

Washington Leave Laws

This material is for general informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. For current and accurate guidance, please consult legal counsel in your jurisdiction.

Washington Leave Laws	1
Paid Time Off (PTO) in Washington	2
Vacation Leave Quota	2
Accruals	2
Roll Over (Carry Over, Brought Forward)	3
Statutory Provisions Addressing Vacation Pay	3
Payment of Accrued, Unused Vacation on Termination	3
Sick Leave in Washington	4
Federal Laws – Leave Quota	4
Washington State Laws	5
Washington’s Paid Sick Leave Law	5
Seattle’s Paid Sick and Safe Time (PSST) Ordinance	6
Tacoma’s Paid Sick Leave	6
Maternity, Paternity, FMLA in Washington	7
Federal Law	7
Washington State Paid Family and Medical Leave	7
Bereavement Leave in Washington	9
Jury Duty Leave in Washington	9
Military Leave in Washington	10
Federal law	10
Washington State Law	10
Voting Leave in Washington	11
Washington State Holidays for 2025	11
A complete list of official holidays celebrated in Washington in 2025:	12
2026	13

Paid Time Off (PTO) in Washington

Vacation Leave Quota

0 days

Private employers in Washington are not required to provide paid or unpaid vacation neither by federal or Washington state law.

Regardless, most employers in the US provide employees with 10 paid days off after 1 year on the job. Still, the amount of paid time off (PTO) can vary based on factors such as the industry, location, and the employee's length of service with the company.

If a company decides to provide its employees with vacation time, whether paid or unpaid, it is required to follow relevant state regulations, abide by its own policies, and uphold the terms of the employment agreement.

Accruals

The accrual system is not obligatory in Washington, but it is commonly adopted by businesses.

Employers have the flexibility to create their own vacation accumulation method, which may be in hourly, daily, weekly, bi-weekly, semi-monthly, or monthly intervals and is typically determined by the company's pay cycle. Official payroll frequency in Washington is monthly; this means that employers in Washington are obligated to compensate most hourly workers via a regular payday, scheduled at a minimum monthly.

The employer has the ability to cap (establish a maximum amount of) vacation time that an employee can accumulate in a given year.

For more information, please visit vacationtracker.io

Roll Over (Carry Over, Brought Forward)

A use-it-or-lose-it policy is permitted.

A “use-it-or-lose-it” type of policy is when an employee forfeits any remaining vacation time after a certain date, usually at the end of the year. Employers may implement this policy because this issue is not addressed in state statutes.

Employers usually implement a use-it-or-lose-it vacation policy because some employees use very little PTO. Long-term employees can accrue a lot of PTO over the years, which can be quite costly if company policy requires it to be paid out on termination.

Statutory Provisions Addressing Vacation Pay

Not required by state law.

Employers in the state are not legally obligated to provide vacation leave to their employees. However, if an employer chooses to offer paid vacation time, the duration of the vacation time an employee is entitled to is determined by the employer’s policy or the terms of the employment contract.

Payment of Accrued, Unused Vacation on Termination

Not required. Employers only follow their own company policy.

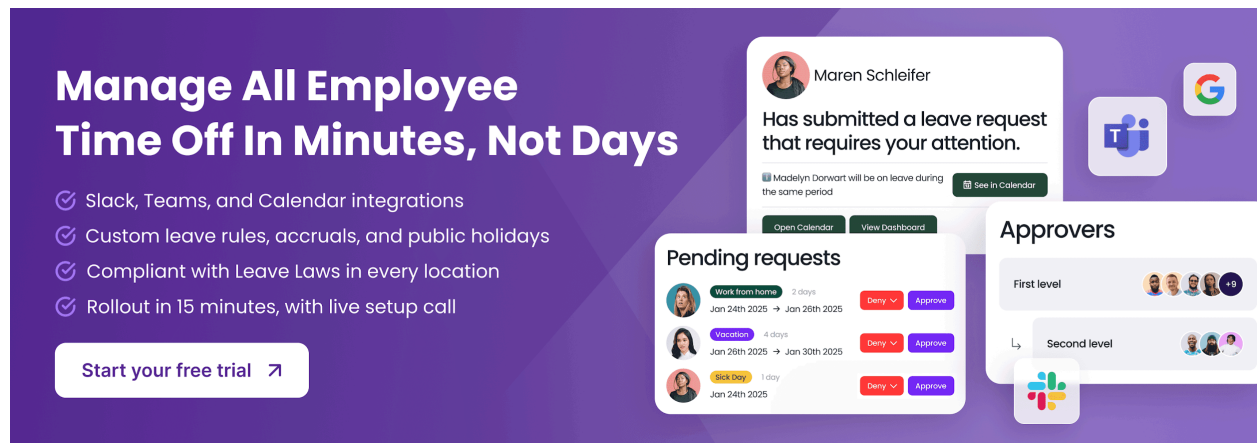
An employer may legally establish a policy or contract that denies employees payment for accumulated vacation time upon their departure from the company.

