

## e-Alert

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# Maryland Passes Public Health Emergency and Bereavement Leave Laws

## Background

Maryland has passed Public Health Emergency Leave and made amendments to its bereavement leave law, both anticipated to be signed into law shortly and scheduled to take effect on October 1, 2021.

## Summary

### Public Health Emergency Leave

The [Essential Workers Protection Act \(EWPA\)](#) provides protections for essential workers related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The act provides up to 112 hours of paid public health emergency leave in addition to any existing paid leave (only if there is federal or state funding for that leave).

### Reason for Leave:

- To isolate due to a diagnosis or symptoms;

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- To obtain a diagnosis, preventive care, or treatment;
- To care for a family member diagnosed with the disease;
- By order of a public health official or health care professional because of the worker's exposure to or symptoms of the disease, or to care for a family member who has been so ordered; or
- To care for a family member whose care provider is unavailable or whose school/place of care has been closed because of the emergency.

### **Bereavement Leave**

Maryland has [amended](#) its bereavement law to require employers with 15 or more employees to allow the use of any existing paid leave for bereavement purposes. The amended law allows employees to use accrued paid leave in the case of the death of a spouse, parent, or child of any age. Employers are prohibited from taking adverse action against any employee who has used leave, requested leave, opposed an unlawful practice, reported a violation, or participated in a proceeding under the amended law.

## **Employer Next Steps**

- If you are a Full-Service or Virtual HR client and would like our assistance with updating your policy, please [email us](#).

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