



Mineral



Question of the Week

July 15, 2026

Question

What do our managers need to know about the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)?

ANSWER

Your managers have two basic responsibilities under FMLA: notifying HR when any employee might be missing work for an FMLA-qualifying reason and protecting employee confidentiality.

Managers shouldn't be determining whether a situation or request for leave qualifies for FMLA, but they should notify HR when an employee's situation or request for time off *could* qualify. Generally, managers should reach out to HR when an employee has been out sick for more than three consecutive days, and they have reason to believe it might be related to a serious health condition. For instance, if the employee has been out for four days, hasn't used up all their sick leave, and says it's just a bad cold, HR likely doesn't need to know. On the other hand, if they've been gone for a week, have been diagnosed with pneumonia, and aren't sure when they'll be back, that's definitely FMLA territory and HR should be informed.

Other situations that HR should know about would include overnight (or longer) hospitalizations, extended or frequent absences for chronic health conditions or pregnancy, and time away to care for family members.

Managers are also responsible for protecting confidential information about the employee's leave. Managers can tell affected team members that an employee is out on leave, but they shouldn't disclose that the leave is FMLA or share any details about the employee's (or their family member's) health condition or situation.

If FMLA applies to your organization, we recommend training managers on the basics of the law and their responsibilities under it.

You can learn more about FMLA on the [platform](#).

This Q&A does not constitute legal advice and does not address state or local law.