
Changes in Employment and Labor Policies (4Q 2024)

Jan. 2025

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dispatched to KOTRA's Foreign Investor Support Center

I. Amendment of three childcare support laws to assist work-family balance of employees

The three childcare support laws (i.e., Equal Employment Opportunity And Work-Family Balance Assistance Act, Employment Insurance Act, Labor Standards Act) were amended and promulgated on Oct. 22, 2024. Accordingly, the regulations on extension of childcare leave period, extension of spousal maternity leave, etc. shall be enforced starting February 23 next year.

[Childcare leave] Where both parents have used childcare leave of three months or longer and the where an employee is a single parent or a parent of a severely disabled child, childcare leave is extended from one year to one year and six months.

[Spousal maternity leave] To help new mothers care for newborns, spousal maternity leave shall be extended from 10 days to 20 days, and the government subsidy for the salaries of workers of companies given prioritized support shall be extended from 5 days to 20 days.

[Shortening of work hours during childcare period] The standards for the age of children for which employees can use shortened work hours during childcare period is expanded from up to age eight (2nd grade) to up to age 12 (6nd grade), and the period of shortened work hours during childcare period is double the unused childcare leave period. With the change, an employee who has not used childcare leave can use shortened work hours during childcare period for up to three years.

[Shortening of work hours during pregnancy period] Currently, work hours can be shortened within the first 12 weeks of pregnancy or in or after the 36th week of pregnancy. but this was extended to within the first 12 weeks of pregnancy or in or after the 32nd week of pregnancy, and high-risk pregnant

employees can use the shortened work hours throughout the pregnancy period.

[Maternity leave] Maternity leave, which is currently 90 days before and after the childbirth date, is extended to 100 days if a premature baby is born.

[Infertility treatment leave] Infertility treatment leave is extended from three days a year to six days a year. Also, the paid infertility leave period is extended from one day to two days.

II. New childcare leave policies in 2025

To strengthen employees' work-family balance, government support will be expanded such as raise of childcare leave allowance. For this, the partially amended Enforcement Decree of the Employment Insurance Act and the Enforcement Decree of the Equal Employment Opportunity And Work-Family Balance Assistance Act was deliberated and resolved at the cabinet meeting on December 17 and shall be enforced on January 1 next year.

[Childcare leave allowance] Childcare leave allowance shall be significantly raised from up to KRW 1.5 million per month to up to KRW 2.5 million per month. If 12 months of childcare leave is used, the total childcare leave allowance shall be increased by KRW 5.1 million from KRW 18 million to KRW 23.1 million.

* Up to KRW 1.5 million per month \rightarrow Up to KRW 2.5 million per month (KRW 2.5 million for the 1st through 3rd month, KRW 2 million for the 4th to 6th month, and KRW 1.6 million for the 7th month and after)

[Method of payment] Currently, 25% of childcare leave allowance is paid six months from the month the employee returns to work, but starting next year, the allowance shall be paid in full during the childcare leave period.

[Childcare leave of both parents] If a couple both uses childcare leave (for

babies within 18 months of age), the total childcare leave allowance for the couple shall be KRW 59.2 million, or KRW 29.6 million for each.

* (1st month) KRW 2 million → KRW 2.5 million, (2nd month) KRW 2.5 million, (3rd month) KRW 3 million, (4th month) KRW 3.5 million, (5th month) KRW 4 million, (6 months) KRW 4.5 million

[Application method and granting process] When applying for maternity leave, an application for childcare leave can be made at the same time. Also, the process for employers' granting of childcare leave* was established.

* The intention to grant childcare leave should be expressed in writing within 14 days (if there is no intention expressed, the employee can use childcare leave as he/she applied for).

[Subsidies for substitute workers] Starting from next year, subsidies for substitute workers shall be paid for childcare leave as well as maternity leave and shortened work hours during childcare period. The subsidies shall be paid up to KRW 14.4 million won (up to KRW 1.2 million per month, for one year).

III. Useful information on labor and employment

[AI labor law service] An AI search service for labor laws is provided to help better understand complicated and difficult labor laws (Dec. 2024).



- i. **AI search on labor law information:** Labor law related questions are answered in easy expressions through SNS.
- ii. **Conversation-style search of reference information:** Laws, court rulings, answers on questions, manuals, etc. can be searched in an easy manner through conversation.
- iii. **Support for preparation of petitions:** A detailed petition is prepared through an AI-based Q&A method.

※ To search labor law information, use the QR code, and for other services, log onto <https://labor.maum.ai>.

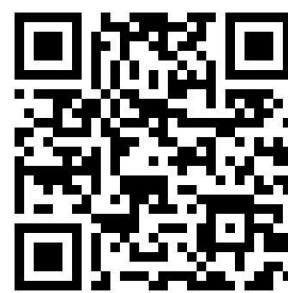
[Manual for flex time] For companies that do not know how to apply flex time or are hesitant to adopt flex time, a manual for using flex time for work-life balance was published (October 2024). The manual introduces various types of flex time such as staggered hours, selective work hours system, work-from-home and remote work, and shortened work hours. Also, the manual provides examples of initial surveys, actual flex time examples that can be adopted, requirements such as revision of employment rules, and overtime work to provide practical information that can be applied to the field.



Flex time manual



Online Q&A for flex time



Video of FAQ on flex time

※ Website of the Ministry of Employment and Labor (www.moel.go.kr), work-life balance website (www.worklife.kr)

[White paper on serious accidents] A 2024 white paper on serious accidents titled “No accidents are accidental” (December 2024) was published. The publication focuses on cases related to risk assessment, which is the first step of the occupational safety and health management system. Also, considering the fact that the application of the Serious Accidents Punishment Act was extended to companies with less than 50 employees, the book presents examples for companies with less than 50 employees.

The white paper on serious accidents can be accessed for free at the website of the Ministry of Employment and Labor and e-book platforms (e.g., Kyobo, Yes24, Aladin), and the hard copy version can be purchased at general bookstores.



[Case study on chemical accidents] A case study on chemical accidents explaining major fire and explosion accidents that occurred in the recent five years (2019-2023, 10 cases) has been published (November 2024). The publication is written in a reader-friendly manner using a story-telling method on the direct cause and progress of accidents and safety regulations in business places and analyses in detail complex causes of accidents such as working environment and occupational safety and health management system.

The case study on chemical accidents can be accessed on the website of the Ministry of Employment and Labor and the Korea Occupational Safety and Health Agency, and also through QR codes and e-book platforms (e.g., Kyobo, Yes24, Aladin).



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