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## New Developments Affecting Connecticut Employers

2017 brought the following developments in Connecticut employment laws:

### Expanded Rights of Pregnant Employee and Applicants

Connecticut has expanded its anti-discrimination protections for pregnant employees and applicants.

- A new law specifies that discrimination on the basis of pregnancy is prohibited, and that prohibited discrimination includes failure to provide a reasonable workplace accommodation when requested for a pregnant employee or job applicant, except in the case of an undue hardship to the employer.
- Pregnancy is defined broadly so that it also includes childbirth and related conditions, such as lactation.
- Reasonable accommodations may include being permitted to sit while working, more frequent or longer breaks, periodic rest, assistance with manual labor, job restructuring, light duty assignments, modified work schedules, temporary transfers to less strenuous or less hazardous work, time off to recover from childbirth, or break time and appropriate facilities for expressing breast milk.
- **REQUIRED ACTION BY EMPLOYERS:** Employers must provide notice of the right to be free from discrimination and the right to reasonable accommodation (1) to new employees upon the start of employment, (2) to existing employees, and (3) to an employee who notifies the employer of her pregnancy within 10 days after notification. The notice requirements may be satisfied with a conspicuous and accessible workplace poster written in both English and Spanish.

### New Option for Employers to Manage Workers' Compensation Claims

Private employers in Connecticut may now designate an address where employees must send notice of a workers' compensation claim via certified mail, by posting notice of the address in the workplace, and forwarding the address to the Workers' Compensation Commission.

- The new notice option will help an employer manage workers' compensation claims by ensuring that a claim reaches the right person, and providing a definitive start to the already-existing 28-day period within which an employer must act after receiving notice of a claim.
- An employer must, within 28 days after receiving a written notice of a claim, either (1) file

a notice contesting liability or (2) begin paying workers' compensation benefits to the injured employee (while retaining a one-year right to contest the claim). If the employer does not so act within 28 days, the employer will be conclusively presumed to have accepted the claim.

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