

## NJ's Earned Sick Leave Law Will Cost Employers If Violated

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New Jersey employers stand to face expensive consequences if they violate the state's new earned sick leave law, which has lesser-known provisions that could render companies noncompliant, Garden State labor lawyers said when the measure went into effect in late October.

Under the broad strokes of the New Jersey Earned Sick Leave Act, signed by Gov. Phil Murphy in May and effective Oct. 29, employers must pay one hour of sick leave for every 30 hours worked, up to 40 hours per year. Employers that violate the law — by withholding pay, making record-keeping gaffes or retaliating against workers who use earned sick leave — are subject to fines of up to \$1,000 and possible criminal charges. Employees have a two-year window to bring civil claims for violations and can win attorneys' fees and costs if they prevail.

The new law is "a bit of a sea change" for employers that don't currently offer earned sick leave, according to McCarter & English LLP partner Christopher S. Mayer, who is based in the firm's Newark location. Home health care companies, for example, don't typically offer earned sick leave benefits to their aides, Mayer said.

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