

# Five things to know about the paid sick-leave law taking effect July 1

May 27, 2015, 6:13am PDT

**Allen Young**

*Sacramento Business Journal*

SHARE     

California's law mandating [three days of paid sick leave](#) for every California worker goes into effect July 1. Here are five common questions about the law and answers from [Robin Largent](#), an employment attorney and partner with the Sacramento firm [Carothers DiSante & Freudenberger](#).

## How many hours is three days?

The Department of Labor says employers must provide three paid sick-leave days or 24 total hours each year. The law is vague on which option employers should use for employees with an alternative work week, meaning they work less or more than the standard eight hour day. To be on the safe side, employers should provide whichever is greater -- three days or 24 hours, said Largent

## What qualifies as sickness?

An employer is limited in what it can ask an employee about an illness. The law says employees must give an oral or written request for sick time. Employers could violate the



law by demanding a doctor's note and withholding pay if an employee does not provide one.

### **How much notice must sick employees provide?**

The law also is vague on this, but Largent recommends using "serious caution" before disciplining an employee for giving last-minute notice.

### **When do employers pay it?**

Paid sick leave is owed on the next payday following the illness.

### **How to provide it?**

Employers can front-load the paid sick leave, meaning employees would automatically be able to access all three days when the law becomes effective July 1. The other option is to have employees accrue the paid leave over time.

### **What option is better, monthly accrual or all at once?**

Employers may fold the new paid sick leave into regularly accrued paid time off or as a separate leave policy. The advantage of folding it into PTO is that the leave doesn't require the employer to devise a new system, but one drawback is that those hours would need to be paid out as wages to the employee upon termination of employment. The drawback of immediately giving employees all their sick leave beginning July 1, said Largent, is that the employee could conceivably use the time and then quit, which may open the door for abuse.