



## **Harvard University Massachusetts Paid Family and Medical Leave (MA PFML) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

The Massachusetts Paid Family and Medical Leave (“MA PFML”) is a state law that took effect January 1, 2021. It requires most Massachusetts employers to provide paid family and medical leave benefits.

To make it easier to coordinate MA PFML with other types of leave, Harvard has chosen to offer a private MA PFML plan administered by Lincoln Financial Group (Lincoln). Lincoln also administers our Short-Term Disability (STD) program and Long-Term Disability (LTD) plan. If you are eligible for STD, Lincoln will ensure that medical leave benefits will be paid under either MA PFML or STD, whichever will provide the most generous benefit for an eligible leave.

These FAQs are designed to provide an overview of the new law, available benefits, and the leave application and administration processes. For more information, see the [policy summaries](#) on HARVie.

### **FAQ Categories**

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## MA PFML Overview

### 1. What benefits are provided by the MA PFML law and when am I eligible?

Under MA PFML, you may be entitled to certain paid family and medical leave benefits for up to the maximum durations listed below, but in no circumstance can you exceed more than 26 weeks of combined leave in a benefit period (52-week period):

#### Paid Medical Leave:

- Up to 20 weeks per benefit period for your serious health condition that prevents you from doing your job.

#### Paid Family Leave:

- Up to 12 weeks per benefit period in total across all types of Family Leave listed below, except you may take up to 26 weeks of Military Care Leave per benefit period:
  - To bond with a child during the first 12 months after the child’s birth, adoption, or foster placement (“Bonding Leave”).
  - For a qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that a family member is on active duty or has been notified of an impending call or order to active duty in the Armed Forces (“Military Exigency Leave”).
  - To provide care to a covered family member who is a covered servicemember (“Military Care Leave”).
  - Beginning July 1, 2021: to care for a covered family member with a serious health condition (“Family Care Leave”).

If you take a leave that is associated with a qualifying reason under MA PFML and are also eligible for leave or approved time off under any other Harvard policy or collective bargaining agreement (including but not limited to the Federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), parental leave, **Short-Term Disability (STD)**, **Long-Term Disability (LTD)**, **workers' compensation**, vacation time, sick time, personal time, PTO, or any other type of approved absence from work), MA PFML leave will run concurrently (at the same time) with that leave, regardless of whether you apply for MA PFML leave.

### 2. How is MA PFML different from FMLA? (continues on next page)

FMLA is a federal law that provides unpaid, job-protected leave for similar reasons as the state’s MA PFML. However, there are important differences between the two laws:

	FMLA	MA PFML
<b>Who’s eligible?</b>	Employee <b>must have worked with their employer for 12 months</b> , with at least 1,250 hours worked	Generally, <b>all MA employees</b> who meet the eligibility criteria previously described
<b>How long can I use benefits and for what?</b>	12 weeks for certain family and medical reasons 26 weeks for family member in the military	12 weeks for certain family reasons <b>20</b> weeks for certain medical reasons 12 or 26 for family member in the military
<b>Is the benefit paid?</b>	No	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Is my job protected?</b>	Yes	Yes

Please note: These frequently asked questions are based on our current understanding of MA PFML, the regulations, and Lincoln Financial Group’s administrative processes. Details are subject to change, and we will provide updated information as applicable.

	FMLA	MA PFML
<b>Who is considered a covered family member?</b>	Spouse, child, parent (includes <i>in loco parentis</i> . Click <a href="#">here</a> for details)	Spouse, <b>domestic partner</b> , child, parent or <b>parent of a spouse or domestic partner</b> ; guardian who legally acted as a parent when you were a minor; or <b>grandchild, grandparent or sibling</b>

Major differences are highlighted **in bold** in the chart, including differences in paid vs. unpaid benefits, duration of paid benefits, and the definition of covered family members. MA PFML will run concurrently (at the same time) with FMLA so long as the leave is for a qualified reason under the law. For specifics on MA PFML plan benefits, please see the [policy summaries](#) on HARVie.

