

May 15, 2020

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HRMORNING

Keep Up To Date with the Latest HR News

With HRMorning arriving in your inbox, you will never miss critical stories on labor laws, benefits, retention and onboarding strategies.

HRMorning, part of the Catalyst Media Network, provides the latest HR and benefits and employment law news for HR professionals in the trenches of small-to-medium-sized businesses. Rather than simply regurgitating the day's headlines, HRMorning delivers actionable insights, helping HR execs understand what HR trends mean to their business.

COVID-19: Key benefits changes to make under the CARES Act

■ Requirements that impact health care, 401(k)s, more

The \$2.2 trillion Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) is the feds' third stimulus package in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Small employers with 500 or fewer workers will need to implement the following changes to their healthcare, retirement and compensation packages.

Protect benefits, paychecks

While the CARES Act's new Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) has already given loans to 1.6 million small employers, the allocated \$360 million in funds were

depleted in a matter of weeks.

However, it's expected the feds will replenish the PPP with \$310 billion so more employers can get access to the Small Business Administration \$10 million loans. These funds will most likely be available in late April.

These are forgivable loans if an employer uses the proceeds to cover payroll, as well as expenses for paid sick leave, health care and other benefits; maintains the same average number of employees for the first eight-week period beginning on the origination date of the loan; and doesn't reduce salaries of employees

(Please turn to CARES Act ... Page 2)

COVID-19 REGS

DOL's ruling to firms about new paid sick, FMLA leave

Now that the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) became effective in April, the DOL has issued guidance to employers regarding the emergency sick leave and expanded FMLA leave, allowing them more flexibility in making decisions.

New rules

Effective through Dec. 31, 2020 for firms with less than 500 workers, the new rules (tinyurl.com/DOL603) include the following specifications:

Small business exemption: Firms with fewer than 50 workers can seek an exemption from the FFCRA's emergency leave by retaining documentation on how compliance

would jeopardize their business.

Emergency paid sick leave: The DOL specifies that the leave cannot be used by an employee to care for someone else who's quarantined unless they have a "personal relationship," such as a family member or roommate.

Emergency FMLA leave: Employees may elect to use – or an employer may require an employee use – vacation, personal leave, etc., concurrently with the expanded FMLA.

Recordkeeping: For four years, employers must retain all FFCRA documentation on employees, whether or not a request for leave was granted.

Info: tinyurl.com/FFCRA603

CARES Act ...

(continued from Page 1)

making under \$100,000 in 2019 by more than 25%.

Health benefits

Under the CARES Act, these health benefits are affected:

COVID-19 testing, treatment: Group health plans are required to cover COVID-19 screenings and doctors visits without co-pays or deductibles. However, this doesn't include treatment following a COVID-19 diagnosis.

Telehealth: The CARES Act allows for a high deductible health plan (HDHP) with a health savings account (HSA) to cover telehealth services prior to an employee reaching the deductible. This provision is effective through plan years beginning in 2021.

The IRS has also announced that HDHPs can pay for 2019 COVID-19-related testing and treatment without penalty.

Over-the-counter medicines: The

CARES Act allows employees to use money in a HSA, FSA and HRA account for the purchase of over-the-counter healthcare products and medical supplies without a prescription from a doctor. This applies whether or not the product is related to treatment for COVID-19.

These changes, which reverse the ACA requirement, are effective immediately and apply indefinitely.

Unemployment benefits

Although unemployment benefits vary by state, the CARES Act provides an additional 13 weeks of unemployment benefits through Dec. 31, 2020 for those who remain unemployed after the initial weeks of unemployment compensation expire. States are encouraged to waive the typical one week waiting period.

Short-time compensation: Workers with reduced hours will receive prorated unemployment benefits through their states' short-time compensation program. Employers must pay the state one-half the amount of short-time compensation paid by the state to the employee.

Expanded unemployment compensation: This includes up to 39 weeks of benefits to those not traditionally eligible for unemployment, such as independent contractors and gig workers.

401(k) retirement plan changes

Employer 401(k) plans will need to be amended to reflect these new rules by the last day of the plan year beginning on or after Jan. 1, 2022:

Hardship withdrawals: The CARES Act makes it legal for employees to take a hardship withdrawal up to \$100,000 (the previous loan limit was \$50,000) for just about any economic loss shown to be related to COVID-19 without the usual 10% penalty.

