

Basics of FMLA

Changes in 2026

“What is changing in 2026?”

The most significant change taking effect in 2026 involves how the 72 days of FMLA are tracked and allotted. In prior years, each employee’s FMLA balance was reset to 72 days on January 1 for use during that calendar year. Beginning January 1, 2026, Southwest transitioned to a rolling 12-month measurement period. Under this new system, FMLA days will be restored one year from the date they are used.

“Why are these changes being made to FMLA?”

Southwest Airlines believes that this change will allow employees to “use their leave more freely” without the restriction of a calendar year. TWU Local 556 has spoken to legal counsel and it has been verified that these changes are legal and meet the FMLA requirements.

“If I have an approved INT FMLA, what do I need to know?”

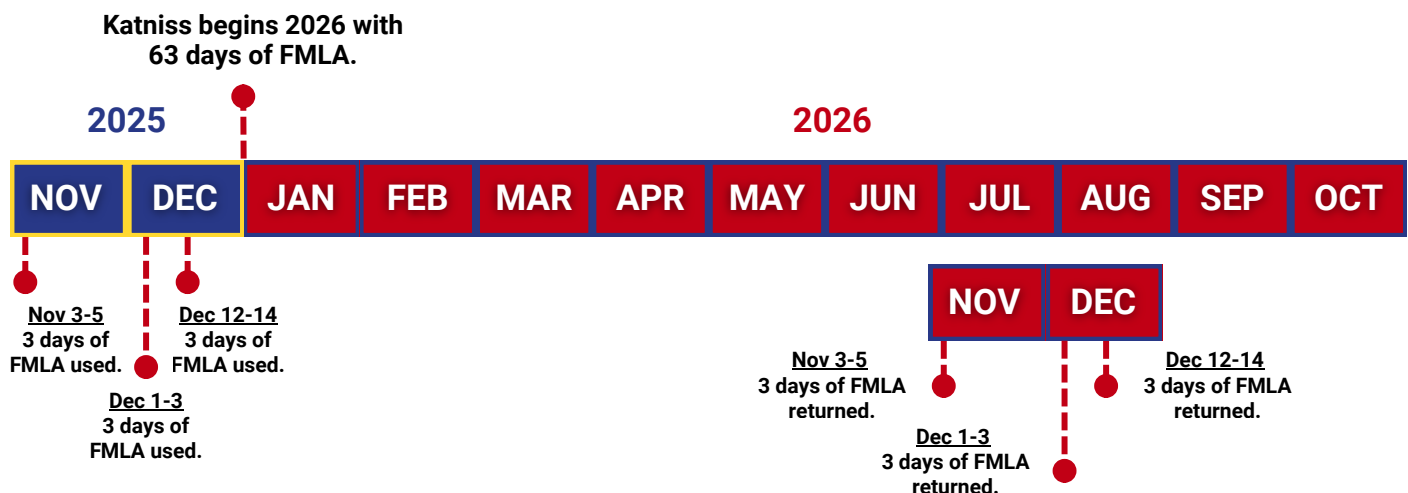
The biggest change is to understand that if you have an approved FMLA claim, your balance of 72 days will not be “refreshed” on January 1, 2026. Instead, you will recover your used FMLA day(s) after 12 months have passed since the absence.

“OK... that is confusing! Can you give me a couple of examples?” SURE!

Example 1: Katniss Everdeen was approved for INT FMLA from November 1, 2025, through October 31, 2026, allowing for use up to twice a month (frequency) for three days at a time (duration). In November 2025, she used 3 days of FMLA (3-5). In December 2025, she used 6 days of FMLA (1-3 and 12-14). Katniss has used a total of 9 days of FMLA in her 2025 approval period.

On January 1, 2026, Katniss will not receive a new allocation of FMLA days. Her FMLA balance on Workday will show 63 days of FMLA available (72 days - 9 days = 63 days).

Katniss will get 3 days of FMLA returned to her balance on Nov 3-5, 2026, another 3 days on Dec 1-3, 2026, and the remaining 3 days on Dec 12-14, 2026... 12 months following each of her absences in 2025.