### 3. Where do I find information about MA PFML eligibility and benefit amounts?

Click on a link below for your employee group to go to the policy summary that provides an overview of eligibility, benefits, and more:

- [Harvard PFML Summary for Administrative and Professional Staff, Nonunion Staff, Postdoctoral Fellows \(internal and external working on Harvard Research\)](#)
- [Harvard PFML Summary for Bargaining Unit Members including ATC, HUCTW, HUPA, HUSPMGU, Local 26 and SEIU \(Custodian and Arboretum\)](#)
- [Harvard MAPFML Summary for Faculty and Academic Appointees \(active benefits-eligible faculty \(those in tenured, tenure-track, multi-year, and annual teaching ranks\) and other academic appointees \(academic researchers and visitors\)\)](#)
- [Harvard PFML Summary for Non-benefits-eligible and terminated employees \(as provided for under the Massachusetts Paid Family and Medical Leave Law\)](#)
- [Licencia Remunerada Médica y Familiar de Massachusetts \(MAPFML\)](#)

You can also reach out to your Harvard Faculty Affairs contact, Leave of Absence Specialist, or Local HR contact for more information.

### 4. Is there a waiting period for MA PFML leaves?

In general, nonunion staff, union staff, and non-benefits-eligible and terminated staff have an initial seven-day waiting period. Refer to the [policy summaries](#) for details. There is no waiting period for bonding leave when taken immediately following a medical leave for pregnancy or recovery from childbirth. If bonding leave is taken after your return to work following the medical leave for pregnancy/birth, the seven-day waiting period applies. The waiting period counts against your total available leave time in a 52-week benefit year.

### 5. Is there a minimum time I must be employed before I'm eligible for MA PFML?

There is no minimum time of employment to be eligible for MA PFML.

### 6. What types of leave does Lincoln Financial Group administer for Harvard?

Lincoln administers leave under the Federal Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and State Leave programs (e.g., MA PFML and Massachusetts Parental Leave). Lincoln also administers Harvard's Short- and Long-Term Disability (STD and LTD) claims. All other leaves are administered by Harvard.

## 7. What if I work in Massachusetts but live in another state?

Harvard's MA PFML Policy applies to all of its Massachusetts-based employees, even if the employee lives outside of Massachusetts.

Additionally, Harvard's MA PFML Policy currently applies to its Massachusetts-based employees who are temporarily working remotely outside of Massachusetts due to the University's COVID-19 remote work arrangements.

## 8. Can I take an FMLA leave, and then take an MA PFML leave for the same reason?

Generally, no, as MA PFML will run concurrently (at the same time) with other federal and state laws when both apply. So you cannot take 12 weeks FMLA, then another 12 weeks of MA PFML. That said, any FMLA leave taken in 2020 will not count against your MA PFML leave entitlement that began January 1, 2021.

## Benefit Payments

### 9. What is the maximum weekly benefit under MA PFML?

Lincoln, the plan administrator, will determine your MA PFML benefit based on your earnings and your plan details. Click on the link below for your employee group to see the policy summary, which provides an overview of MA PFML benefits including benefit maximums:

- [Harvard PFML Summary for Administrative and Professional Staff, Nonunion Staff, Postdoctoral Fellows \(internal and external working on Harvard Research\)](#)
- [Harvard PFML Summary for Bargaining Unit Members including ATC, HUCTW, HUPA, HUSPMGU, Local 26 and SEIU \(Custodian and Arboretum\)](#)
- [Harvard MAPFML Summary for Faculty and Academic Appointees \(active benefits-eligible faculty \(those in tenured, tenure-track, multi-year, and annual teaching ranks\) and other academic appointees \(academic researchers and visitors\)\)](#)
- [Harvard PFML Summary for Non-benefits-eligible and terminated employees \(as provided for under the Massachusetts Paid Family and Medical Leave Law\)](#)
- [Licencia Remunerada Médica y Familiar de Massachusetts \(MAPFML\)](#)

### 10. How will I be paid while on leave?

If you are approved for a paid leave, payment will be issued by Harvard according to your regular payroll cycle. For certain employee groups there is a one-week waiting period (7 calendar days) before leave benefits are payable. This waiting period will be unpaid unless you use eligible paid time off (PTO).

