

Massachusetts Paid Family and Medical Leave: February 2022 Update

Article By:

Laurielle Howe

Lisa Stephanian Burton

The Massachusetts Department of Family and Medical Leave (DFML) continues to issue, update, and consolidate guidance on the Massachusetts Paid Family and Medical Leave Act (PFML). Here is a summary of additional guidance released by the DFML in early 2022, which further updates our [2021 year-end article](#).

Consolidated Guidance for Employers and Workers

As the DFML adjusts and solidifies its guidance on the administration of the PFML, the agency is consolidating employer and worker resources on its website. There is now a [resource page](#) addressing the program that employers can share with their workers, as well as a new [Help Center page](#) with guidance for workers, employers, and health care providers.

The DFML's newly published materials for *workers* include the following:

- A [list](#) of common issues that may result in delays in application processing and payment of benefits
- A [list](#) of other types of leave benefits that workers should be reporting to the DFML when they complete their application, such as unemployment income
- A [timeline](#) for a worker's appeal of a denial of PFML benefits
- A form [affidavit](#) to demonstrate a qualifying family relationship to support a worker's application for leave to care for a family member with a serious health condition

Notable updates to *employer* guidance includes the following:

- An updated [employer resource page](#)

-
- An updated [contribution calculator](#), which now allows calculations based on current and past annual rates
 - Guidance on [wage contributions and reporting](#)
 - Guidance on the [employer's role](#) in reviewing PFML applications
 - [Tax](#) guidance on PFML benefits

Bonuses

The DFML also has provided a brief guidance on [bonuses](#) so workers can determine relevant information to report to the DFML when submitting an application for benefits. The guidance notes that bonuses, “like a holiday bonus or an annual sum paid out at the end of the year,” will not cause a reduction in a worker’s PFML benefits for the week that the bonus is paid. The guidance also states that workers “**should not** report bonuses to the [DFML] in [the] application or when reporting other income during [the] leave.” (Emphasis in original.)

Guidance on 2022 Benefit Calculations and Claim Ownership

According to the DFML, The average weekly wage (AWW) for 2022 has increased to \$1,694.24. (The threshold for earnings for a worker to be eligible for benefits has also increased to \$5,700 earned in the past four quarters). Given the AWW increase, the DFML provides guidance on [2022 benefit calculations](#) “related to the minimum requirements for private and self-insured plans to remain compliant and continue to qualify for exemptions from participation in the state program.”

The guidance includes scenarios that address the compliance implications for different claims based on the date filed (e.g., in 2021 or 2022), bonding leave that follows a medical leave for pregnancy or childbirth, and extensions. It also provides different scenarios addressing how private and self-insured plans should calculate new benefit rates at the end of a benefit year.

Additionally, the guidance addresses [claim ownership](#), which focuses on when employers transition from the state program to exempt private plans (or the reverse). The DFML advises employers that are transitioning between plans to “provide workers as much notice as feasible about the change so that workers can submit their application under the appropriate, applicable plan.” The DFML also provides several compliance scenarios to address various situations when workers are applying for PFML benefits and when employers may be transitioning between plans.

Staying Informed

Employers can access the DFML [website](#), which includes links to the DFML’s regulations, notices, and other guidance. The DFML also issues a [newsletter](#) to which readers can subscribe.

© 2025, Ogletree, Deakins, Nash, Smoak & Stewart, P.C., All Rights Reserved.

Source URL: <https://natlawreview.com/article/massachusetts-paid-family-and-medical-leave-february-2022-update>