



Paternity leave is paid or unpaid leave available to employed fathers upon the birth of a child. In some countries, paternity leave entitlement extends to same-sex partners, and to adoption of infants. It provides fathers with time away from work to help care for a new child, as well care for other children and help the mother.

Paternity leave is different to parental leave which is usually offered to both mothers and fathers and which tends to be for a longer period to care for the child, beyond the maternity or paternity leave entitlement. Fathers may also have access to parental leave or have the right to share parental leave with the mother.

Paternity leave entitlements vary by country in terms of eligibility, duration, benefit amount and responsibility for funding. Funding may be by employer contribution, employee contribution, government contribution, or a combination of any or all of these. Additional leave for multiple births, according to type of birth (natural/caesarian) and adoption may also be available. Increasingly, countries around the world at all stages of economic development either have or are developing paternity leave policies. The ILO has reported that 78 countries provide a statutory right to paternity leave.

Benefits of paternity and parental leave

All paternity leave is beneficial to fathers, but **paid** paternity leave delivers additional social and economic benefits. Research has shown that men are much more likely to use paternity leave when it is paid at an income replacement rate, is provided for fathers only (often referred to as 'ring-fenced leave', or 'use or lose' leave) and when their right to return to their job is protected.

Fathers benefit from access to paid paternity leave in a number of ways. Research shows they have lower levels of depression, they reduce risky behaviours such as smoking and drinking, and have stronger relationships with their children.

The health and well-being of babies is also improved when fathers are involved in caring from birth. There are improvements in on-time immunization, improvements in child cognitive development, lower infant mortality and prolonged breast feeding. As children grow, they benefit from the enhanced one-on-one time with fathers, through stronger relationships and increased performance at school.

Women benefit significantly from paternity leave in terms of additional time to recuperate from childbirth, time to engage in extended breastfeeding and enjoy increased emotional support.

Paternity leave has also been found to reduce parenting stress, post-partum depression, maternal mortality and intimate partner violence.

In all countries, women spend more time on unpaid work than men. Access to paid paternity leave has been found to produce a more equal distribution of unpaid work and shift social norms around shared caregiving. The sharing of unpaid work allows women more time to spend on paid labour market activities or further learning opportunities. A 2016 World Bank study found a positive relationship between paternity leave and women’s employment, including a 6.8% increase in the number of female workers at firms with mandated paternity leave.

In the workplace, changed gender norms about parenting can reduce stigma around taking time off for childcare and promote more equal hiring practices. Providing both parents with access to paid parental leave can also improve household income and economic security.

Women’s improved access to employment alleviates poverty and allows for increased investment in child health and education. When mothers work, daughters are more likely to stay in school longer, seek out work and earn higher wages. McKinsey Global Institute has calculated that if women’s and men’s workforce participation were identical, global GDP could increase by \$28 trillion by 2025.

Paternity leave in the Philippines

The Paternity Leave Act of 1996 (Republic Act No 8187) provides married fathers who are employed in the private and public sectors with seven working days of paid Paternity Leave at full pay for up to four children. Paternity leave benefit is paid for by the employer, whereas maternity leave is paid for by the Philippine Social Security System.

This leave policy applies to childbirth and in the case of miscarriage and abortion, as well as for adoption of children under seven years of age. Fathers can take their paternity leave before, during, and after their wife gives birth (and can split it, e.g. taking one day in advance, and the rest afterwards, up to a deadline of 60 days after the delivery). As this is an employer-linked entitlement, the implementing regulations require that employers provide a Paternity Notification Form, to be completed by the husband and submitted to the employer with a copy of the marriage contract (or other proof of marriage) before the wife’s due delivery date.

Republic Act No 8972 outlines a paid parental leave entitlement for single and solo parents, including those whose spouse is absent or incapacitated, if a woman gives birth as a result of rape, or if a solo parent (for example, due to death, imprisonment, separation or abandonment). Solo parents are also entitled to further government mandated rights such as flexible work and non-discrimination.

Type of Leave	Entitlement
Paternity leave Miscarriage Adoption leave (under 7 years of age)	7 days at full pay, up to four births
Maternity leave transferable to fathers	Up to 7 days
Leave for solo parents due to the following circumstances: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rape, even without final conviction of offender Death of spouse Imprisonment of spouse Legal separation from spouse Nullity or annulment Abandonment of spouse Unmarried mother or father A family member who assumes parental role due to death, abandonment, disappearance or prolonged absence of parent(s) 	7 days at full pay; entitled to further government mandated rights such as flexible work and non-discrimination.

The Philippine Labor Code provides maternity leave benefits only and does not mention paternity benefits, but complaints against employers who refuse fathers' requests for the seven days can be lodged under that Code.

Policy challenges

Although Filipino fathers are entitled to paid paternity leave, traditional gender roles, the statutory prerequisites and the informal economy can pose challenges to its uptake.

Traditional gender roles in the Philippines remain strong with fathers refraining from contribution to childcare, and working mothers preferring to rely on other women for support. Contributing to these strong gender roles is religion, with conservative views posing a barrier to women's access to abortion which is illegal, and to contraceptives which is limited. Although the right is available on paper, traditional gender roles may dissuade men from requesting and taking paternity leave. Moreover, the mandated benefit only applies to married fathers in the formal economy.

However, a mother's ability to transfer seven paid parental leave days to her partner demonstrates the Philippine government's support for father involvement in care. Government mandates such as

also demonstrate government support for women in the workplace.

Having large numbers of people employed in the informal economy remains a significant challenge for the spread of public policies. In the Philippines an estimated fifty-six percent of workers are in the informal sector. As such, they do not benefit from the economic and societal gains that paternity leave provides.

Paternity leave is a benefit that can lead to changing gender norms, leading to improvements for all. The private sector can also play a role, as in the case of Unilever Philippines. There are also initiatives to help men understand their roles in the community as husbands, fathers and sons, and a push to extend paternity leave to a statutory right to 15 working days with full pay.

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