

## COVID-19 KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

### YOU HAVE RIGHTS REGARDLESS OF YOUR IMMIGRATION STATUS IN THE US. KNOW YOUR RIGHTS AND DEFEND THEM!

#### Your Rights as an Employee

- ❖ **If you are still working**, your employer is legally required to provide you with a safe workplace, including protections from COVID-19. Such as:
  - Increase physical distancing at work site;
  - Creating physical barriers;
  - Regular cleaning of all surfaces, equipment and tools;
  - Provide workers and others with a place to wash hands or alcohol-based hand sanitizers, tissues and trash cans;
  - Monitoring of signs and symptoms.
  - **It is illegal for your employer to retaliate against you for advocating for a safe workplace.**
- ❖ **If you are unable to work** or have lost your job for a reason related to COVID-19, there are paid benefits available to you:
  - In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Federal Government passed the Families First Coronavirus Relief Act (FFCRA). The FFCRA requires employers under 500 employees to provide paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons related to COVID-19 to employees. The law went into effect as of April 1, 2020 and runs through December 31, 2020.
  - This means if you have to personally be quarantined or you are caring for a family member (including a child whose school has been closed), your employer is required to provide you with up to 80 hours of paid sick leave and 10 weeks of paid family and medical leave.
  - Employers may not discharge, discipline, or otherwise discriminate against any employee who lawfully takes paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave under the FFCRA.
  - Additionally, If you work in Minneapolis or St. Paul, you have the right to Earned Sick and Safe Time pay. Employers with six or more employees **must** provide paid sick and safe time. Visit: <http://sicktimeinfo.minneapolismn.gov/> for more information.
- ❖ **If you contract a disease** that arises out of and in the course of your employment, you may be entitled to workers' compensation benefits, including payment for wage loss and medical benefits. However, you must show you contracted the disease due to your employment.
- ❖ **Your Employer cannot discriminate** on the basis of disability, race, national origin, age and other protected classes. If you have a disability that affects your risk for contracting COVID-19 or being harmed if you do contract the virus, you have the right to request a reasonable accommodation from your employer. For example, employees with disabilities that put them at high-risk for complications related to COVID-19 may request telework or paid/sick/unpaid leave as a reasonable accommodation to reduce their chances of infection during a pandemic.
- ❖ **If you believe your rights are being violated** Contact Minnesota OSHA Compliance at [osha.compliance@state.mn.us](mailto:osha.compliance@state.mn.us), 651-284-5050 or 877-470-6742 with questions.

## **Your Rights as a Tenant or Homeowner**

- ❖ **Your landlord can't end your lease or evict you right now.** You should continue to pay your rent, but if you can't afford to, evictions are on pause during the Peacetime Emergency that Governor Walz declared on March 13, 2020. If your landlord tries to end your lease or evict you, file a complaint with the Attorney General's Office <https://www.ag.state.mn.us/Office/Forms/TenantEvictionComplaint.asp> and seek legal assistance. Our office does not practice landlord tenant law, but we can refer you to some local non-profit (free) legal services such as HomeLine <https://homelinemn.org/> and LegalAid <http://mylegalaid.org/get-help>.
- ❖ **If you live in a Mobile Home Park,** Governor Walz's order suspending evictions does apply to mobile home park lot rentals. This means that a park can't evict you for not paying your lot rent.
- ❖ **Your utility bills are due as normal.** But Xcel Energy, Centerpoint, and some cities and other utility providers are stopping utility shutoffs during COVID-19. If you need help with your heating bill, you might be able to get help from Minnesota's Energy Assistance Program. Call 1-800-657-3710, press 1, then enter your zip code to talk with your local Energy Assistance Program.
- ❖ **It is illegal for your landlord to shut off your water,** electricity, or gas on their own. If your landlord does this, call an attorney right away.
- ❖ **If you can't make your mortgage payment,** call the company or bank you send your mortgage payments to every month. If your mortgage is FHA insured or is with Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac, you may be able to get a forbearance. Forbearance means your full payments could be suspended for a period of time.

**Paschal Nwokocha and Chukwu Law Offices is here to protect the rights of you and your family. Our office is open during regular business hours to take your call. (612) 465-0060.**