If a company policy or employment contract is silent on this matter, an employer is also not required to provide a PTO payout on termination.

For more information, please visit vacationtracker.io



Even though Washington doesn't have a law requiring PTO payout at termination, employers might be responsible for paying out unused PTO to an employee who leaves the company. If there is a company policy or employment contract that requires it, an employer is required to pay unused PTO to the employee.



Sick Leave in Washington

Federal Laws – Leave Quota

Federal law requires 12 weeks of unpaid sick leave.

The standard federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) applies to Washington (as it is in all the states in the U.S.A). The leave is job-protected.

Employees qualify for FMLA benefits only if:

- they have been employed for at least 12 months (at least 25 hours per week) or 1,250 hours in the previous year
- they work in a location where at least 50 people are employed by the company (in a 75-mile radius)

For more information, please visit vacationtracker.io

The FMLA entitles qualified employees to take up to 12 weeks off for:

- personal medical reasons – illness or injury
- to care for a close family member (child, spouse, or parent) suffering from a severe illness
- maternity or paternity leave.

Check out our article on [federal leave laws in the US](#) to learn more.

Washington State Laws

Washington has paid sick law for the entire state, while the cities of Seattle and Tacoma have their own.

Washington's Paid Sick Leave Law

All Washington employers must provide paid sick leave.

Almost all employees (including part-time and seasonal workers) are covered. Only lawyers, dentists, doctors, executive managers, and construction workers covered by the CBA are excluded.

Employees earn 1 hour of paid sick leave for every 40 hours worked. Employers may provide additional sick leave, better than the state minimum requirements. There is no annual accrual cap, or limit for annual usage. Front-loading is permitted. Employees may carry over up to 40 hours to the following year. The accrual begins upon hire, though employees might have to wait 90 days before they start using it (if an employer requires so).

Employees can use paid sick leave for:

- their own health illness, injury, or health condition

For more information, please visit vacationtracker.io

- to care for a family member with an illness, injury, or health condition
- the closure of a workplace, children's school, or place of care by order of public officials, because of any health-related reason
- reasons related to domestic violence, abuse, sexual assault, or stalking.

Seattle's Paid Sick and Safe Time (PSST) Ordinance

All **Seattle employers** must provide paid sick leave.

The size of the employer determines the amount of leave:

1–49 employees: 1 hour of PSST per 40 hours worked, carry-over limit can be set at 40 hours per year;

50–249 employees: 1 hour of PSST per 40 hours worked, carry-over limit can be set at 56 hours per year;

250 employees or more: 1 hour of PSST per 30 hours worked, carry-over limit can be set at 72 hours per year (108 hours for employers with PTO).

Paid sick leave can be used for the same reasons as in the state of Washington (see above).

Tacoma's Paid Sick Leave

All **employees** (including part-time and temporary) who work in Tacoma for more than 80 hours in a year earn paid sick leave. An employee earns 1 hour for every 40 hours worked, and may carry-over up to 40 hours into the following year.

Paid sick leave, besides the same reasons as in the state of Washington (see above), can also be used for bereavement.

Payout

For more information, please visit vacationtracker.io

Sick leave in Washington is paid by the employer.

Maternity, Paternity, FMLA in Washington

Federal Law

12 weeks of unpaid maternity/paternity leave is provided by FMLA.

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is a federal law that allows eligible workers to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave per year for family or medical reasons, including maternity or paternity leave. Unless otherwise authorized by the employer, an employee must take this leave continuously. More information about FMLA eligibility can be found above, under the section *Sick Leave in Washington: Federal Laws – Leave Quota*.

The Pregnancy Discrimination Act (PDA) is one more federal law that protects pregnant women. According to the PDA, discrimination against pregnant people is prohibited in all areas of employment: hiring, firing, pay, job assignments, promotions, fringe benefits, training, leave, and health insurance.

Washington State Paid Family and Medical Leave

All employers must offer paid family and medical leave.

This program is funded through premiums that are paid by both employers and employees. Employers pay 27.24% and employees pay 72.76% of the total premium. Small companies with

For more information, please visit vacationtracker.io

1-49 employees aren't required to pay the employer part of the premium, but they still participate in collecting and submitting the employees' part of the premium.

Employees receive up to 90% of their weekly wages, with a maximum of \$1000 per week.

To qualify for paid family and medical leave benefits, an employee must work at least 820 hours during the "qualifying period". This means that an employee must have worked a minimum of 820 hours, which can be achieved by either working during the first four of the last five finished calendar quarters or, if that's not enough, over the previous four finished calendar quarters right before they apply for leave.

