

## **CORONAVIRUS LEGAL UPDATE | March 24, 2020**

As the COVID-19 health crisis continues to evolve, we will provide you with the latest information.

### **FAMILIES FIRST CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE ACT (FFCRA)**

Signed into law on March 18 and effective on April 1, the FFCRA provides expansive benefits and rights to individuals impacted by COVID-19. Two provisions address critical employment issues raised by the pandemic:

***The Emergency Family Medical Leave Expansion Act (EFMLEA)*** applies to employers with fewer than 500 employees (with limited exceptions) and covers employees who have been employed for at least 30 days and are unable to work (or telework) due to a need to care for a child whose school or childcare provider has been closed. The first ten days of the employee's leave may be unpaid, but the employee can elect to substitute vacation, personal, or sick time. After that period, leave must be paid at a rate of two-thirds of the employee's regular pay, up to a limit of \$200 per day and \$10,000 total.

***The Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act (EPSLA)*** also applies to employers with fewer than 500 employees (with limited exceptions). Paid sick leave is available to an employee, regardless of length of employment, who is unable to work (or telework) because he or she: (1) is subject to a federal, state, or local quarantine or isolation order due to COVID-19; (2) has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19; (3) is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and seeking a medical diagnosis; (4) is caring for an individual who is subject to items (1) or (2) above; (5) is caring for child whose school or childcare provider is closed or unavailable due to COVID-19 precautions; or (6) is experiencing any other substantially similar condition specified by federal agencies.

Qualifying full-time employees are entitled to up to 80 hours of paid sick leave under the EPSLA, while qualifying part-time employees are entitled to time equal to the average number of hours the employee works over a two-week period. Employees taking sick leave must be paid at their regular rate, capped at \$511 per day and \$5,110 total for the reasons described in (1)-(3) above, or \$200 per day and \$2,000 total for the reasons described in (4)-(6) above.

The Secretary of Labor may exempt businesses with fewer than 50 employees from both the EFMLEA and EPSLA if compliance would jeopardize their viability. Employers are entitled to a refundable tax credit for 100% of qualified wages paid under the EFMLEA and EPSLA.

### **EXTENSION OF FEDERAL TAX DEADLINE**

The 2019 federal tax filing and payment deadline has been extended to July 15, 2020 for most individual and certain business taxpayers. Taxpayers should monitor the situation as to whether states will conform to the change in the federal filing date. Tax refunds will not be delayed by COVID-19.

### **FORECLOSURE AND EVICTION RELIEF**

The Department of Housing and Urban Development has suspended evictions and foreclosures through April for single-family mortgages insured by the Federal Housing Administration. Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac have also suspended foreclosures and evictions for single-family mortgages through May 17. These moratoriums do not protect other homeowners, renters, or businesses. Kansas has issued an order prohibiting financial institutions operating in Kansas from initiating any mortgage foreclosures or residential or commercial evictions until May 1.

***For more information, contact your attorney at Rouse Frets White Goss Gentile Rhodes, P.C.***

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