

Walmart Cuts in Half Paid Leave for Workers Who Get Covid-19

The U.S. reported 704,369 new cases of covid-19 on Wednesday.

By **Matt Novak** Today 6:00AM | Comments (33) | Alerts



File photo of a Walmart store in Hallandale Beach, Florida. Photo: Joe Raedle (Getty Images)

f Walmart, the largest private employer in the U.S., is cutting paid sick leave for workers who get covid-19 from two weeks of leave to one week, according to a new report from [Reuters](#) that cites an internal memo sent out on Tuesday. The change was inspired by the CDC's updated guidelines that suggest Americans isolate for just five days after a positive test rather than 10 days.



Walmart, where the average annual salary for full-time workers is just \$24,960, introduced a new program in March of 2020 where workers could receive paid leave for up to two weeks. Workers who couldn't return to work after two weeks could get additional pay replacement for up to 26 weeks, according to a Walmart press release from the start of the [pandemic](#).

But the frontline “heroes” that keep the U.S. economy afloat are now expected to take one for the team and are only going to be allowed one week of paid leave if they get covid-19. Every other wealthy country in the world has government-mandated [paid sick leave](#). And while some [states and cities](#) have passed laws granting workers paid sick leave, many Americans have to choose between losing their paycheck or just going in sick.

The CDC changed its recommended isolation time last week while top U.S. health officials very explicitly said it was to keep society moving. What they meant, of course, was that people in the lowest paid jobs would need to potentially sacrifice their health in order to keep daily life in the U.S. from grinding to a halt.

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“Instead of keeping people out of action, out of work, out of society, for 10 days, if you're infected and without symptoms then you have five days of isolation and then you can go back out into society with a mask worn consistently,” Fauci told CNN on [Dec. 29, 2021](#).

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Walmart confirmed to Gizmodo that the changes to sick leave were made to conform to new guidance from the CDC.

“Since the pandemic began nearly two years ago, we have aligned to CDC guidance regarding covid-19 in developing policies for customers and associates. We have updated our covid-19 Emergency Leave policy in response to the latest CDC guidance which recommends 5 days of isolation and associates who are mandated to quarantine or have tested positive for covid-19 may receive up to one work week of paid leave,” a Walmart spokesperson told Gizmodo via email in a statement early Thursday.

“Our policy also states associates who have contracted covid-19 and are unable to return to work after the one work week of covid-19 Emergency Leave may be eligible for additional pay replacement for up to 26 weeks,” the statement continued.

The U.S. reported 704,369 new cases of covid-19 on Wednesday, bringing the seven-day average to over 584,000—a truly staggering number of infections that doesn’t take into account at-home tests for the disease. The country also reported 2,113 new deaths from covid-19 on Wednesday.

Walmart is one of the worst companies in the country for wage inequality, according to a [recent study](#) which notes that CEO C. Douglas McMillon makes roughly \$21 million per year. McMillon enjoys the privilege of teleconferencing in on his [meetings with President Joe Biden](#), something his workers aren’t able to do.

As many online commenters [have noted](#), if society really could grind to a halt with workers taking just ten days off, there’s absolutely no doubt that a [general strike](#) could work to secure many of the basic freedoms American workers currently lack. It’s certainly food for thought at a time when companies continue to tell their employees they’re “heroes” while reducing their benefits.

Again, the U.S. is the only wealthy country in the world without paid sick leave mandated by the federal government. And if Americans don't finally get it during a global pandemic that's left over 831,000 dead, it's hard to see when they'll ever get it.

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A bit of a clickbait article. They're not cutting the pay in half, just the amount of days that they are required to sit at home, in quarantine. That number of days is based on the CDC guidelines and my company is doing the same thing, if you're positive on a Tuesday, you are required to leave immediately and return the following Tuesday.

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