



PAID SICK DAYS FOR A HEALTHY TACOMA

Paid sick days help prevent the spread of disease, promoting healthier schools, more productive workplaces and more profitable businesses.

Yet 2 in 5 Tacoma workers – about 40,000 people – have no paid sick leave now. Many work directly with the public, including in restaurants, health care, social assistance, and retail.

No one should have to choose between going to work sick or losing pay – or worse, their job. Paid sick days help create a healthy community by:

- **Protecting public health.** When people work sick to protect their family's financial health, they spread disease. According to the CDC, Norovirus, which causes vomiting and diarrhea, is often transmitted by sick workers handling food, and the flu is contagious up to 8 days.
- **Boosting children's health and school performance.** About 1/3 of kids in Tacoma Public Schools have all their parents in the workforce with **no** sick time available. That means routine doctor visits are hard to schedule, and those kids can't stay home in the loving care of a parent when ill. Older children may even have to skip school to care for a sick sibling.
- **Lowering health care costs.** When people can seek preventive care and early treatment, they have fewer health complications and rely less on costly emergency room care.
- **Building family economic security.** In today's economy, missing a paycheck means cutting back on essential purchases and struggling to pay the bills.
- **Helping businesses prosper.** Paid sick leave increases worker morale and productivity, decreases workplace accidents, and lowers worker turnover. Many companies find paid sick leave pays for itself.



Sharon worked as a nurse at a hospital that counted absences as “occurrences,” even if they were approved. After a certain number of occurrences, employees were disciplined. When Sharon was in a serious automobile accident, she worried about missing her shifts instead of getting well:

“I was taken to the hospital by ambulance. As I was laying there and talking with my son, I became afraid of losing my job. I started crying.”

Cities and states across the country have established paid sick leave standards, including Seattle, Portland, San Francisco, Connecticut, Washington, DC, and New York City.



OUR PROPOSAL

FOR A HEALTHY TACOMA

MAY 2013

The Healthy Tacoma proposed Paid Sick Days ordinance is based on these guiding principles:

1. **Healthy Workers and Families:** No one should have to go to work or school sick.
2. **Economic Justice:** People should not lose income or fear losing their job because they stay home when sick.
3. **Business Prosperity:** Businesses of all sizes and industries should be encouraged to thrive.

Minimum accrual and caps on use:

- **Small Employer** – Employees in companies with *fewer than 10 employees* accrue 1 hour paid sick time for every 30 hours worked, up to 40 hours (5 days).
- **Medium & Large Employer** – Employees in companies with *10 or more employees* accrue 1 hour paid sick time for every 30 hours worked, up to 72 hours (9 days).
- **Large Employer with pooled leave (PTO)** – Employers with *over 250 employees* that opt to provide sick leave as part of a flexible leave bank, such as PTO for both sick leave and vacation, must provide 1 hour for every 15 hours worked up to 108 hours (13.5 days).
- **Unused leave** – Carries over into the next year, but employees are not entitled to use more than their capped amount in a given year.

Uses of paid sick time:

- **The employee's illness or injury**, diagnosis, treatment, and preventative care.
- **Care of a family member** with an illness or injury, or for diagnoses and preventative care.
- **Domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking** – to seek medical attention, counseling or other services; relocate; or take legal action.
- **Public health emergency** - Closure by order of a public official due to a public health emergency of the employee's place of business, or a child's school or place of care.

Existing policies and flexible options:

- Employers may provide more generous leave, and may provide leave as PTO (paid time off), available for sick leave, vacation or personal time.
- Employers may require a **waiting period** of up to 90 days before new employees are entitled to use the paid sick time they have accrued.
- New small business owners have a 1-year grace period to implement a Sick Time policy.
- Employees may voluntarily **trade shifts** rather than use paid sick time.
- Employers may establish policies for notice and communication about employee absences, but may not discipline or discharge employees who use sick leave for an authorized purpose.

View "Our Proposal" online at healthytacoma.net/our-proposal