Outstanding loans: A provision allows for employees to delay repayments for one year.

Info: tinyurl.com/CARES603

SHARPEN YOUR BENEFITS JUDGMENT

This feature provides a framework for decision making that helps keep you and your company out of trouble. It describes a recent legal conflict and lets you judge the outcome.

■ No pre-approval for overtime: Should employee be paid?

"Betty, we need to talk about our overtime policy," CFO Joseph Reynolds said to Benefits Manager Betty Murphy, who was sitting in his office.

"Jessica Thomas has been complaining to her supervisor she hasn't been paid for overtime she's worked," said Joseph.

"Yes, I'm aware," said Betty. "Our policy requires employees to receive pre-approval before working overtime. The worker's immediate supervisor is responsible for verifying and recording all overtime once employees put their hours in our timekeeping system."

Supervisors knew

"Well, Jessica claims her supervisor was well aware she'd worked overtime since he'd seen her do it, but he didn't approve those hours in the system.

"She's been putting in extra time on the fly to finish tasks, so there's been a lot of working through lunch breaks and before her shift starts," said Joseph.

"Yes, her supervisor said he told Jessica we'll only pay for overtime that's been approved in advance, and she didn't get pre-approval for it.

"Also, the sign-in on our timekeeping system reminds employees any overtime needs to be approved, so I think our policy is clear," said Betty.

Jessica and some of her co-workers eventually sued the company for unpaid overtime.

Did the company win the lawsuit?

■ *Make your decision, then please turn to Page 6 for the court's ruling.*

HRMORNING'S

What's New in **BENEFITS & COMPENSATION**

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What's New in Benefits & Compensation (ISSN 1076-0466), May 15, 2020, Vol. 27 No. 603, is published semi-monthly except once in December (23 times a year).

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Telemedicine: Low-cost, or free, care option for firms during the pandemic

While many firms have made attempts to get employees to access the underutilized telemedicine healthcare benefit for the last few years, now's the time – during the coronavirus pandemic – to encourage them to use this low-cost benefit.

Virtual care could serve as “an effective first step” in fighting the virus, says Mary Kay O’Neill, senior consultant at HR consulting firm Mercer. It’s useful for assessing whether someone needs to get tested for COVID-19 without overburdening ERs and urgent care clinics, she says.

Also, with the IRS’ recent announcement – allowing high deductible health plans (HDHPs) to waive deductibles for the virus’ testing or treatment – many employees can access telehealth with minimal co-pay or even for free.

Immediate health needs

During the pandemic, telehealth can also help those with immediate health needs unrelated to COVID-19, such as diabetes or hypertension, to prevent worsening of these acute conditions

without risking doctor’s office visits.

Many telehealth providers, like Teladoc and Doctor on Demand, are adding doctors to their network to deal with the deluge of new patients.

Teladoc reports usage rose 50% in March, while Eden Health’s post-pandemic usage is up 67% in overall usage and 38% in new patients.

The feds have eased telemedicine regulations so healthcare providers can keep up with demand, allowing them to use popular video chat programs, such as Skype, Google Hangout and FaceTime.

Telehealth provider MeMD is offering short-term, 90-day contracts (available through May 31, 2020) to address employee needs with the coronavirus. The offering includes services for urgent care, chronic conditions and mental health (phone or video therapy sessions).

There’s growing concern about the mental health implications of the pandemic, says Nick Lorenzo, chief medical officer, MeMD.

Info: tinyurl.com/tele603

THE COST OF NONCOMPLIANCE

This regular feature highlights recent case settlements, court awards and fines against companies. It serves as a reminder to keep benefits policies in order.

Restaurant eats \$121K for minimum wage violations

A North Carolina restaurant’s illegal “tip pool” required tipped employees to share tips with non-tipped workers.

What happened: Charlotte-based Hot Taco forced servers to share gratuities with non-tipped workers, such as kitchen staff, but didn’t reduce tipped employees’ reported wages to account for tip sharing. As a result, employees were paid below the federal minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour. This tip-pooling arrangement didn’t meet FLSA requirements, so the employer wasn’t entitled to take a tip credit for the workers forced to share tips.

Result: Hot Taco has paid \$120,949 in back wages and damages to 67 employees for minimum wage violations.

