

WAC 192-530-020 Voluntary plans—Employer plan requirements.

(1) An employer's voluntary plan must:

(a) Allow the employee to take at least the same duration of leave from work as the state plan;

(b) Pay at least equivalent total monetary benefits as the state plan;

(c) Not withhold an amount from an employee's wages that is higher than what would be withheld under the state plan for the same period of time; and

(d) Offer leave for at least the same reasons as the state plan.

(2) An employer with an approved voluntary plan may, at its discretion, use an accelerated payment schedule. The total monetary benefit must be equal to or greater than what the employee would have received under the state plan.

(a) If the employer chooses to use an accelerated payment schedule, the total monetary benefit must be paid to the employee over a length of time that is no less than one-half of what would have been provided under the state plan.

(b) Whether an employer elects to use an accelerated payment schedule has no impact on the length of job-protected leave to which the employee is entitled.

(c) If an employer chooses to utilize an accelerated payment schedule and the employee agrees to return to work earlier than required, the employer cannot require the employee to repay benefits as a result of returning to work earlier.

(3) Employees covered by a voluntary plan are entitled to at least the same length of job-protected leave to which they would be entitled under the state plan. An employer and an employee may enter into an agreement wherein the employee returns to work at an earlier date.

Example: An employee elects to take 12 weeks of leave for the birth of a child. The weekly benefit amount is \$750. The employer decides to pay the employee \$1,500 weekly over 6 weeks. In addition, the employer and the employee agree that the employee will return to work after 6 weeks. In this example, the employee would still have been permitted to take the full 12 weeks of leave if the employee had decided to do so.

(4) A two hundred fifty dollar fee will be required for every new application or nonstatutorily required amendment filed by an employer seeking approval for a voluntary plan.

(5) If an employer elects to have a voluntary plan for either family leave or medical leave, but not both, the employer is responsible for withholding the employee share of the premium for the portion that is covered by the state plan. The department will post the rates for family and medical leave for the following calendar year to its website by November 30th each year. The employer is responsible for paying the premiums due to the state plan in accordance with WAC 192-510-060.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 50A.04.215. WSR 18-12-032, § 192-530-020, filed 5/29/18, effective 6/29/18.]