

The Long-Awaited Amendment Has Entered into Force: Maternity and Paternity Leave Periods Extended

Significant amendments affecting working life have entered into force with the publication of the Law No. 7578 on Amendments to the Social Services Law and Certain Other Laws ("Law No. 7578") in the Official Gazette dated 1 May 2026 and numbered 33240. Within the scope of these amendments, both maternity and paternity leave durations have been extended.

Maternity Leave

Pursuant to Article 74 of the Labour Law No. 4857, female employees had previously been entitled to a total of 16 weeks of maternity leave, consisting of 8 weeks before childbirth and 8 weeks after childbirth. In the case of multiple pregnancies, an additional 2 weeks were added to the period during which the employee could not be required to work before childbirth.

Under the new amendment introduced by Law No. 7578, which entered into force as of 1 May 2026, the leave period after childbirth has been extended from 8 weeks to 16 weeks. Accordingly, in the case of a single pregnancy, female employees are now entitled to a total of 24 weeks of maternity leave (8 weeks before childbirth and 16 weeks after childbirth). In the case of multiple pregnancies, the entitlement has been increased to a total of 26 weeks, consisting of 10 weeks before childbirth and 16 weeks after childbirth.

Furthermore, whereas previously female employees could continue working until three weeks prior to childbirth with a doctor's approval, the new amendment allows them to work until two weeks prior to childbirth, subject to doctor's approval. Any such periods worked shall continue to be added to the leave period after childbirth. In addition, the new amendment provides that female employees whose maternity leave has expired but who, as of 1 April 2026, had not yet completed the 24 weeks period following the date of childbirth, shall be granted an additional 8 weeks of maternity leave, provided that they submit a request within 10 working days as of the effective date of Law No. 7578.

Paternity Leave

Pursuant to Additional Article 2 of the Labour Law No. 4857, introduced by Law No. 6645, which entered into force on 23 April 2015, paternity leave was set at 5 days. Prior to this amendment, there was no statutory entitlement to paternity leave. Under the new amendment, paternity leave has been extended from 5 days to 10 days.

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