Info: tinyurl.com/tacoburn603

Builder’s crooked overtime calculations cost firm \$44K

A South Carolina contractor paid straight-time wages regardless of hours worked.

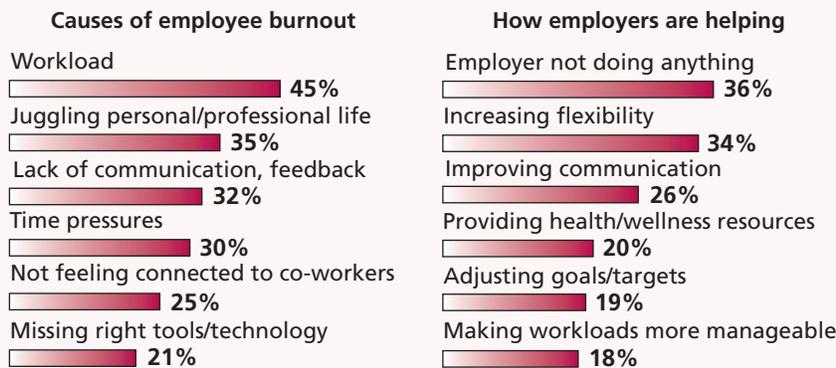
What happened: Lexington, SC-based Lucas Builders didn’t pay time-and-a-half for hours its employees worked in excess of 40 hours in a workweek. The residential builder also misclassified some of its employees as independent contractors who aren’t eligible for overtime and failed to pay them owed wages for overtime. Finally, the company violated FLSA recordkeeping requirements because it failed to maintain accurate payroll records.

Result: The company paid \$43,663 in back wages and liquidated damages to 15 employees for violating FLSA overtime requirements.

Info: tinyurl.com/lnailed603

Is your firm addressing employee burnout?

Battling employee burnout during pandemic



Source: COVID-19 and Employee Burnout by Eagle Hill Consulting

Employee burnout became exacerbated by the pandemic. Firms need to give workers more control and provide avenues for them to say how they’re feeling.

COBRA subsidies: Some firms offering to workers, as feds address in new bill

As many employee unions call on Congress to subsidize emergency COBRA health plans for workers losing their jobs during the pandemic, some employers are choosing to subsidize the cost for their own employees.

As workers lose health coverage due to a leave of absence, furlough, temporary layoff or a change in status from full-time to part-time, many employers are choosing to pay for the cost of COBRA coverage.

“Subsidizing COBRA may be more financially prudent than continuing eligibility during a furlough for a period and then offering COBRA,” says Lockton Companies attorney John Price.

However, employers that choose to do so need to proceed with caution. Be careful not to be discriminatory, for example, only subsidizing highly compensated employees. Otherwise, it could result in tax penalties.

Also, an employee agreement needs to specify if a subsidy is extended to employee-only or family coverage, advises employee benefits attorney

Patricia Moran.

Employers may also have other options to assist employees. Prior to the layoff, employers can either:

- ask an employee to consent to a pre-tax deduction equal to the premiums, or
- provide an employee an advance equal to the cost of the premiums with an understanding the worker will repay the advance upon return.

Federal COBRA subsidies

The CARES Act, the coronavirus relief package, failed to provide employers COBRA subsidies, as many employers were anticipating. Following the 2008 financial crisis, Congress authorized a 65% COBRA premium subsidy for employees in its stimulus package.

However, the feds are working on a fourth coronavirus relief bill – the Take Responsibility for Workers and Families Act – that would subsidize 100% COBRA payments for six months for those who lost their jobs.

Info: tinyurl.com/COBRA603

Access technology to reach quarantined employees

With all of the COVID-19 stress, uncertainty and constant family- and pet-related working from home interruptions, many employees are having trouble focusing on day-to-day responsibilities.

And with almost everyone working from home, it’s no longer possible for employees to stop in for a 15-minute lunchtime consultation with a Benefits rep. That’s making it harder than ever for employees to make decisions about their benefits options.

And it’s putting even more strain on your already overburdened Benefits team dealing with those same work-from-home distractions.

Personalized benefits help

Benefits advisory platforms, like Perspective Partners and Zest, can help lighten the load – while still providing personalized help to employees.

These companies can upload your benefits plan, salaries and other information to their platform to provide staff with personalized recommendations, and create and manage communications campaigns.

Examples include sending open enrollment deadline reminders, creating individualized healthcare comparison and cost-saving recommendations and handling other communications campaigns.

