

Paid Sick Days Standards for Washington

The facts about paid sick days:

- 42% of American workers in private firms received no paid sick days in 2005.¹
- 941,000 Washington workers have no paid sick leave.²
- Low income, part-time, service, and construction workers are particularly likely **not** to have access to any kind of paid leave.³
- In Washington, 46% of employers provide paid sick leave to full-time workers and 12% to part-timers.⁴
- Full-time Washington workers get sick leave in only 15% of hotels and restaurants, and 1 in 3 retail establishments. Very few part-time employees in these jobs get sick leave.⁵
- Many families cannot afford to miss a paycheck.

The benefits of paid sick days:

- With paid sick leave, ill workers are more likely to stay home rather than spreading disease to co-workers and the general public.
- Children recover more quickly from illness and do better in school when their parents have access to paid leave.⁶
- Hospital stays are shorter when patients have a loved one present, reducing health care costs.⁷
- When workers show up sick, it undermines safety and costs employers in lost productivity.⁸
- Employers with paid leave policies report higher morale, higher productivity, lower turnover, less absenteeism, and greater customer satisfaction.⁹

The United States remains one of the few countries in the world without minimum standards of paid leave for workers. At least 116 countries guarantee 10 or more paid sick days annually.¹⁰ Bills establishing minimum paid sick leave standards have been introduced in Congress, Massachusetts, Washington, DC, and Madison, Wisconsin.

The state already sets minimum standards for wages, child labor, and worker health and safety. These laws safeguard workers and the public, protect businesses from undercutting by unscrupulous competitors, and make our communities stronger.

It's time to establish minimum standards of paid sick days.

Legislative proposal:

- Minimum standard of 10 days or 80 hours of paid sick leave annually
- Pro-rated for part-time workers
- Available for worker illness, doctor visits, and family illness
- Employers meeting or exceeding the standards would not need to change their policies
- Employers could require medical certification of health conditions

Sources:

¹ U.S. Bureau of Labor of Statistics, "National Compensation Survey: Employee Benefits in Private Industry in the United States, March 2005," www.bls.gov.

² Average annual employment in private industry in Washington through October 2005 was 2,239,700, according to Employment Security Department. 42% of that total equals 941,000.

³ BLS, "National Compensation Survey."

⁴ Washington State Employment Security Department, "2004 Employee Benefits Survey," March 2005, www.workforceexplorer.com.

⁵ "2004 Employee Benefits Survey."

⁶ Jody Heymann, *The Widening Gap: Why America's Working Families are in Jeopardy – and What Can Be Done About It*, Basic Books, 2000, pp. 54-55.

⁷ *Widening Gap*, pp. 57-58.

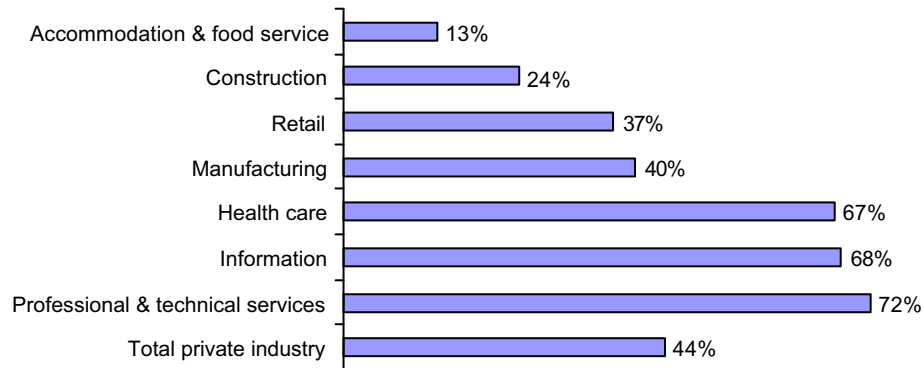
⁸ "Economists coin term, 'presenteeism,' for on-the-job health slowdowns," Cornell Chronicle, April 2004, <http://www.news.cornell.edu/Chronicle/04/4.22.04/presenteeism.html>; Vicky Lovell, "No Time to Be Sick: Why Everyone Suffers When Workers Don't Have Paid Sick Leave," Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2004, www.iwpr.org.

⁹ Jane Waldfogel, "The Impact of the Family Medical Leave Act," *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, vol. 18, Spring 1999; Christine Siegwarth Meyer, et al, "Work-Family Benefits: Which Ones Maximize Profits?" *Journal of Managerial Issues*, vol. XIII, No. 1, Spring 2001: 28-44; Thomas E. Casey and Karen Warlin, "Retention and Customer Satisfaction," *Compensation & Benefits Review*, May/June 2001, p. 27-30.

¹⁰ Jody Heymann, et al, "The Work Family, and Equity Index: Where Does the United States Stand Globally?" *Global Working Families*, June 2004, www.globalworkingfamilies.org.

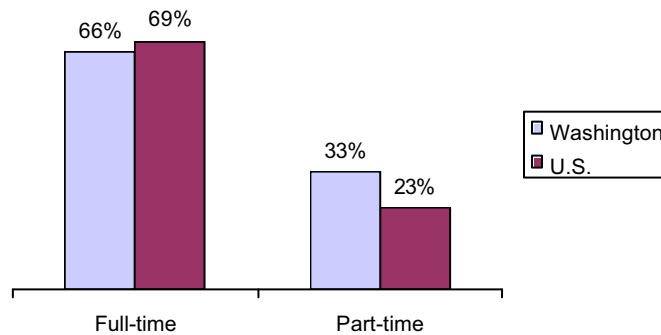
Sick Leave Facts

Percentage of Washington Firms Providing Sick Leave for Full-time Workers



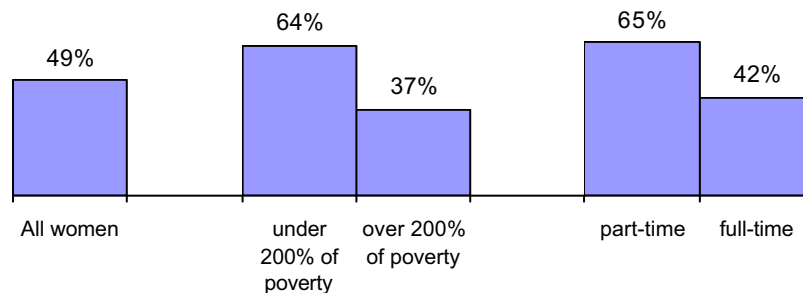
Source: Washington Employment Security Department, 2005 Employer Benefits Survey

Percentage of Full-time and Part-time Workers in Private Industry with Sick Leave



Source: Washington Employment Security Department, 2005 Employer Benefits Survey
U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, National Compensation Survey, March 2005

Working Mothers Who Lose Pay When Caring for a Sick Child



Source: Kaiser Family Foundation, April 2003