

Paid Parental Leave Policy

Purpose/Objective

The FitchRona EMS District will provide up to three weeks of paid parental leave to employees following the birth of an employee's child or the adoption of a child. The purpose of paid parental leave is to enable the employee to care for and bond with a newborn or a newly adopted child. This policy will run concurrently with Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leave, as applicable.

The effective date of this Policy is January 1, 2026, and no paid parental leave may be taken prior to this date, however, this policy is applicable to qualifying birth or adoptive events that occur on or after the date of adoption of this policy.

Eligibility

Eligible Employees must meet the following criteria:

- Have been employed with the FitchRona EMS District for at least 12 months
- Be a regular, full-time (LTE employees are not eligible for this benefit).
- Have given birth to or fathered a child; or
- has adopted a child who is 17 years old or younger; or
- the employee's spouse has given birth to a child; or
- Employee experienced a fetal loss at or after 20 weeks gestation. Beginning with January 1, 2026, employees who experienced fetal loss at or after 20 weeks on or after January 1, 2026, are eligible for up to a maximum of one week) of paid parental leave to be used immediately following the fetal loss. Medical documentation is required.
- With the exception of employees who experienced a fetal loss, eligible employees are eligible for up to a maximum of three weeks of paid parental leave per birth or adoption of a child/children. For the purposes of calculation, three weeks is equivalent to an employee's regularly and consistently assigned hours in a three week period, (i.e. 120 hours for management or 144 hours for permanent paramedic employees).

In addition, employees must experience one of the following qualifying events on or after January 1st, 2026:

In the case of a foreign adoption, the date of the event is the date the child enters the United States.

Amount, Time Frame and Duration of Paid Parental Leave .

- The fact that multiple births or adoptions occur (e.g., the birth of twins or adoption of siblings) does not increase the two-week total amount of paid parental leave granted for that event. In addition, in no case will an employee receive more than three weeks of paid parental leave in a rolling 12-month period, regardless of whether more than one qualifying event occurs within that 12-month time frame.
- An unmarried employee will be required to provide documentation establishing paternity or maternity in order to be eligible for the benefits afforded by this policy.
- The adoption of a stepchild (a child of the employee's spouse from a previous relationship) by an employee does not qualify for a benefit under this policy.
- Employees with a child born from a surrogate incur a qualifying event under this policy.
- An employee serving as a surrogate does not incur a qualifying event under this policy.
- Each week, or intermittent use, of paid parental leave, is compensated at 100 percent of the employee's regular and regularly scheduled overtime weekly pay, as if the employee were working.
- With the exception of fetal loss, approved paid parental leave will be available for use on or after the date of the birth or adoption of the child, or on or after January 1, 2026, whichever is later, and may be used for a period of up to 12 (twelve) months from the date of birth/adoption. Paid parental leave may not be used or extended beyond this 12-month time frame.
- With the exception of fetal loss, paid parental leave may be taken consecutively, or, if approved by Chief, or designee, may be taken intermittently (separate, non-consecutive blocks of time), or to work a reduced schedule. Employees must work with the Chief or Deputy Chief and obtain approval to take paid parental leave intermittently or to work a reduced schedule to avoid a disruption of departmental operations. In no case will the amount of available leave exceed three (3) total weeks per rolling 12-month period.
- In the event of a female employee who herself has given birth, the three weeks of paid parental leave will commence at the conclusion of any short-term disability leave/benefit provided to the employee for the employee's own medical recovery following childbirth.

- Unused paid parental leave will be forfeited at the end of the 12-month time frame. Unused paid parental leave shall not be paid out to the employee at termination, resignation, or retirement.
- If both parents of a qualifying event are district employees, each employee is eligible for a paid parental leave benefit under this policy.
- Paid parental leave taken under this policy will run concurrently with leave under the FMLA; thus, any leave taken under this policy that falls under the definition of circumstances qualifying for leave due to the birth or adoption of a child, the leave will be counted toward the 12 weeks of available FMLA leave per a 12-month period. All other requirements and provisions under the FMLA will apply. In no case will the total amount of leave—whether paid or unpaid—granted to the employee under the FMLA exceed 12 weeks during the 12-month FMLA period. Please refer to the Family and Medical Leave Policy for further guidance on the FMLA.
- After the paid parental leave (and any short-term disability leave for employees giving birth) is exhausted, the balance of FMLA leave (if applicable) will be compensated through employees' accrued sick or PTO or employees may take the time as unpaid per the district's FMLA policy.
- The district will maintain all benefits for employees during the paid parental leave period just as if they were taking any other paid leave such as PTO or paid sick leave.
- An employee who takes paid parental leave that does not qualify for FMLA leave will be afforded the same level of job protection for the period of time that the employee is on paid parental leave as if the employee was on FMLA-qualifying leave.
- An employee must return to work for at least six (6) months following use of paid parental leave or the value of paid parental leave used must be repaid to the district. This requirement may be waived by the Chief or their designee, as determined on a case-by-case basis, and does not apply in the event of involuntary termination or lay-off.
- The employee will provide the Chief, or their designee with notice of the request for leave at least 30 days prior to the proposed date of the leave (or if the leave was not foreseeable, as soon as possible). The employee must complete the necessary forms and provide all documentation as required by the district to substantiate the request.
- The district may take disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, against an employee who uses paid parental leave for purposes other than those described in this policy. (Example: Engaging in other paid employment while on an approved paid parental leave.)

- All medical information relating to use of paid parental leave, whether verbal or written, including FMLA medical documentation, shall be kept confidential to the maximum extent possible. All medical documents including, but not limited to, medical statements and FMLA medical certifications must be maintained within the Human Resources Department in confidential, secure files separate from personnel files.
- Questions regarding the application and interpretation of this policy should be directed to the Deputy Chief of Administration