STD, workers' compensation, and/or MA PFML leaves will run concurrently (at the same time) with unpaid Federal FMLA.

If you begin receiving other income (such as Social Security disability benefits) while receiving MA PFML payments, you must notify Lincoln immediately to avoid overpayment. Harvard has the right to recover overpayments in full.

If you have questions about your MA PFML payment amount, contact your Lincoln Integrated Claims Specialist at 1-844-228-2501 or [HarvardClaims@lfg.com](mailto:HarvardClaims@lfg.com).

## 11. When will I receive payments for my leave?

Your payment from Harvard will be based on your regular payroll cycle. So, for example, if you're paid biweekly, you'll continue to receive payments on a biweekly basis. Leaves approved after the end of the day on Tuesday will be processed in the next payroll cycle.

### **Example: bi-weekly paid employee on leave February 1, 2021 through February 28, 2021:**

- Leave is approved Wednesday, February 17, 2021 (missing Tuesday end-of-day cutoff).
- Because the leave was approved after the cut-off date, payment will be made on the next payroll cycle. If you use PTO, for the current payroll cycle it will be considered a replacement and will not be refunded.
- Pay information will be sent to Harvard on Wednesday, March 3, 2021 for processing.
- Payroll will process the following Tuesday, March 9, 2021 for the approved timeframe and you will be paid on Friday, March 12, 2021.

### **Example: weekly paid employee on leave February 1, 2021 through February 28, 2021:**

- Leave is approved Wednesday, February 17, 2021 (missing Tuesday end-of-day cutoff).
- Because the leave was approved after the cut-off date, payment will be made on the next payroll cycle. If you use PTO, for the current payroll cycle it will be considered a replacement and will not be refunded.
- Pay information will be sent to Harvard on Wednesday, February 24, 2021 for processing.
- Payroll will process the following Tuesday, March 2, 2021 for the approved timeframe and you will be paid on Friday, March 5, 2021.

**For intermittent leave, payments may not reflect a full week of time, based on reporting procedures.**

If you have questions about your MA PFML payment amount, contact your Lincoln Integrated Claims Specialist at 1-844-228-2501 or [HarvardClaims@lfg.com](mailto:HarvardClaims@lfg.com). Please work with your Integrated Claims Specialist to ensure they have all the information needed to process your claim as soon as possible.

## 12. Will my health benefits (medical, dental, life insurance, etc.) continue while I'm on leave?

- If you are on an approved paid leave, you will continue to have benefit deductions taken from your Harvard paycheck
- If you are not on an approved paid leave, or if you have not elected to use available PTO during an unpaid FMLA leave, you will be billed for your benefits by Harvard's billing vendor, Benefits Strategies. Please see [What Happens When You Go On Unpaid Leave](#) for more information. We recommend you also review [What Happens When You Return From Unpaid Leave](#).

## 13. Are state or federal taxes deducted from my MA PFML benefit?

Yes, taxes are deducted.

#### **14. Can I use my paid time off (PTO) while on leave?**

Generally, yes—but the type of PTO and when you can use it varies:

##### **During a waiting period and when your leave is still pending**

- If a waiting period applies for MA PFML, you may use eligible PTO or you can go unpaid. Follow instructions under [question 42](#).

##### **During your leave**

- You can use PTO to replace (use instead of) MA PFML pay during any leave. (This will not extend your maximum eligible benefit duration, only your form of payment.)
- Vacation and personal time can be used towards any leave
- Sick pay can only be used towards leave for your own serious health condition or an eligible dependent based on our usual sick time policy
- If you are out on a continuous leave and wish to replace your MA PFML benefit with PTO after your leave has been approved, you should reach out to your Harvard leave contact to designate the type of PTO being used and number of hours per week or the pay period to which you wish to apply it. For example: “I wish to replace MA PMFL with 21 hours Personal, 49 hours Sick, and 70 hours Vacation for the next biweekly pay period.” Your Harvard leave contact will then work with payroll to make sure your leave is paid accordingly.

