

Nothing to Sneeze About: Oregon State-Wide Paid Sick Leave Bill is Now Law

Legal Alert
June 24, 2015

Contact
Joy Ellis

Garvey Schubert Barer Legal Update, June 24, 2015.

In a healthy victory for Democrats that left some Republicans feeling ill, Oregon's legislature voted to enact a [statewide paid sick leave law](#) that will take effect January 1, 2016. Governor Brown signed the bill into law on June 22, 2015. The law requires Oregon employers with 10 or more employees to provide up to five paid sick days a year – except in Portland, where employers need only to have six or more employees to be subject to [Portland's paid sick leave ordinance](#), in effect since 2014. Oregon employers with fewer than 10 employees (or six, in Portland) need to provide unpaid sick leave to employees who qualify. The statewide law negates the city of Eugene's controversial sick leave ordinance that was passed in 2014 but has not yet been implemented.

Under the law, employees will accrue one hour of paid sick time for every 30 hours worked, up to five days (40 hours) a year, the same as the Portland ordinance. Employees may take time off to care for themselves or a family member. It is expected that employers already complying with Portland's sick leave ordinance will not have to change their practices. Employers with paid time off policies with substantially equivalent benefits will not need to convert their policies. Now is the time to plan ahead and make sure your policies are ready to go on January 1, 2016.

The law also protects employees from retaliation or discrimination for using sick time.

Oregon is now the fourth state to enact statewide paid sick leave, following the lead of Connecticut, California, and Massachusetts.