



## **Seattle Passes Paid Sick Leave Ordinance**

October, 2011

Seattle has joined San Francisco, Washington D.C., and Connecticut in mandating that employers provide a paid time off benefit for personal illness or a family member's illness. The new Seattle ordinance will affect many employers, including those who have seemingly insignificant Seattle-based operations, by imposing new obligations on most private employers to provide specified amounts of accrued, job-protected paid time off.

***Which Employers and Employees are Covered?*** Every private sector employer that employs more than four employees, at least one of whom performs work in Seattle, is covered by the law. All employees who perform their work in Seattle are covered, including part-time, casual, and temporary employees. Covered employees include those who work in Seattle only occasionally, if they do more than 240 hours of work in Seattle in a calendar year.

The 50-page Seattle ordinance is both broad and complex. For example, minimum leave accruals vary by employer size and are based on an employee's hours worked. Although employers may impose caps on an employee's usage and year-end carryover of accrued paid time, these caps vary depending on the employer's size. Strict annual "use it or lose it" policies are prohibited.

The ordinance goes into effect September 1, 2012. Employers with employees who perform work in Seattle should begin their compliance planning now, while substantial time remains before the effective date next year. Please contact [Katherine Somervell](#), of Bullivant's [Employment Group](#), for assistance in compliance planning.