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Pittsburgh Employers Face Mandatory Paid Sick Time Expansion

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As of January 1, 2026, employers whose full and part-time employees work within the geographical boundaries of the City of Pittsburgh are subject to expanded requirements of the Pittsburgh Paid Sick Days Act (PSDA). The PSDA initially took effect on March 15, 2020, and required that employees working within the city accrue paid sick time at a rate of one hour for every 35 hours worked. Employees working for employers with more than 15 employees could accrue up to 40 hours of paid sick time per year, and those employees working for employers with fewer than 15 employees could accrue up to 24 hours of paid sick time per year.

As noted in a previous [Vorys client alert](#), the ordinance passed by Pittsburgh City Council mandates that, beginning in 2026, employees working within the city limits accrue paid sick time at a rate of one hour for every 30 hours worked. Moreover, employers with 15 or more employees must now allow employees to amass 72 hours of paid sick time per year. Smaller employers with under 15 employees must provide up to 48 hours of paid sick time annually. Employers must comply with the PSDA and provide the minimum amount of sick leave associated with their employee count, and they may not retaliate against an employee for using sick leave time accrued under the PSDA.

Employers should also note that under both the original and revised PSDA, employees must be permitted to carry over unused sick leave into the following calendar year *unless* the employer awards the employee the full sick leave (48 hours or 72 hours) for its classification under the PSDA at the beginning of the calendar year, without requiring the employee to accrue the time based upon hours worked.

The PSDA goes on to specify the reasons for which employees may use the paid sick time to which they are entitled under the Act:

- An employee's mental or physical illness, injury or health condition; an employee's need for medical diagnosis, care, or treatment of a mental or physical illness, injury or health condition; an employee's need for preventive medical care;

- Care of a family member with a mental or physical illness, injury or health condition; care of a family member who needs medical diagnosis, care, or treatment of a mental or physical illness, injury or health condition; care of a family member who needs preventive medical care; or
- Closure of the employee's place of business by order of a public official due to a public health emergency or an employee's need to care for a child whose school or place of care has been closed by order of a public official due to a public health emergency, or care for a family member when it has been determined by the health authorities having jurisdiction or by a health care provider that the family member's presence in the community would jeopardize the health of others because of the family member's exposure to a communicable disease, whether or not the family member has actually contracted the communicable disease.

Pittsburgh employers should work with their legal counsel and human resources professionals to review both the existing requirements of the PSDA which remain unchanged by the new ordinance, as well as those expanded benefits which these employers are now mandated to provide. Employers must understand and comply with the minimum sick leave benefits for which they are responsible, while also reviewing and revising existing time-off and leave policies to make sure that the total benefits extended to its employees meet, but do not exceed what the employer had intended when combined with the amount of sick leave to be provided under the PSDA.