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BLOGS

Archives;Leave

First Sick Leave Settlement Reached in Minneapolis

The Minneapolis Department of Civil Rights has settled its first case of retaliation under the [paid sick-leave ordinance](#) that went into effect on July 1, 2017. The paid sick-leave ordinance requires that employers with six or more employees provide Minneapolis employees with one hour of paid sick leave for every 30 hours worked within Minneapolis. The ordinance applies to full and part time employees, temporary employees, and paid interns. Under the ordinance, retaliation against employees for exercising their sick leave rights is strictly prohibited.

In the recently settled case, a gas station employee brought a claim in September 2017, alleging retaliation by his employer for taking sick leave. The employee claimed that, when he attempted to call in sick, his supervisor denied his request on grounds that he had not called at least six hours before the start of his shift. The supervisor also reportedly demanded that the employee find his own replacement. After the employee's failure to show for work due to his illness, the employee was suspended for a week and then was omitted from the schedule, effectively resulting in his termination. Three months after the employee's complaint was initiated, the Minneapolis Department of Civil Rights reached a settlement with the gas station employer in which the gas station agreed to pay the employee \$11,000 in lost wages.

The Minneapolis Department of Civil Rights has stated that it intends to investigate complaints, while working collaboratively and proactively with employers. It has also stated, and now demonstrated through this settlement, that penalties will be assessed to effect cooperation and compliance.

This is the first reported instance of the city of Minneapolis penalizing an employer under the paid sick-leave ordinance. Although some may argue that the city of Minneapolis has limited resources to enforce the city's new sick-leave and minimum wage ordinances, this settlement indicates that the city intends to zealously pursue complaints. Covered employers should, therefore, take care to comply with the new ordinances.