



Tennessee Veterans Have New Employee Leave Rights

Insights

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Without much fanfare, Tennessee has a new employee rights law on the books providing veterans with the guaranteed right to take an unpaid day off from work on Veteran's Day – November 11. This new law was passed by the state legislature on April 7 and was signed into effect by Governor Bill Lee on April 20. What steps should Tennessee employers take to prepare for this new legal obligation?

Veterans Entitled to Unpaid Day Off on November 11

The new law covers any business which employs at least one person and requires employers – with limited exceptions – to provide veterans with an unpaid day off on November 11. In order to qualify for this benefit, the employee needs to provide you with:

- at least one-month's written notice of the requested time off, and
- proof of their veteran status.

The only exceptions to the required day off are if the veteran's absence would impact public health or safety, or if the time off would cause you significant economic or operational disruption.

"Veterans" are defined in the new law as former members of the U.S. armed forces and former or current members of a reserve or a Tennessee National Guard unit called into active military service of the U.S. The statute does not include independent contractors as workers entitled to this benefit

What Steps Should You Take?

Tennessee employers should consider updating their holiday policy to include information about this benefit for your employees located in the state. You should also make your managers and HR representatives aware of this leave entitlement. If you offer a more generous holiday leave policy, this new law may be a non-issue for you. You should still have this on your radar, however, to the extent an employee may raise it with you.

Finally, it's important that your organization take a consistent approach when evaluating whether a request could cause you "significant economic or operational disruption" such that you consider denying the time-off request. You should consider coordinating between departments or operational units to develop such a consistent approach.

Conclusion

Fisher Phillips will continue to monitor workplace laws impacting Tennessee employers and provide updates as appropriate. Make sure you are subscribed to [Fisher Phillips' Insight system](#) to get the most up-to-date information. If you have questions, contact your Fisher Phillips attorney, the authors of this Insight, any attorney in [our Memphis or Nashville offices](#), or any attorney in our [Employee Leaves and Accommodations Practice Group](#).

Related People



Joseph P. Shelton
Regional Managing Partner
615.488.2901
[Email](#)

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