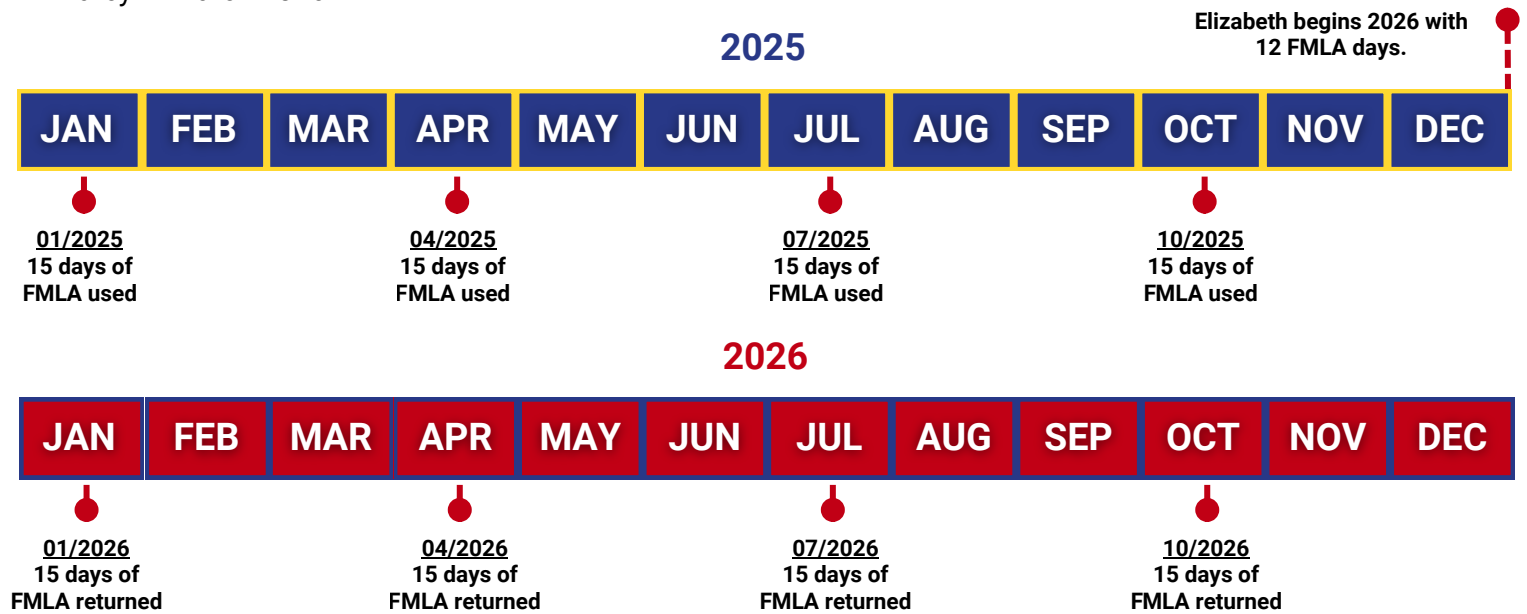


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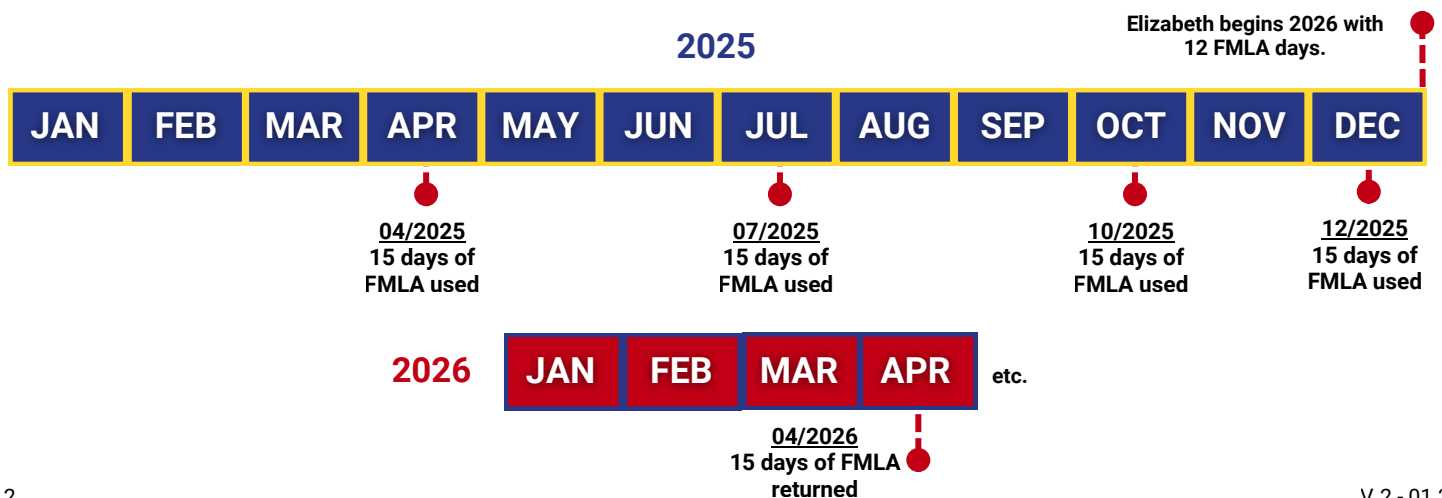
Example 2: In 2025, Elizabeth Bennet used INT FMLA to care for her husband (Mr. Darcy) in January 2025 (15 days), April 2025 (15 days), July 2025 (15 days), and October 2025 (15 days). This means she began 2026 with 12 days of FMLA available ($72 \text{ days} - 60 \text{ days} = 12 \text{ days}$). Mr. Darcy is going to need Elizabeth's care in March 2026 for 15 days. Let's calculate and see if she'll have the FMLA days to cover this absence.

