

Employer Compliance Check: Washington State Employment Laws 2024 + 2025

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Takeaways

- The Evergreen State's new requirements and protections for employees across various industries have effective dates in 2024 and 2025.
- They cover leave and accommodations, labor relations, paid leave, protected characteristics and more.
- Employers are encouraged to address these new regulations proactively to fulfill their legal obligations and maintain compliance.

Article

Washington State has enacted significant employment laws that have or will come into effect in 2024 and 2025. These laws introduce new requirements and protections for employees across various industries. This update provides an overview of these laws and offers guidance on how employers can prepare for compliance.

2024 Effective Dates

June 6, 2024

- Washington HB 2266

Requires employers in the construction industry to provide workers who are performing construction activities and menstruate or express milk with reasonable accommodations.
- Washington SB 5778

Prohibits employers from retaliating or threatening retaliation against employees for refusing to attend or participate in meetings about the employer's religious or political opinions or for refusing to listen to or view communications about those opinions. It also prohibits employers from coercing employees into attending those meetings or participating in those communications.

July 1, 2024

- Washington HB 1570

Gives drivers for app-based ride-hailing companies access to unemployment benefits and up to 12 weeks of paid leave for health conditions or caregiving responsibilities.
- Washington HB 1762

Requires employers to provide each employee, upon hire or within 30 days of the effective date, with a written description of certain information relating to any quotas to which the employee is subject.

2025 Effective Dates

January 1, 2025

- Washington HB 1991/SB 5793

Requires employers to provide paid sick leave in a specified manner to each of their employees. The law also requires employers to allow an employee to use paid sick leave for certain reasons, including when, among other circumstances, the employee's place of business has been closed by order of a public official for any health-related reason or the employee's child's school or place of care has been closed for such a health-related reason or after the declaration of an emergency.

- Seattle App-Based Worker Deactivation Rights Ordinance

Provides several deactivation-related rights and protections for covered app-based workers. It requires companies to provide fair notice of a deactivation policy describing what actions could lead to deactivation and provide a procedure for challenging deactivation. It also gives workers the right to challenge deactivation through the network company's internal deactivation challenge procedure.

July 1, 2025

- Washington HB 1905

Updates the state's Equal Pay and Opportunities Act to add protections for protected classes, defined as a person's age, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, race, creed, color, national origin, citizenship or immigration status, honorably discharged veteran or military status, or the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability.

Employer Action Items

- *Review and Update Policies:* Ensure that company policies are updated to reflect the new requirements, particularly regarding accommodations, anti-retaliation measures, and paid-leave provisions.
- *Training and Communication:* Conduct training sessions for management and HR personnel to ensure they understand the new laws and can implement them effectively. Communicate these changes to all employees.
- *Facility Adjustments:* For construction industry employers, assess and modify facilities to provide reasonable accommodations for menstruating or lactating workers.
- *Documentation and Transparency:* Prepare and distribute written descriptions of any quotas to new hires and existing employees as required by HB 1762.
- *Leave Management:* Update leave management systems to accommodate the new paid sick leave requirements and ensure compliance with the expanded eligibility criteria.
- *Anti-Discrimination Measures:* Strengthen anti-discrimination policies and practices

regarding pay and fairness among workers to include the expanded list of protected classes under HB 1905.

By proactively addressing these changes, employers can fulfill their legal obligations and maintain compliance with the new regulations.

Please contact a Jackson Lewis attorney if you have any questions about these developments.

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