Please note: For bonding leave only, union employees with less than 7 years of service can supplement (aka “top off” to receive 100% of usual pay) during the 4 weeks of MA PFML bonding leave following the waiting period. The remaining weeks of bonding leave can’t be supplemented with PTO. You should work with your Harvard leave contact to let them know if you want to supplement this time.

#### **15. Will I be paid for holidays (including winter break) if I am out on MA PFML?**

You will be paid 100% of your pay for holidays that fall within an applicable waiting period. If the holiday falls outside of an applicable waiting period, you will be paid the amount you are eligible for while on leave, which may be less than 100% of your regular pay.

#### **16. What happens to leave under MA PFML and FMLA during seasonal leaves?**

Lincoln will follow the federal FMLA regulations which state the time an employee is not scheduled to work will not be counted as FMLA leave (i.e., summer break). MA PFML leave will be treated the same way.

## **Intermittent Leave**

#### **17. Does leave under MA PFML and FMLA need to be taken all at once, or can it be taken intermittently?**

For most types of leave, you can take the leave all at once (continuous) or break it up (intermittent). A continuous leave means a single leave of absence involving three or more consecutive days. Intermittent leave is taken in separate blocks of time due to a single qualifying reason. Leave cannot be taken in blocks of less than 15 minutes, but can be taken in blocks rounded to the nearest 15-minute increment. You are not required to take whole or half days. Family bonding leave may be taken intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule only with your manager’s approval.

**Please note:** These frequently asked questions are based on our current understanding of MA PFML, the regulations, and Lincoln Financial Group’s administrative processes. Details are subject to change, and we will provide updated information as applicable.

## 18. When can I request to take intermittent MA PFML leave?

- Military exigency leave can be taken intermittently or on a reduced-leave schedule
- Family care leave, military care leave, or medical leave can be taken intermittently or on a reduced-leave schedule when medically necessary
- Family bonding leave can be take intermittently only when approved by your manager

Harvard does not need to approve the intermittent or reduced schedule leave as long as the leave documentation supports the need. You will need to initiate an intermittent leave with Lincoln and follow [Harvard's intermittent time reporting process](#) for submitting absences related to intermittent leave.

## 19. How does the waiting period apply for intermittent leave?

If the waiting period applies, it is seven calendar days starting from the first instance of leave, not the total accumulation of seven days of leave. For example, if you work part-time and start your leave on a day you don't normally work, your waiting period will start on that day and run for seven consecutive days.

## 20. What if there is a paid holiday during my intermittent leave?

If a paid holiday falls on a day that you are taking intermittent leave, you would receive the MA PFML pay amount.

## 21. When will I receive payments for my leave?

Your payment from Harvard will be based on your regular payroll cycle. So, for example, if you're paid biweekly, you'll continue to receive payments on a biweekly basis. Intermittent leaves approved after the end of the day on Tuesday **may not** be processed in the next payroll cycle.

### **Example: biweekly paid employee on leave from February 1, 2021 through February 28, 2021**

- Leave is approved Wednesday, February 17, 2021 (missing Tuesday end-of-day cutoff).
- Intermittent leaves approved after the cut-off date (Wednesday, Thursday, Friday of the same week) will be sent to Harvard for processing on Saturday, February 20, 2021. Payment will be made current payroll cycle.
- Payroll will process the following Tuesday, February 23, 2021 for the approved timeframe and you will be paid on Friday, February 26, 2021.

### **Example: weekly paid employee on leave from February 1, 2021 through February 28, 2021**

- Leave is approved Wednesday, February 17, 2021 (missing Tuesday end-of-day cutoff).
- Intermittent leaves approved after the cut-off date (Wednesday, Thursday, Friday of the same week) will be sent to Harvard for processing on Saturday, February 20, 2021. Payment will be made current payroll cycle.
- Payroll will process the following Tuesday, February 23, 2021 for the approved timeframe and you will be paid on Friday, February 26, 2021.