In January 2026, Elizabeth will regain 15 days of FMLA because 12 months have elapsed since that absence. This means in March 2026, she will have 27 days ($12 \text{ days} + 15 \text{ days}$). Elizabeth will have enough FMLA time to care for Mr. Darcy in March 2026.



Example 3: What if Elizabeth had used her FMLA in April, July, October and December 2025... Would she have the needed 15 days in March 2026?

Elizabeth started 2026 with 12 days. She would not gain back any of her FMLA days until April 2026 (12 months after her first FMLA absence to care for Mr. Darcy, in April 2025). With an FMLA balance of only 12 days, Elizabeth would not have the needed FMLA days to care for her husband in March 2026. She could choose to use the 12 INT FMLA days and then use other contractual provisions (like giving away or trading) for the additional 3 days needed.



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"Looking at colored boxes and made-up dates isn't very helpful... can we look at a couple real Flight Attendant examples?"

Example 1: This Flight Attendant has approved INT FMLA, and they needed to use it quite a bit between April and November 2025. They will receive the utilized FMLA back into their FMLA balance 12 months *after* it's been used.

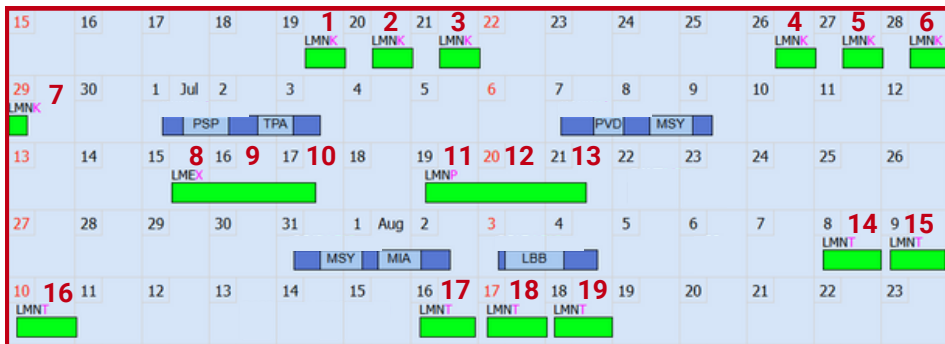


This Flight Attendant used 11 FMLA days in April and May:

April 4-6, 2025 (3 days)
April 17-19, 2025 (3 days)
May 7-11, 2025 (5 days)

They will receive FMLA days on:

April 4-6, 2026 (3 days)
April 17-19, 2026 (3 days)
May 7-11, 2026 (5 days)



This Flight Attendant used 19 FMLA days in June, July, and August.

They will receive FMLA days on:
June 19-21 & 26-29, 2026 (7 days)
July 15-17 & 19-21, 2026 (6 days)
August 8-10 & 16-18, 2026 (6 days)



This Flight Attendant used 9 FMLA days in September, October, and November.

They will receive FMLA days on:
September 19-21, 2026 (3 days)
October 11-13 & 17-19, 2026 (6 days)

NOTE: The absences on September 12-14, 2025, and November 1, 2025, were sick calls without FMLA applied.

Next let's take a look at some additional info now available in Workday! !



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“How do I find out how many FMLA hours I have available to me?”

Your FMLA Balance can be viewed in Workday.

FMLA Balance

Effective Date	FMLA Balance	FMLA Units	FMLA Qualifying Hours (past 12 months)
12/31/2025	72	Days	829.7

“I like the visible FMLA hours balance on Workday! How often will it be updated though?”

The Workday FMLA Balance will update periodically according to Southwest Airlines Inflight Attendance and Leave Management. Make it a habit to review this table **prior** to calling out for your illness in which you want to apply INT FMLA.

Important FYI: If you believe that your balance is incorrect, you will need to contact the Southwest Leave Administration team via Workday by submitting a “General Leave Inquiry.”

SWALife > Workday > Menu - “Leave, OJI, & Accommodations” > “Create Case” > “General Leave Inquiry”

“Does this change mean that I need to resubmit for a new case in Workday for my own qualifying condition?”

- If your approved INT FMLA case is approved through December 31, 2025, and you need continued INT FMLA into 2026, you must submit a new FMLA case and Leave Administration Healthcare Provider form via Workday.
- If your approved INT FMLA case is approved into 2026, you are not required to submit a new FMLA application until your approved application period ends.
- If you’re on an approved CONT FMLA case for yourself, then you will continue to remain on that leave until you are returned to work or extended.

“How do I know when my current INT FMLA expires?”

If you don’t know your current INT FMLA expiration you will need to submit a general inquiry via Workday.

“Who do I contact if I have questions about FMLA or other Leave of Absence options??”

Your first step for FMLA questions should be submitting a “General Leave Inquiry” in Workday. If you have questions about other contractual leave options, you can contact our TWU Local 556 Leave Specialists.

LeaveHelp@twu556.org