

Parental Leave Policy - FAQs

Q. May I use parental leave before my child is born?

A. If an expecting mother is placed on bed rest prior to delivery, with medical documentation and approval, the expectant mother may be able to use parental leave and the twelve continuous weeks of paid parental leave would start immediately. Family Medical Leave (FMLA) may also apply.

Q. What happens to my benefits, leave, and pay during my time off?

A. All city benefits and compensation remain intact as if you never left. Leave will continue to accrue as normal.

Q. What happens if my merit review is due during my time off?

A. It will be treated the same as if you were on FMLA.

Q. What happens if my child has a medical condition after birth?

A. Paid parental leave starts immediately following birth, and if applicable, FMLA may be taken subject to approval.

Q. What happens if my child develops a medical condition after the parental leave is used up?

A. Available paid leave options, starting with sick leave, may be taken. If FMLA is still available, it will run concurrently with any paid leave used.

Q. Can paid parental leave be used for the loss of a baby?

A. No, however other leave options may be available.

Q. Do I still qualify for sick match while on paid parental leave?

A. No, paid parental leave is full income replacement for twelve weeks. For BMEA employees only, the BMEA bargaining unit contract addresses sick leave match.

Q. Do I still qualify for short term disability while on paid parental leave?

A. No, paid parental leave is full income replacement for twelve weeks.

Q. How does the Family Medical Leave Act relate to the Paid Parental Leave Bank?

A. Some employees will also be eligible for leave under FMLA, which would run concurrently with Paid Parental Leave. Employees who are not eligible for FMLA leave may still qualify for parental leave.

Q. Normally when I take FMLA leave, I have to use up my sick leave or vacation leave to get paid. But does this mean when I'm on Paid Parental Leave that I don't have to use my sick leave or vacation leave?

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A. That is true. Paid Parental Leave is another type of paid leave to be used in lieu of sick or vacation leave.

Q. This is a great benefit. Why is the city doing this?

A. The City of Boulder is committed to diversity and well-being, providing benefits that are supportive and responsive, when possible, to its employees. This benefit is consistent with these and city values and vital to the success of the city.

Q. Does this policy apply to seasonal or temporary, or employees?

A. No, this policy only applies to standard employees who work twenty (20) of more hours per week and have been employed for one year or more by the city.

Q. Can I stay out of work beyond twelve weeks?

A. This policy is intended to support family bonding time by providing up to twelve weeks of paid leave. After twelve week, leave is not protected under FMLA and HR and Department Director approval will be required. These requests will be evaluated on a case by case basis, including staffing and budgetary considerations.

Q. Will paid parental leave be retroactive? Can I be grandfathered into this program if my child was born or adopted prior to March 1, 2017?

A. Possibly. To be grandfathered into the program, you must meet the following criteria: Currently be on a continuous block of parental leave (not necessarily FMLA) and the birth or adoption date must be between 12/7/16 and 3/1/17. Paid parental leave will not be retroactive prior to 3/1/17. The amount of paid parental leave received will be based on how many weeks you have been on parental leave prior to the effective date of the policy (i.e. if you had been on leave since February 1, 2017, you would be eligible for approximately eight weeks of paid parental leave).

Q. Can I use paid parental leave intermittently?

A. No, paid parental leave cannot be used intermittently and must be used in a continuous block. This leave is intended to support families by providing bonding time for new parents while allowing the organization to effectively plan for employees being away from the work place.

Q. May I take supplemental sick/vacation leave immediately following the birth of my child, then take paid parental leave in a continuous block?

A: Yes, with Department and HR Director approval

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Q. Can I come back to work a partial schedule before the twelve weeks is up?

A. If you return to work before twelve weeks is up, the remainder of paid parental leave may be forfeited, but the leave will not be extended beyond the first twelve continuous weeks. The adjust work schedule must be approved by your supervisor.

Q. Do I need to track my time in the city's time entry system?

A. Once your leave starts, the block of leave is entered at one time.

Q. How is a week defined under the policy?

A. A week is defined by average scheduled hours worked per week.

Q. What does "concurrently" mean related to taking FMLA and paid parental leave?

A. "Concurrently" means using the FMLA leave along with paid parental leave. FMLA leave is an unpaid, job-protected leave (which may be supplemented with paid vacation or sick leave). Paid parental leave is income replacement while out for birth or adoption of a child. For every hour of paid parental leave, an hour of FMLA must also be tracked, when eligible.

Q. If my spouse and I both work for the city, do we have to split time?

A. Yes, sharing leave time under such a policy is a common element amongst organizations that employ this benefit.

Q. Will paid parental leave count towards the calculation of overtime?

A. No

Q. How often can I take paid parental leave?

A. The leave allowed through this policy is a maximum of twelve weeks per rolling calendar year. Multiple births or adoptions do not increase the length of paid parental leave granted for the event.

Q. What documentation or forms are required to request paid parental leave?

A. Employees should use the [Leave Request Form](#) and indicate maternity/paternity/adoption. Additionally, documentation indicating date of birth or adoption should be submitted.

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Q. Does paid parental leave count towards pension, unemployment and 401(k) and 457?

A. Yes. Paid parental leave is income replacement while on leave. You will still have all deductions taken out including taxes, pension, etc.

Q. If I have a child or adopt before I reach my one year service anniversary date and reach my service date while on leave, am I eligible for paid parental leave?

A. No. You may be eligible for other leave options based on employment status and category such as short term disability, sick match, or unpaid leave of absence.

Q. If I adopt a stepchild, am I eligible for paid parental leave?

A. Adoptions of stepchildren are excluded from this policy.

Q. Is paid parental leave available for foster care placement?

A. No, foster care placement is excluded from this policy.

Q. What if a holiday or city closure falls during the paid parental leave time?

A. The employee's time is coded consecutively as paid parental leave. Holiday pay or city closures would not extend the length of paid parental leave.

Q. If a union Executive Board member is on paid parental leave and attends a union or executive board meeting, is their leave affected?

A. If an Executive Board member chooses to attend a union business meeting while on paid parental leave, the paid parental leave will not be affected or interrupted.

Q. Is there anything else I should know about this policy?

A. This policy is intended to support family bonding time and all requests for paid parental leave are subject to final approval by the Department Director and HR Director or designee.