full Update](#)

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Federal: OSHA Extends Heat Hazard Emphasis Program

Federal: OSHA Extends Heat Hazard Emphasis Program Through April 2026

OSHA has extended its National Emphasis Program (NEP) on Heat Hazards through April 8, 2026, continuing targeted inspections and outreach to prevent heat-related illnesses and injuries.

Key Changes:

- › The NEP timeline will be extended through April 8, 2026.
- › OSHA may inspect workplaces when the heat index is 80°F or higher or during heat advisories.
- › The NEP encourages employers to provide water, shade, rest breaks, heat safety training, acclimatization plans, and monitor conditions.

Why This Matters:

These changes ensure employers remain subject to inspections and must proactively implement heat safety measures to protect workers and reduce compliance risks.

Click the Tool/Asset button below to access a guide to help employers in high-risk industries update safety programs, train staff, and maintain compliance with OSHA's heat hazard requirements to prevent citations and protect workers.

[Full Update](#)[View Tools and Resources](#)

Federal: USCIS Automatic EAD Extensions

USCIS Ends Automatic EAD Extensions for Most Renewals

USCIS will end automatic employment authorization extensions for most EAD renewals filed on or after October 30, 2025, meaning expired EADs plus receipt notices will no longer serve as valid work authorization except for limited exceptions like TPS and STEM OPT.

Key Changes:

- › **No Automatic Extensions:** Renewals filed on or after Oct 30, 2025, will not receive the prior up to 540-day extension.
- › **Grandfathered Renewals:** Applications filed before the cutoff retain the old extension rule.
- › **Exceptions:** TPS and F-1 STEM OPT retain separate extension provisions.
- › **Document Change:** I-797C receipt notice no longer counts as work authorization for expired EADs under the new rule.

Why This Matters:

Employers can no longer rely on automatic work authorization extensions for most EAD renewals filed after October 30, 2025, which means I-9 compliance procedures must change, and HR teams need to plan for potential work authorization gaps to avoid penalties and operational disruptions.

Click the Tools and Resources button below to access a guide to help employers maintain I-9 compliance and manage workforce continuity under the new rule.

[Full Update](#)[View Tools and Resources](#)

Federal: USCIS Form I-9

USCIS Extended Form I-9 Expiration Date to May 31, 2027

USCIS has extended the expiration date of Form I-9 to May 31, 2027, requiring employers to update systems and ensure they use the correct version by July 31, 2026.

Key Changes:

- › **New Expiration Date:** Form I-9 edition dated August 1, 2023, is now valid until May 31, 2027, previously July 31, 2026.
- › **Transition Timeline:**
 - › Current form with either expiration date may be used until its listed date.
 - › Starting August 1, 2026, employers must use the version with May 31, 2027, expiration.
- › **System Updates:** Employers should update electronic I-9 systems to reflect the new expiration date by July 31, 2026.

Why This Matters:

Employers must use the correct Form I-9 version and update electronic systems before July 31, 2026, as using expired forms can lead to compliance violations and penalties during employment eligibility verification.

[Full Update](#)

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To view any/all source references for each article, click the full update button.

Tools and Resources

Arizona Heat Safety Guidelines

Reminder Arizona: Executive Order to Develop Heat Safety Guidelines by 2026

- › The **Arizona Workplace Heat Safety Employer Guide** outlines upcoming state heat safety requirements, including hydration, shade, rest breaks, training, and acclimatization protocols, with final guidelines due by December 2025.

[Employer Guide](#)

California Business Opt-Out Signals

California to Mandate for Business Opt-Out Signals for Consumers in Browsers and Mobile Systems

- › The **Website Implementation Guide – California Opt-Out Preference Signals** provides technical and compliance steps for businesses to detect, honor, and document opt-out signals under CCPA and prepare for the 2027 browser mandate.

[Website Implementation Guide](#)

California Pay Data Reporting Requirements

California Expands Pay Data Reporting Requirements for 2026

- › The **California Pay Data Reporting: Step-by-Step Checklist, Timeline and Compliance Calendar** provides a detailed roadmap for SB 464 compliance, including key dates, tasks, and penalties.

[Checklist, Timeline, and Calendar](#)

California Personnel Records

California Expands Access to Personnel Records

- › The **California Personnel Records Compliance Guide** explains new requirements under SB 513 for including detailed training and education records in personnel files, along with rules for access, retention, and privacy.

[Personnel Records Compliance Guide](#)

Los Angeles, California: Olympic Wage Ordinance

Los Angeles, California: Olympic Wage Ordinance Enacted

- › The **Los Angeles Olympic Wage Ordinance Employer Implementation Guide** translates the ordinance into an actionable plan for hotel and airport employers, detailing wage schedules, health benefit adjustments, training deadlines, cure processes, and recordkeeping.

[Implementation Guide](#)

Connecticut Retirement Program Compliance and Enforcement

Connecticut Expands Compliance and Enforcement for MyCTSAvings Retirement Program

- › The **Connecticut MyCTSAvings Employer Guide** explains new enforcement rules and compliance requirements under Public Act 25-30 for employers with five or more employees, including mandatory auto-enrollment, default contribution rates, penalties, and expanded coverage.

[Employer Guide](#)

Delaware Pay Transparency Law

Delaware Enacts Pay Transparency Law Effective 2027

- › The **DE HB 105 – Pay Transparency Compliance Package** explains Delaware’s new law requiring employers with 26+ employees to include pay ranges and benefits in job postings, maintain records, and follow enforcement rules.