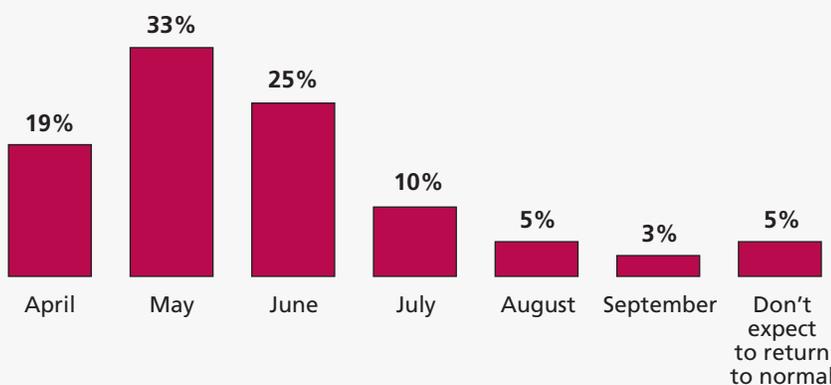
These platforms can also save time and effort by measuring engagement and usage of the benefits portal and preparing reports for company leadership. Like the rest of your company, Benefits needs to leverage technology to keep staff engaged and productive during these unprecedented times.

And now until Aug. 31, 2020, Perspective Partners is offering no-fee access for employers, so you can test if an advisory platform is a good solution for your firm.

Info: tinyurl.com/advisorytech603

Have you set a date to reopen your workplace?

When employers expect to resume normal operations



Source: WorldatWork

With workers returning from furloughs and layoffs, HR needs to prepare for an increase in administrative tasks, so an incremental return would work best.

WHAT WORKED FOR OTHER COMPANIES

Our readers come from a broad range of companies, both large and small. In this regular section, three of them share success stories you can adapt to fit your needs.

1 Extended sick pay to contract workers

The COVID-19 pandemic has shined a light on an unfair benefits practice for contractors. W-2 employees generally get health insurance and sick leave, while contractors oftentimes don't get any workplace benefits.

We wanted to support our contractors in the wake of the coronavirus crisis. To help level the benefits playing field for all workers, we've extended our sick pay benefits to all of the temporary talent we place with different employers in the U.S.

and Canada. It's available to our more than 10,000 employees.

This is an unprecedented move since it made us the first staffing or gig economy company to do so.

We've been offering health benefits to our temporary workers for nearly 30 years. By extending sick pay to them, we're going above and beyond what's mandated by state laws.

Job-protected sick time

For talent working in the 37 states with no current sick pay requirements, we'll apply our home

state of Massachusetts' sick policy, which gives most workers the right to earn and use up to 40 hours of job-protected sick time per year.

We're proud to increase our benefits, especially during the pandemic. This is something we wanted to do for a long time, but the pandemic really clarified the need to do this right away.

My hope is that our actions will serve as a catalyst for companies to treat their extended workforce the same as their full-time employees.

(John H. Chuang, CEO, Aquent, Boston)

**REAL
PROBLEMS
REAL
SOLUTIONS**

2 Employees get takeout meals during pandemic

Since the pandemic began, I started hearing about employees who were concerned about being able to find and provide food for their families while also working long hours at home and caring for their kids.

I also heard from other employees who didn't want to leave their homes to shop for groceries and risk exposure to the coronavirus.

It really resonated with me as a mom, so I contacted our management

team with the idea to provide something similar to the care packages we gave our Tampa employees after the 2017 hurricane.

Curbside meal service

We teamed up with food services company Sodexo to offer curbside meal services. We launched a pilot takeout program in San Antonio that allows employees to place an order online for meals or food staples such as produce, bread, milk and eggs, and pick it up later in the day at a drive-thru in a garage at one of

our campuses. We've expanded the service to Tampa, FL; Phoenix, AZ; Colorado Springs, CO; and Plano, TX.

Meals are sold at half the usual price and grocery items are sold at cost. So far, about 3,000 employees among our 35,000 have placed orders.

I'm gratified the program is making available some basic grocery items people weren't able to find before.

(Melinda Castaneda, Director, Bank Omnichannel, USAA, San Antonio, TX)

3 Waiving virtual out-of-pocket costs for 90 days

Since the beginning of the year, we've offered employees and their families access to \$10 virtual visits with Doctor on Demand (DoD).