The leave could last:

- Up to 12 weeks per year (to bond with a new baby or child; for an employee's own serious illness or injury; or to care for a family member with a serious health condition)
- Up to 16 weeks (if there is more than one qualifying event)
- Up to 18 weeks (for a female employee who experiences a condition during pregnancy or birth that results in incapacity)

Job protection applies to employers with more than 50 employees.

The Washington Family Care Act allows employees with accrued paid sick leave to use the leave to care for a sick child, a spouse or domestic partner, a parent, a parent-in-law, or a grandparent. All employers who provide paid sick leave are covered.

Pregnancy Disability Leave requires employers with 8 or more employees to provide unpaid, job-protected leave to female employees disabled by pregnancy, birth, or other related medical conditions.

Bereavement Leave in Washington

An employer is only required to provide bereavement leave under certain circumstances.

An employer must legally provide paid bereavement leave, but only under certain circumstances. In 2022, the state updated its PFML (Paid Family and Medical Leave Act) to include paid bereavement leave under specific conditions. These changes aim to support new parents who experience the loss of a newborn or newly placed adopted child. Now, employees can take paid leave within 7 days after their child's death if they would have been eligible for medical leave under the PFML leave law, either due to their own pregnancy or to bond with their child in the first year following the birth or placement.

However, in addition to this, 85% of employers offer regular bereavement leave in the event of the death of a close family member, which usually lasts for up to 3 work days. Some companies are even more generous and offer a maximum of 5 or 6 days.

Payout

Employers are required to pay for bereavement leave only if it is under PFML (Paid Family and Medical Leave Act).

Jury Duty Leave in Washington

Employers must provide employees with unpaid time off for jury duty.

Employers are required to provide employees with unpaid, job-protected leave to report to jury selection or jury duty. An employee may have to present the employer with a jury summons to be given the leave. An employer may not fire, threaten to fire, penalize, or punish the employee in any way for responding to a jury summons.

For more information, please visit vacationtracker.io

Learn more about jury duty leave in our [Glossary](#) section.

Payout

The employer pays:

An employer in Washington doesn't need to pay employees while on jury duty, but most employers do it as the court compensation is rather low.

The court pays:

Employees who serve as jurors in Washington are paid \$10.00 a day (though juror pay is only a token amount).

Military Leave in Washington

Federal law

The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) is a federal law that applies to employers of all sizes and types in the U.S. USERRA protects employees called to active duty in the U.S. military, including the U.S. Armed Forces, Reserves, and National Guard. USERRA provides reinstatement rights, protection from discrimination, the right to continue group health care benefits for up to 24 months during their leave, and up to 5 years of unpaid leave for military service (with exceptions to this 5-year limit).

Washington State Law

Mirroring the federal USERRA, Washington law also protects the employment and reemployment rights of uniformed service members: the Washington National Guard, the US

For more information, please visit vacationtracker.io

Armed Forces, the Coast Guard, or the US Public Health Service. Members of these uniformed services may take unpaid leave for deployment, training, or any other activity related to a military order. All job protections, reemployment rights, and protections against discrimination apply to them.

When military service members are about to be deployed or on leave from deployment, eligible spouses or registered domestic partners are entitled to receive up to 15 days of unpaid leave from their employers. In order to qualify, the worker is required to work an average of 20 hours per week or more.

Payout

Military leave in Washington is unpaid.

Voting Leave in Washington

Not required by state law.

Washington law doesn't require an employer to provide employees with time off to vote on Election Day.

Currently, 29 states have laws providing employees with time off for voting. Washington is not one of them.

Payout

Voting leave in Washington is unpaid.

Washington State Holidays for 2025

For more information, please visit vacationtracker.io

A leave for holidays is not required by state law.

Private employers in Washington are not required to provide paid or unpaid leave for holidays. However, the majority of employers provide several paid holidays.

Holiday pay ("time-and-a-half," or 150 percent of the regular rate) is also not mandated by law.

A complete list of official holidays celebrated in Washington in 2025:

Holiday	Observed in 2025	General Date
New Year's Day 2025	Wednesday, January 1	January 1
Martin Luther King, Jr.	Monday, January 17	3rd Monday in January
Presidents' Day	Monday, February 17	3rd Monday in February
Memorial Day	Monday, May 26	Last Monday in May
Juneteenth	Thursday, June 19	June 19
Independence Day	Friday, July 4	July 4
Labor Day	Monday, September 1	1st Monday in September

Veterans Day	Tuesday, November 11	November 11
Thanksgiving Day	Thursday, November 27	4th Thursday of November
Native American Heritage Day	Friday, November 28	Day after Thanksgiving
Christmas Day	Thursday, Dec. 25	December 25

In the state of Washington, as in most other states, public holidays that fall on Saturday are moved to the previous Friday. Likewise, holidays from Sunday are moved to Monday.

2026

Holiday	Observed in 2026	General Date
New Year's Day 2026	Thu, Jan 1, 2026	January 1
Martin Luther King, Jr.	Monday, January 19	3rd Monday in January