

# Can manager ask about worker's reason for FMLA?

**Q. When HR receives an employee's completed FMLA certification form, does the employee's supervisor have the right to see the form and know the medical reason for the FMLA leave? — Ann, Illinois**

**A.** Supervisors are not entitled to medical information about their employees (including reasons for leaves) as a general matter. FMLA rules are silent about whether supervisors can be given a copy of the employee's *Certification of Health Care Provider Form*. But the rules do say supervisors are not permitted to contact doctors directly to obtain clarification on the employee's condition.

The ADA is also relevant. The law says supervisors are entitled to new hire medical information only to the extent they need to be aware of necessary restrictions on the employees' duties and accommodations.

You'll have to balance the practical need for supervisors to be aware of employees' need for leave (and possible restrictions) against the need to treat employee medical info as confidential. This likely means supervisors will be provided with information on the FMLA certification sometimes, but not as a matter of course.