**For intermittent leave, payments may not reflect a full week of time, based on reporting procedures.**

If you have questions about your MA PFML payment amount, contact your Lincoln Integrated Claims Specialist at 1-844-228-2501 or [HarvardClaims@lfg.com](mailto:HarvardClaims@lfg.com). Please work with your Integrated Claims Specialist to ensure they have all the information needed to process your claim as soon as possible.

## Medical Leave

### 22. When might I qualify for a paid medical leave under MA PFML?

You qualify for paid medical leave under MA PFML if you have a serious health condition, which is supported by a medical certification. Under MA PFML, a serious health condition is an illness, injury, impairment or physical or mental condition that requires:

- inpatient care in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical facility; or
- continuing treatment by a health care provider.

Refer to the [Paid family and medical leave benefits guide](#) on Mass.gov for examples. For specifics on plan benefits, please see the [policy summaries](#) on HARVie.

### 23. How do MA PFML benefits coordinate with STD?

STD and MA PFML benefits cannot be combined. If you are eligible for STD, medical leave benefits will be paid under either MA PFML or STD—whichever provides the most generous benefit for an eligible leave.

MA PFML personal medical leave and STD are both administered by Lincoln Financial Group, who will ensure you receive the maximum available benefit. Benefit payments for MA PFML medical leave and STD will be paid directly by Harvard.

## Bonding/Maternity Leave

### 24. How many weeks of MA PFML leave am I entitled to for the birth of my child?

The parent who gives birth to the child is eligible for up to 20 weeks of MA PFML leave for a birth without complications, as follows:

- Up to 8 weeks of STD/MA PFML **medical** leave for the birth recovery; and
- 12 weeks MA PFML **family bonding** leave.\*

If there are complications due to the birth, the medical leave can be extended with supporting medical documentation up to a maximum of 20 weeks in a 52-week benefit year. However, combined medical and family bonding leave cannot exceed 26 weeks in a 52-week benefit year.

The non-birth parent is eligible for 12 weeks of MA PFML family bonding leave.\*

\*Leave for bonding with a child can be taken anytime during the first 12 months after the birth, adoption, or placement. For specifics on plan benefits, see the [policy summaries](#) on HARVie.

### 25. How many weeks of MA PFML leave am I entitled to for the adoption or foster care placement of a child?

You can take up to 12 weeks of MA PFML family bonding leave due to the adoption or foster care placement of a child. Leave for bonding with a child can be taken anytime during the first 12 months after adoption, or placement. For specifics on plan benefits, see the [policy summaries](#) on HARVie.

### 26. What date is used to determine the start of the 12-month bonding leave period for adoption or foster placement?

A bonding leave period for adoption or foster placement starts as of the date of the placement of the child in your home.



**27. If I begin a bonding leave for the birth of my child, can the leave continue beyond my child's first birthday?**

No. You are eligible to take bonding leave during the first 12 months following your child's birth, so it's important to plan accordingly. For example, if your leave begins one week before your child's first birthday, you would only be eligible to take one week of leave.

**28. If I begin a bonding leave for my adopted or foster child, can the leave continue beyond 12 months from the date of adoption or placement?**

No. You are eligible to take bonding leave during the first 12 months following the date of adoption or placement of the child. For example, if the child was adopted or placed on May 1, 2021 and you start your bonding leave on April 23, 2022, you would only be eligible to take one week of leave.

**29. Can family members other than parents, such as a grandparent, take bonding leave under MA PFML?**

No. Family leave can be taken only by a parent or legal guardian to bond with a child during the first 12 months after the child's birth, adoption, or foster care placement.

**30. If my spouse/domestic partner and I are new parents both employed by Harvard, can we each take MA PFML bonding leave?**

Yes. Each new parent is eligible for bonding leave under MA PFML, so you can both utilize the benefit.

