

What you need to know about the Federal Law on the registration of partnerships for same-sex couples

The Partnership Law came into effect on 1 January 2007 and governs civil partnerships between two persons of the same sexual orientation.

The Partnership Law makes it possible for couples of the same sexual orientation to have their partnership registered at the registry office at the place of residence of either partner. By doing so, they commit to leading life as a couple with joint rights and responsibilities and are accorded the civil status "in a registered partnership". Under social insurance law, in the occupational benefit scheme, and under inheritance and tax law, registered partners have the same rights and responsibilities as married couples. Upon the termination of the partnership, these persons are given the civil status "partnership terminated".

Registration was possible in some cantons prior to the above date. However, such partnerships registered at cantonal level are not automatically recognised under the new legislation. These couples have to re-register on the basis of the Partnership Law.

Impact on the occupational benefit scheme

Provisions conform to the regulations were amended as follows:

- **Survivors' benefits**

Surviving partners are entitled to survivors' benefits under the same conditions as widowed spouses.

- **Lump-sum withdrawal**

Registered partners must consent to any advance withdrawal to finance residential property, any lump-sum withdrawal upon retirement and any cash payment of vested benefits, in the same way as a spouse.

- **Splitting on divorce**

If the registered partnership is terminated, the procedure is the same as for divorce. The old-age savings accrued in the occupational benefit scheme during the partnership are shared equally, as is the case for spouses.

As an employer, what do you need to remember?

Notify us of the change in civil status when an employee enters into or terminates a registered partnership.

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