The out-of-pocket cost of using the online telehealth provider is the same as a typical in-network office visit.

But until June, in an effort to help employees avoid spreading COVID-19, they won't have to pay for any virtual visits, including ones with their own primary care doctor.

Employees can connect with DoD doctors over video calls 24/7. They can either see the next available doctor or set up an appointment with a provider they choose.

Immediate consultation

Seeing a doctor takes about 10 minutes, and the typical wait time for an immediate consultation is about five minutes.

Doctors can perform an exam and recommend treatment for potential COVID-19 symptoms, sore throats and skin conditions, fill prescriptions

for chronic conditions or order tests at a local lab. Mental health treatment is also available, including therapy sessions.

Employees can allow notes from virtual visits to be shared automatically with their regular primary care provider.

We began offering this benefit as an inexpensive way to expand employees' and their families' access to health care on a 24/7 basis.

(Ed Holland, Director of Benefits for University Human Resources, Iowa State University, Ames, IA)

BACK TO WORK

Readying to reopen after shutdown?

Plans are already in place to open up factories, with automakers like Fiat Chrysler and Tesla targeting production to start May 4. But any decision to open up workplaces to bring staffers back is fraught with risk.

Overcoming hurdles

Now that the feds have released the 3-phase Opening Up America Again (whitehouse.gov/openingamerica) guidelines, employers need to watch for state governors to issue mandates.

Employers' back-to-work plans will depend on geography, says Peter Cappelli, director, Wharton School's Center of Human Resources.

Employees will be much more hesitant to return to the office in coronavirus hotspots like New York and New Orleans. Regardless, firms will need to have a plan in place to keep employees safe once they do return to the office:

Follow local guidelines. "Employers should be looking to their local health departments and governments for guidance on when to return to the office," said Cozen O'Conner employment attorney David Barron.

Take precautions. Employers may want to reopen the office in phases.

In Missouri, Secretary of State Jay Ashcroft has just begun his first phase of returning people to work. He's asked some of his staff to rotate schedules and asked those who have offices, not cubicles, to return. All employees are encouraged, not required, to wear a mask.

Employers are advised to provide employees with antibacterial wipes and hand sanitizer. OSHA has issued guidance on preparing workplaces for the coronavirus (tinyurl.com/OSHAguide603).

Upon return, firms will still be wrestling with keeping sick workers out of the office, but now they can ask employees if they have COVID-19 symptoms and do temperature checks, since the EEOC issued guidelines in March. "It's legal to require employees to participate because of COVID-19," says Barron.

Employers are also exploring ways to gauge the health of their employees by testing them or requiring them to sign an agreement saying they feel well before they return.

Be accommodating. It's "creepy" for employees to return to tight cubicles, especially "if you drum it into everybody's heads they should

WHAT BENEFITS EXECS SAID

Top employer COVID-19-related concerns

Shutdown if employee tests positive **96%**

Accommodating workers worried about exposure **94%**

Compliance with safety, health regs **93%**

Assessing whether employee should stay home **90%**

Whether to pay employees during absences **89%**

Source: Littler COVID-19 Flash Survey Report

During the pandemic, firms have been grappling with a host of thorny challenges. That's why monitoring state and federal regs in order to provide staff with plenty of resources and support is key.

(Each issue of WNB&C contains a current survey to give benefits officers insight into what their peers nationwide are thinking and doing.)

be six feet away from each other," says Cappelli. That's why some employees may be hesitant to return, particularly if they live with someone who has a compromised immune system. Others may still have ongoing childcare complications.

To address these issues, says Barron, allow them to work remotely, if that's still possible. If not, consider offering them hazard pay, a temporary bump in salary to compensate putting them at risk.

Info: tinyurl.com/Return603

SHARPEN YOUR JUDGMENT – THE DECISION

(See case on Page 2.)

No, the court decided the employer violated FLSA rules for not paying employees overtime.

The employees argued they should've received overtime pay for the extra time they worked before and after their shifts and during meal breaks.

In its defense, the employer pointed to its overtime policy, which said employees have to get any overtime hours worked approved in advance. And employees were aware of this policy, the company argued.

The court said the company's OT policy seemed adequate, but there was one big issue: Employees claimed their supervisors knew they were working unapproved overtime. They each gave examples of instances where supervisors saw them working through meal periods and

doing pre- and post-shift tasks.