**31. Under Harvard's former parental leave program, vacation days continued to accrue during the leave. Is this still the case under MA PFML?**

Harvard's former parental leave policy has been replaced by the enhanced MA PFML bonding leave, which is 12 weeks. Accrual of sick time, vacation time and personal time is as follows:

- Professional and administrative, nonunion staff, and eligible post-doctoral fellows will not accrue paid time off during leave
- HUCTW members will accrue paid time off during leave
- Service and trade staff will accrue benefits as outlined in their collective bargaining agreements

**32. Do I have to take bonding leave all at once, or can I break it up (taken intermittently)?**

Please refer to the [Intermittent Leave](#) section for details.

**33. If I give birth, is there a waiting period for MA PFML bonding leave if it comes right after my MA PFML medical leave?**

If bonding leave is taken immediately following the birth recovery leave, there is no additional/separate waiting period for the MA PFML bonding leave. If the bonding leave is taken later on, it will be subject to a seven day waiting period.

**34. What if my due date changes, or I have my child early?**

If the due date changes, you should notify Lincoln of the change so they can update the leave start date. If your leave start date changes due to an earlier birth, you need to notify Lincoln of this change. Lincoln will work with you, and if authorized, your physician, to approve your leave as soon as possible.

**35. If my leave starts before my delivery date, do my benefits start on my delivery date, or the day the leave began?**

If supported by medical certification from your provider, your benefits will start on the day your leave began, not your delivery date.

## **Military Leave**

**36. Under what situations can I take family leave related to active military service?**

There are two types of family leave available if you have a family member who is, was, or will be deployed in a foreign country. Beginning January 1, 2021:

**You can take up to 26 weeks of family leave per benefit year to care for a family member who is a current member of the Armed Forces, including the National Guard and Reserves, and is:**

- Undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy for a serious health condition that occurred or was aggravated while deployed in a foreign country
- In outpatient status for a serious health condition that occurred or was aggravated while deployed in a foreign country
- On the temporary disability retired list for a serious injury or illness that occurred while deployed in a foreign country
- On the temporary disability retired list for a serious injury or illness that existed before the start of active duty and was aggravated while deployed in a foreign country

**You can take up to 12 weeks of family leave per benefit year to manage any needs immediately after a family member is deployed in a foreign country or has been notified of an upcoming deployment in a foreign country.** These needs may include:

- Caring for a deployed family member's child or other family member immediately before their deployment
- Making financial or legal arrangements for deployed family member
- Attending counseling, military events, or ceremonies
- Spending time with a deployed family member during a rest or recuperation period, or when they return from deployment
- Making necessary arrangements following the death of a family member who was deployed

Refer to the [Paid family medical leave \(PFML\) benefits guide](#) on the MA PFML website for more information. For specifics on plan benefits, see the [policy summaries](#) on HARVie.

## **Leaves for 2020 Events**

**37. I took a medical leave in 2020 for my own serious health condition. Am I eligible for MA PFML benefits in 2021?**

Yes. If you meet the requirements for MA PFML, you are eligible for job protection and paid benefits under MA PFML regardless of leave time used in 2020. The new law took effect January 1, 2021, so time taken for leave in 2020 will not be deducted from your MA PFML entitlement.

**38. If I took an unpaid leave under FMLA in 2020 am I now eligible for MA PFML?**

You are eligible if you meet the requirements for MA PFML.

### **39. How does MA PFML bonding leave apply to births, adoptions, or foster placements that took place in 2020?**

As of January 1, 2021, you are eligible for bonding leave during the first 12 months following the birth, adoption or foster placement of a child. Even if you took a leave of absence in 2020 for bonding, the 2020 leave time will not count against bonding leave available in 2021 under MA PFML—however, bonding leave is only available for the first 12 months after the birth, adoption, or foster placement. For example:

- If your child was born on April 1, 2020, you are eligible to take up to 12 weeks of bonding leave beginning on January 1, 2021, until the child’s first birthday on April 1, 2021.
- If your child was born on April 1, 2020, but you did not start your bonding leave until March 1, 2021, you are eligible to take approximately 4 weeks of bonding leave (up to the child’s first birthday on April 1, 2021).

