

Issue Brief

Almost Half of Florida Workers without Paid Sick Leave

- Over 3.5 million Florida workers do not have paid sick leave.
- Only 54% of Florida workers have paid sick leave.
- Four out of the top five industries in Florida, accounting for 59% of Florida workers, provide no more than 50% of their workers with paid sick days nationally.
- Public sector workers are the most likely to have paid sick leave.
- Hispanics are less likely than non-Hispanics to have paid sick leave.
- Studies show that paid sick leave has an important effect on worker productivity.

These findings come from analysis of 2005 National Health Interview Survey data, which had a sample size of over 19,000 U.S. adults. The National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) is conducted annually by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The NHIS administers face-to-face interviews in a nationally representative sample of households. Each week a probability sample of the civilian non-institutionalized population of the United States is interviewed by personnel of the U.S. Bureau of the Census. Information is obtained about the health and other characteristics of each member of the household.

The following tables refer to Americans over 18 years old who are currently working for pay, including those that have their own businesses.

Nationally, 56% of workers have paid sick leave, and 42% do not. Males are more likely to be without paid sick leave than females. This is likely due to the higher percentage of women who are public sector employees, which almost always confers paid sick leave benefits, as well as the higher percentages of men in industries such as construction which do not do well at providing paid sick leave.

Paid sick leave at current/most recent job by sex		
	Yes	No
Male	52.90%	45.04%
Female	59.65%	38.73%
Total	56.02%	42.13%

Source: National Health Interview Survey 2005

Paid sick leave is closely tied to job quality – jobs that pay higher wages and provide more benefits are more likely to give workers paid sick leave. Since Hispanics in Florida tend to have higher quality jobs than Hispanics nationally, it is likely that the percentage of Hispanics in Florida that have paid sick days is better than the national percentage. But since state level data is not available through the NHIS we do not know how much better.

Paid sick leave at current/most recent job by Hispanic ethnicity		
	Yes	No
Hispanic	44.82%	52.87%
Non-Hispanic	57.76%	40.45%

Source: National Health Interview Survey 2005.

Nationally, Black or African American respondents were the most likely to indicate that they had paid sick leave, followed by Asians, whites, American Indians and Alaska Natives, and multi-racial respondents. This is likely due to the higher percentage of African Americans in public sector jobs, which almost always provide paid sick leave. Nationally, Asians tend to be in high quality jobs with good wages and benefits.

Paid sick leave at current/most recent job		
	Yes	No
Black/African American only	61.04%	37.13%
Asian only	57.20%	38.84%
White only	55.47%	42.74%
American Indian/Alaska Native	49.52%	50.48%
Multiple race	48.57%	50.67%

Source: National Health Interview Survey 2005.

As the following table shows, very high percentages of public sector employees have paid sick leave, while only slightly over half of private sector workers have paid sick leave.

Paid sick leave at current/most recent job		
	Yes	No
Federal government employee	88.86%	10.68%
Local government employee	85.45%	14.21%
State government employee	83.33%	16.58%
Employee of a private company for wages	56.18%	42.10%
Self-employed in own business, professional practice or farm	9.40%	89.99%
Working without pay in a family-owned business or farm	0%	100%

Source: National Health Interview Survey 2005.

Nationally, the industries that do the worst job at offering paid sick leave are agriculture, accommodation and food services, construction, other services (which includes personal care services and equipment and machine repair), and business support services such as administrative support and waste management. In addition, real estate and the arts have over 50% of workers with no paid sick leave. Unionized industries such as manufacturing, transportation, and education have fewer workers without paid sick leave. Management appears to have virtually no employees without paid sick leave.