If an employer had "constructive knowledge" employees were working unpaid overtime hours, it was legally obligated to pay them for that time, the court said.

Analysis: Enforce overtime policies

While employers can have policies requiring workers to get overtime hours approved in advance, they can't refuse to pay employees for OT that's already been worked. However, an employer can discipline them for violating company policy.

Also, employers need to be sure supervisors are reminding employees of the protocols they must follow before working overtime – and that managers are letting HR know about any hiccups in the process.

Cite: *Murray, et al., v. City of New York*, No. 16-cv-8072 (PKC), U.S. D.C., S.D. New York, 2/10/20. Dramatized for effect.

Accommodating employees for a work-at-home shift during pandemic

■ Immediate action plan kept them safe, productive

On March 9, as the impact of the coronavirus pandemic grew clear, we made a plan to close *Homes.com*'s four locations. We had a week to prepare 40% of our staff to work full-time from home.

That meant making sure they had all necessary equipment and access to any training they'd need on using that gear and remote work applications.

Step 1: Gearing up

We immediately got our orders in for 165 laptops, computer bags and headsets. Moving fast was critical – our regular vendor only had three laptops in stock, so we had to find an alternative. And right after we placed our order, that supplier increased prices by 62%.

Coordination between teams, hands-on laptop configuration and drive-through pickup at four locations across the country got everyone geared up in about a week. It was a huge effort, but providing equipment was only the beginning.

We knew prolonged remote work was going to be a big change, even for our remote veterans. With schools and daycares closed, employees with kids are working and parenting simultaneously, many for the first time.

To make sure managers were ready to support their teams as they adjusted, we established guidelines for appropriate accountability and performance measurements.

Step 2: Asking what workers need

We continually ask our employees what they need, whether it's tips on working from home with small children or suggestions for folks having trouble sleeping.

We're delivering a wide variety of

resources – virtual panel discussions, timely articles via email, video recordings from senior leadership, virtual yoga sessions, engaging internal Facebook posts and more. Everything is accessible from anywhere and anytime on a new internal website.

Under our "Business to Employee Communication and Advocacy Plan" we created in the first week, company leadership and external subject matter experts provide daily information sessions. These sessions are aimed at inspiring and unifying us as we deal with the uncertainties of the pandemic.

To help employees cope and adjust, we emphasize treating everyone with grace and empathy.

We've shared the videos from leadership and outside experts, we've hosted virtual birthday parties, held webcam happy hours

and encouraged managers to schedule team meetings via video conferencing.

And we're encouraging employees to photograph their workspaces and post to our internal social media groups using the hashtag #WorkFromHomes.

Step 3: Listening to our people

Of course, we'll continue adjusting our processes. What won't change is our dedication to our employees and their well-being.

As leaders, we must remember our actions create the picture of us others see. When they look at you, do they see a "people-first" organization?

Our philosophy should shape policy, not the other way around.

We must lead with humanity. After all, people are the "why" of everything we do.

(David Mele, President, *Homes.com*, Norfolk, VA)

Case Study:

WHAT WORKED, WHAT DIDN'T

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

■ How COVID-19 furloughs can impact benefits eligibility

When determining a rehired employee's eligibility for coverage after a furlough, keep in mind the IRS Rule of Parity defining when an employee is considered rehired for ACA compliance. Do you know what the rule says about eligibility?

Test your knowledge: Decide whether the following statements are *True* or *False*. Then check your responses against the answers below.

1. Whether the Rule of Parity applies with regard to COVID-19-related events is determined by the length of the furlough.
2. Any employee who is furloughed should be treated as a new hire for eligibility waiting period purposes under the Rule of Parity.
3. All years of employment must be counted when determining a rehired employee's eligibility.

ANSWERS

- Info: tinyurl.com/ACACOVID603
- years worked.
- all breaks in employment exceeds
- in employment or the period of
- had more than five 1-year breaks
- employment if an employee has
- of
3. *False*. You can disregard years of
- long as a new hire.
- make all rehired workers wait as
- year. Many companies incorrectly
- for the remainder of the plan
- must immediately offer coverage
- length of the furlough. If so, you
- apply for a period longer than the
2. *False*. The Rule of Parity doesn't
- in employment.
- immediately preceding the break
- the period of employment
- furlough must be longer than
- more than 13 weeks. And the
- consecutive weeks but not
- should be at least four
1. *True*. IRS regs say the furlough
- Answers to the quiz

COVID-19 crisis is ushering in a new wave of benefits

Working from home does have its drawbacks. That's why employers are trying to keep spirits high and stress levels down during the pandemic.