## **Leave Process**

### **40. How do I file a leave?**

You must initiate your leave at least 30 days prior to the start of the leave. If it is not foreseeable, you should initiate the leave as soon as you know. To initiate a leave within this timeframe, you must complete the following steps:

- Inform your Faculty Affairs contact, Leave of Absence Specialist or Local HR contact **and** your dean/manager of your need for leave; **and**,
- Contact Lincoln to request a leave, by:
  - Calling the Harvard-dedicated number at 1-844-600-3978. Intake is available 8AM – 10 PM EST, Monday – Friday;
  - Going to [My Lincoln Portal](#)<sup>®</sup> and click on “Register for an account” under the “Log In” button. The Employer Code is: Harvard (not case sensitive). Instructions will be provided on the website throughout the leave submission process; or
  - Contacting your Faculty Affairs contact, Leave of Absence Specialist or Local HR contact and asking that they submit the leave request to Lincoln on your behalf if you are unable to do so yourself

### **41. Will I receive communications from Lincoln after I file my leave?**

You will have an initial discussion with your dedicated Lincoln Integrated Claims Specialist. They will explain the leaves for which you are eligible, the leave process (including required forms and applicable deadlines), and your responsibilities during the leave process.

Following your discussion, Lincoln will send you acknowledgement letters for FMLA and/or MA PFML. The letters will include a summary of your rights and responsibilities. You will also receive a summary email from your Lincoln Integrated Claims Specialist outlining how your leaves and benefits will coordinate.

You can select a preferred communication method (email, mail, or fax) for all leave updates (acknowledgement, approval, extension, denial) related to FMLA and/or MA PFML absences. There is also a general email address ([HarvardClaims@lfg.com](mailto:HarvardClaims@lfg.com)) for sending leave-related documents and inquiries that all Lincoln Integrated Claims Specialists assigned to Harvard can access.

Given the detailed nature of the medical information, STD claim updates generally cannot be shared via email. They will be provided over the phone, or you can opt to receive them via text messaging.

#### **42. Do I need to report my leave in PeopleSoft?**

You may need to report certain absences related to an approved leave:

- If you normally report absences through PeopleSoft Absence Management, or via a timesheet, **and are taking a continuous leave**, refer to the [Instructions for Reporting Continuous Leave Waiting Period Time Under MAPFML](#) on the Training Portal.
- If you normally report absences through PeopleSoft Absence Management or via a timesheet **and are taking an intermittent leave**, refer to the [Instructions for Reporting Intermittent Time in PeopleSoft Under MAPFML](#). Your manager will approve these absences. Harvard will forward the reported time to Lincoln so they can apply it to your intermittent leave.
- If you do not normally report absences through a Harvard Absence Reporting System, you must submit your intermittent time online through Lincoln at [My Lincoln Portal®](#), or over the phone via interactive voice response at 1- 844-600-3978.

#### **43. How will I know if my leave is approved?**

You will be notified by your Lincoln Integrated Claims Specialist via the communication method you chose when you initiated your leave. You will receive approval letters as well as a Leave Decision Summary via email if Lincoln has your email on file, or by mail if your email is not on file.

#### **44. Can I take more than one type of leave at once?**

Yes, you may be approved for more than one type of leave at once. For example, you could be approved for intermittent medical leave due to your own serious health condition and an intermittent family care leave for a parent (after July 1, 2021) with a serious health condition. You will need to work with Lincoln to make sure absences are applied to the correct leave.

#### **45. How will I find out if my leave is denied?**

If you have not provided the documentation required for Lincoln to make a leave decision, your leave may be denied and you may be subject to Harvard's attendance policy. You will be notified by your Lincoln Integrated Claims Specialist via the communication method you chose when you initiated your leave.

If your leave is denied, your Lincoln Integrated Claims Specialist will call you to explain the reason for the denial and advise you how to appeal the decision. Additionally, a letter detailing the denial reason and outlining the appeal process will be mailed to you. Your Harvard Faculty Affairs contact, Leave of Absence Specialist or Local HR contact will also be informed of the decision.

