

# **THE FREE METHODIST CHURCH IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**

## **FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE POLICY**

### **Eligibility for Leave**

All appointed ministers of The Free Methodist Church In Southern California (referred to herein as FMCSC) may be eligible for up to 12 work weeks of unpaid family and medical leave every 12 months if they have:

1. Been so employed for at least one year; and
2. Worked in such employment at least 1,250 hours during the 12 months before leave begins.

### **Reasons for Leave**

Appointed ministers may be eligible for leave for the following reasons:

1. Because of the birth of a minister's child and in order to care for that child;
2. Because of the placement of a child in a minister's home for adoption or foster care;
3. Because a minister needs to care for their spouse, son, daughter, or parent who has a serious health condition; or
4. Because of their own serious health condition that makes them unable to perform their job.

### **Length of Leave**

Appointed ministers may be eligible for up to 12 weeks of family and medical leave during a 12-month period. The 12-month period is measured from the first day of each calendar year.

A minister's eligibility for leave after the birth or placement of a child expires at the end of the 12-month period beginning after the date of birth or placement.

In some cases, ministers may take intermittent leave or may work a reduced number of hours instead of taking 12 consecutive weeks of leave. Unless intermittent leave or working a reduced number of hours is medically necessary, this arrangement must first be approved by the FMCSC. In cases of medical necessity, the FMCSC and the minister will work together to agree on an acceptable arrangement, subject to the approval of the health care provider.

When spouses are both appointed ministers, and are both eligible for family and medical leave, they are entitled to a combined total of 12 weeks of leave (not 12 weeks each):

1. Because of the birth of the minister's child and in order to care for that child;

2. Because of the placement of a child in a the minister's home for adoption or foster care; or
3. Because the minister needs to care for a parent with a serious health condition.

### **Advance Notice and Medical Certification**

When leave is foreseeable, ministers must give the FMCSA at least 30 days notice. Ministers must provide the FMCSA with sufficient information to determine whether leave should be granted. A form may be provided for this purpose. When ministers cannot give 30 days notice, they should give notice as soon as possible. Generally, this means ministers should notify the FMCSA within one or two business days after they learn they need leave.

When leave is due to the minister's own serious health condition or the serious health condition of a spouse, son, daughter or parent, the FMCSA may require medical certification from a health care provider before approving leave.

While a minister is on leave, the minister must periodically report to the FMCSA his or her status and intention to return to work. During this time the FMCSA may require periodic recertification by a health care provider.

### **Payment During Leave**

An appointed minister's compensation will be maintained for no less than the first eight weeks of leave and the minister may use any accrued paid time as an additional part of the leave. Any remaining portion of the 12 weeks leave will be unpaid.

### **Benefits During Leave**

The FMCSA will continue to pay any relevant insurance plan in place during family and medical leave on the same basis as if the minister were not on leave. If the minister pays for coverage, the minister must make arrangements to continue paying for coverage while on leave. Failure to pay for coverage while on leave may result in loss of coverage.

During the leave the appointed minister's Annual Conference relations will remain unchanged and the leave will be considered as an uninterrupted appointment for retirement purposes with the FMCSA and/or the Free Methodist Church of North America.

### **Return to Work**

When a minister has been on leave due to his or her own serious medical condition, the FMCSA will require medical certification that the minister is able to return to work.

When a minister returns to work after family and medical leave, he or she will return to their original or equivalent position with the same pay, benefits and other terms as if he or she had not taken leave.