[Pay Transparency Compliance Package](#)

Maine Paid Family and Medical Leave Program

Maine DOL Publishes Final Rule for the Paid Family and Medical Leave Program

- › The **Maine PFML – Employer Implementation Guide** provides a step-by-step operational plan for complying with Maine’s Paid Family and Medical Leave program, including payroll setup, portal registration, leave administration, private plan substitution, and key deadlines.

[Implementation Guide](#)

Maryland Earned Wage Access

Maryland Enacts Earned Wage Access Regulations

- › The **Maryland EWA Sample Compliance Report Package** provides templates for internal compliance reporting, remediation planning, annual OFR reporting, and board updates under HB 1294, which governs Earned Wage Access providers.

[Sample Compliance Report Package](#)

Maryland Online Data Privacy Act Reminder

Reminder Maryland: Online Data Privacy Act Effective October 1, 2025; Enforcement Begins April 2026

- › The **Maryland Online Data Privacy Act (MODPA) Employer Guide** explains compliance requirements for businesses under MODPA effective October 1, 2025, including data minimization, consumer rights, opt-out mechanisms, privacy notices, and enforcement timelines.

[Employer Guide](#)

Michigan Working Hours for Minors: Michigan Minors Tools and Assets

Reminder for Michigan Employers: Reduced Working Hours for Minors (Effective March 31, 2026)

- › The **Michigan Employer Compliance Guide for Hiring Minors** provides step-by-step instructions for verifying age, following hour restrictions, registering with the state, managing work permits, posting required notices, and monitoring compliance under the Youth Employment Standards Act.

Michigan Employer Compliance Guide

Minnesota Paid Leave

Minnesota Releases Guidance for Equivalent Plans for Paid Leave

- › The **Minnesota Paid Leave – Employer Implementation Guide** for Equivalent Plans provides step-by-step instructions for employers choosing to offer an equivalent plan instead of the state PFML program, covering plan design, approval process, payroll setup, notices, compliance requirements, and timelines.

Implementation Guide

Missouri Insurance Data Security Act

Missouri Enacts the Insurance Data Security Act

- › The **Missouri Insurance Data Security Act Employer Guide** explains HB 974's requirements for licensees under Missouri insurance law to implement risk-based information security programs, manage vendor oversight, and report cybersecurity events within four business days, with phased compliance dates.

Data Security Act Employer Guide

New York City Earned Safe and Sick Time Act

New York City Updates Earned Safe and Sick Time Act

- › The **Employer Compliance Checklist – NYC ESSTA Amendments** outlines all required steps for employers to comply with the updated Earned Safe and Sick Time Act effective February 22, 2026, including creating a 32-hour unpaid leave bank, adding paid prenatal leave, expanding covered reasons, updating pay statements, policies, postings, and training.

ESSTA Compliance Checklist

Washington Paid Family and Medical Leave

Washington Expands Paid Family and Medical Leave Starting 2026

- › The **Washington PFML Expansion Employer Guide (HB 1213)** explains major changes to Washington's Paid Family and Medical Leave program effective January 1, 2026, including expanded job protection thresholds, health benefit continuation, reduced weekly claim minimums, new notice requirements, and a premium rate increase.

Expansion Employer Guide

Federal: HIPAA Policy and Compliance Updates

New HIPAA Rule: Preparing Policy and Compliance Updates

- › The **Compliance Checklist – HIPAA Reproductive Health Privacy** outlines steps for covered entities and business associates to update policies, Notices of Privacy Practices, training, and request-handling workflows following the HIPAA Privacy Rule changes and subsequent court vacatur.

[Compliance Checklist](#)

Federal: OSHA Extends Heat Hazard Emphasis Program

Federal: OSHA Extends Heat Hazard Emphasis Program Through April 2026

- › The **OSHA Heat Hazard NEP Extension Employer Guide** explains OSHA's extension of its National Emphasis Program on heat-related hazards through April 8, 2026, detailing employer obligations such as providing water and shade, scheduling rest breaks, training workers, implementing acclimatization plans, and monitoring heat conditions.

[Extension Employer Guide](#)

Federal: USCIS Automatic EAD Extensions: Tools and Assets

USCIS Ends Automatic EAD Extensions for Most Renewals

- › The **Employer Guide** explains the policy change, its impact on current and future EAD renewals, and provides talking points and action steps for HR to guide affected employees.

[Employer Guide](#)

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The document(s)/links included in this section are provided for reference as samples of official documents derived from government agencies, law firms, or other entities. This content is not and may not be construed to be legal advice or to be a legal opinion on any specific facts or circumstances, or to be a comprehensive or all-inclusive compilation of facts potentially relevant to federal, state, or local laws. It is strongly recommended that any sample document(s) you view, be carefully reviewed to determine how such document(s) will need to be drafted and customized to your company's unique business, workforce, and specific situation; as well as to any applicable changes in federal, state, and local laws, regulations, guidance, and guidelines set forth by the governing agencies, which may change at any time and in such instances will render some content in the document(s) void or inaccurate. Any content referenced here is for informational purposes only and is not intended to be construed as a template for editing, as each document is a sample referenced resource. Users should not rely on this content for editing and customization exclusively but should consult an attorney for legal guidance for proper and compliant drafting. You are solely responsible for compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