Reach out to your Faculty Affairs contact, Leave of Absence Specialist or Local HR Office to determine if other leaves are available to you.

#### **46. How do I appeal my MA PFML denial?**

You have up to 10 calendar days after receiving your denial to file your MA PFML appeal with Lincoln. The 10-day period may be extended if you can establish that circumstances beyond your control prevented you from filing your appeal within 10 calendar days. Appeals must be in writing and must include:

- A detailed explanation of why you believe the denial was in error, and
- Copies of any available supporting documentation

Appeals must be submitted in accordance with Lincoln's appeal process outlined in your denial letter. You will be informed in writing of the outcome of the internal appeal review. You also have the right to appeal your denial with the [Massachusetts Department of Family and Medical Leave \(DFML\)](#). However, you are required to first complete the internal appeal process prior to appealing with the DFML.

#### **47. Can MA PFML be approved retroactively?**

You must file your request for MA PFML with Lincoln at least 30 days prior to the start of the leave (or for unforeseen leaves, as soon as is practicable). Depending on the circumstances, these leaves could be retroactively approved to the start date of the leave; however, there will be no retroactive payment of STD benefits, only MA PFML benefits.

#### **48. How can I find out how much leave I have taken?**

You can contact your Harvard Faculty Affairs contact, Leave of Absence Specialist or Local HR contact for this information. You can also request this information from your Lincoln Integrated Claims Specialist.

#### **49. Am I expected to stay in contact while on leave? Am I responsible for anything else?**

Yes, you are responsible for:

- Timely responses to all requests for information from Lincoln including, but not limited to, completion of Certification of Health Care Provider Forms and recertification of leave
- Notifying your assigned Lincoln Integrated Claims Specialist of changes in the circumstances of your leave
- Keeping your Faculty Affairs contact, Leave of Absence Specialist or Local HR contact informed of changes to your leave or return to work plans
- Reporting intermittent absences related to your leave, per department policies
- Calling your Faculty Affairs contact, Leave of Absence Specialist or Local HR contact before your anticipated return to work date to discuss the return process, including your return date

## 50. What do I need to do before I come back to work from a medical leave?

If you are absent from work for more than three days due to your own serious health condition, you must:

- Call your Faculty Affairs contact, Leave of Absence Specialist or Local HR contact at least two weeks (if possible) before your anticipated return to work date to discuss the return to work process
- Provide written documentation from your health care provider clearing you to return to work. The documentation must indicate the date you can return to work, medical clearance to resume the essential functions of your job, and if any accommodations or restrictions are required

A return to work form will be included with the leave communications sent to you by Lincoln. You will not be permitted to return to work without authorization from your Faculty Affairs contact, Leave of Absence Specialist or Local HR contact. Reach out to your Harvard leave contact with questions about Harvard's return to work requirements.

Note: Return to work documentation is only required for a leave taken for your own serious health condition.

## 51. What if I need to extend my leave?

If you need to extend your leave, you must notify Lincoln no less than 14 calendar days prior to the expiration of your original approved leave (Harvard may allow a late-filed request for extension for good cause shown). You must also notify your Harvard Faculty Affairs contact, Leave of Absence Specialist or Local HR contact of the need for an extension. An extension of a leave will be limited to the period of MA PFML for which you remain eligible for in the benefit year.

## 52. What happens if I don't return to work?

If you don't return to work at the end of your leave and haven't requested a leave extension, you may be subject to discipline up to and including termination. Please note, you may be eligible for other leave coverage through Harvard. Contact your Faculty Affairs contact, Leave of Absence Specialist or Local HR Office to determine if other leaves are available to you.

## 53. Who should I contact if I have questions?

Question Type	Resource
Leave process	Harvard Faculty Affairs contact, Leave of Absence Specialist or Local HR contact
Harvard's leave policies	Harvard Faculty Affairs contact, Leave of Absence Specialist, Local HR contact or Benefits Office
Communications, forms, and pay	Lincoln Integrated Claims Specialist