

# FMLA: Need certification or is a doctor's note OK?

**Q. Do employers have to request an official certification form for all FMLA situations, or can a physician's note be enough for an employer to designate FMLA? — Ann, Illinois**

**A.** Using an official certification form isn't required, but it is a best practice to use one form consistently so that you obtain all the information you need at once. That's especially true because the law limits your ability to go back to the physician and ask for updates in some circumstances.

If an employee presents a physician's note suggesting (or explicitly stating) that the employee has a medical condition that would qualify for FMLA leave, you should within five days "tentatively designate" the leave as FMLA-covered, and ask the employee to have the medical provider complete a detailed certification form within a reasonable time (meaning 15 days).

If you receive a doctor's note with all the information you'd usually request on the form, it wouldn't make sense to follow up and you could accept the note.