Paid sick leave at current/most recent job		
	Yes	No
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	17.26%	81.69%
Accommodation and food services	21.91%	76.19%
Construction	27.33%	70.69%
Other services	31.78%	67.16%
Administrative and support and waste management	33.55%	64.99%
Real estate	43.01%	56.43%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	43.79%	55.65%
Retail trade	48.94%	49.37%
Not ascertained	51.08%	48.92%
Professional, scientific and technical services	58.70%	39.59%
Manufacturing	60.94%	37.91%
Transportation and warehousing	62.59%	36.35%
Wholesale trade	65.93%	32.64%
Health care and social assistance	67.01%	31.78%
Information	68.63%	30.81%
Mining	77.37%	22.63%
Education services	76.88%	22.48%
Finance and insurance	78.56%	21.02%
Armed forces	88.90%	11.10%
Utilities	89.93%	9.35%
Public administration	90.80%	9.10%
Management of companies and enterprises	100%	0%

Source: National Health Interview Survey 2005.

By combining the percentages of employees without paid sick leave by industry with Florida employment data we can arrive at an estimate of the number of Floridians without paid sick leave. Florida's economy is heavily dependent on tourism, which means a large percentage of workers are employed in accommodation and food services and retail, which will tend to bring down the percentage of workers with paid sick leave. The recent construction and real estate boom are also factors affecting the number of workers with paid sick leave.

Florida Workers Without Paid Sick Leave, By Industry				
Industry	Average monthly employment ¹	Percent of Florida workers	Number without paid sick days	Percent without paid sick days ²
Total, All Industries	7,744,343	99.9%	3,583,229	46.27%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	93,974	1.2%	76,769	81.69%
Accommodation and Food Services	718,356	9.3%	547,346	76.19%
Construction	585,339	7.6%	413,782	70.69%
Other Services (Except Public Administration)	243,983	3.2%	163,870	67.16%
Administrative and support and waste management	820,393	10.6%	533,140	64.99%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	173,855	2.2%	98,114	56.43%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	177,682	2.3%	98,876	55.65%
Retail Trade	988,831	12.8%	488,206	49.37%
Professional, Scientific and Tech Services	431,293	5.6%	170,744	39.59%
Manufacturing	399,136	5.2%	151,298	37.91%
Transportation and Warehousing	259,285	3.3%	94,257	36.35%
Educational Services	544,465	7.0%	185,613	34.09%
Wholesale Trade	338,058	4.4%	110,332	32.64%
Health Care and Social Assistance	877,670	11.3%	278,881	31.78%
Information	169,564	2.2%	52,243	30.81%
Mining	5,295	0.1%	1,198	22.63%
Finance and Insurance	354,549	4.6%	74,538	21.02%
Utilities	29,963	0.4%	2,802	9.35%
Public Administration	452,809	5.8%	41,220	9.10%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	72,467	0.9%	0	0.00%

¹ Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2005

² National Health Interview Survey, 2005

The number one industry in Florida, retail trade, is the eighth worst industry for providing paid sick days nationally. The number four industry in Florida, accommodation and food services, is the second worst at providing paid sick days nationally, behind only agriculture. The number 5 industry in Florida, construction, is the third worst at providing sick days nationally. Four out of the top five industries in Florida, accounting for 59% of Florida workers, provide no more than 50% of their workers with paid sick days nationally.

Sick days boost productivity

A 2003 Commonwealth Fund survey of adult workers in the U.S.¹ found that workers lack of paid sick leave leads to reduced productivity of workers who may come to work even when sick

¹ Davis, Karen, Sara R. Collins, Michelle M. Dotty, Alice Ho, and Alyssa L. Holmgren. 2005. Health and Productivity Among U.S. Workers. Washington, D.C.: The Commonwealth Fund.

because they cannot afford to take unpaid days off to recover. Workers who do not have paid sick leave are half as likely to take any sick days. This creates problems of “presenteeism” where workers come to work and experienced reduced productivity while they are sick or preoccupied with a sick family member. Also important is paid time off to visit the doctor. In the survey, those who did not have paid time off to visit the doctor were more likely than those who did to have six or more sick days per year, and also to have six or more days per year of low-productivity.

Conclusion

Providing paid sick leave to workers benefits workers, their coworkers, and their employers. When workers can take paid leave to care for their own health or that of family members they are more productive and likely to be in better health. Policy solutions should be explored to increase the number of workers who have paid sick leave.