Employers are taking care of their employees by offering:

- kids/pets activities, like daily story times, pet parades and Family Fun Fridays with music and magic
- food deliveries to sick employees
- virtual workout classes, meditation sessions and happy hours, and
- the services of its IT team to parents who need to install software for their kids' online classrooms.

Info: tinyurl.com/remot603

DOL's new overtime rules for bonuses, benefits

Even though the DOL's new regular rate of pay (RRP) rule took effect in January, the agency just further clarified for employers whether certain bonuses or benefits must be included in overtime calculations.

In three new Opinion Letters, the DOL said employers must count longevity bonuses toward workers' RROP. But the first installment of a referral bonus (for new hires) and contributions to group-term life insurance don't have to be included.

Firms still need to check that any state laws align with this new ruling.

Info: tinyurl.com/RRP603

Coronavirus moves summer internships online

As the pandemic upends employers' plans to hire summer interns, 29% say they're moving internships online, according to a National Association of Colleges and Employers poll.

About 30% have canceled theirs. Others are still evaluating the situation, says Cameron Jahn, director of employer product marketing at Handshake, a network that connects college students with employers.

If a company relies on early talent, it might regret having an intern-less summer when they don't have "a strong candidate pipeline of interns to convert into full-time jobs," says Jahn.

That's where micro-internship platform Parker Dewey, which offers students short-term professional assignments, can help. It'll assist firms to move their internships online as an alternative to canceling them.

Info: tinyurl.com/intern603

IRS: New form for FFCRA, CARES Act tax credits

Many benefits and compensation managers have been tripped up by how to receive the refundable tax credits under the new FFCRA and CARES Act coronavirus relief laws.

The IRS is drafting a revised three-page Form 941, an employer's quarterly tax return. Firms that provided paid sick leave and FMLA leave wages to their workers or were forced to shut down or reduce hours because of COVID-19 can use the new form (available soon) starting with the second quarter of 2020.

Info: tinyurl.com/IRSform603

FBI warning: Firms, look for staff faking COVID-19 tests

Not my employees! Most employers wouldn't think anyone on their staff would fake a positive COVID-19 test, but the FBI has issued just such a warning for companies to watch for.

In one incident, said the FBI, a worker with a "critical manufacturing company" told bosses they'd tested positive and submitted phony documentation from a medical facility.

In response, the firm shut down to disinfect, telling other workers to self-quarantine, only to find a non-working phone number on the report, costing them \$175,000 in losses.

Firms need to verify reports and check for inconsistencies in font and spacing on documents, said the feds.

Info: tinyurl.com/FBI603

HOT WEBSITES

■ Free benefits helpline

For 90 days, firms can get free access to benefits platform DirectPath's COVID-19 Help Line to get answers to state and federal compliance questions. Email contact@directpathhealth.com.

■ Free LinkedIn postings, courses

During the pandemic, health care, warehousing and logistics firms can post jobs free on *LinkedIn* (ends June 30). The site's also offering free courses for remote staff.

Click: tinyurl.com/LinkedIn603

■ Create videos for free

With many employers struggling amid the shutdowns, YouTube's new Video Builder Tool can help create short videos for free to rebuild, rebrand, recruit or promote culture.

Click: tinyurl.com/Youtubetool603

If you have a benefits-related question, email it to Lynn Cavanaugh at: lcavanaugh@hrmorning.com

LIGHTER SIDE

■ 4 remote video conference calls gone hilariously wrong

With so many workers getting a crash course in the ways of video conferencing, it's no wonder there's been so many mess-ups, like these:

- "Just started talking to my cat in the middle of a 68-person Zoom meeting, and I wasn't muted."
- "If you and your husband are both working at home, check if he's on a 4-way video call before running past him naked to get a towel from the linen closet."
- "I'm in a video meeting and my Google Home just answered a question someone on the video call asked, unprompted."
- "I made my first Zoom fail. I accidentally invited one of our owners to my family's cocktail hour. Oops!"

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