



U. S. Office of Personnel Management Compensation Administration

FAMILY-FRIENDLY LEAVE POLICIES For Federal Employees

Do you need time off from work for personal, family, or medical needs?

Are you confused about your options?

The following may help to put things into perspective. See your agency's personnel office for additional information on each of these leave policies.

ANNUAL LEAVE

Annual leave is designed to give you vacation periods for rest and relaxation and to provide time off for your personal business or family needs. Your annual leave must be scheduled and approved in advance.

SICK LEAVE

Sick leave may be used when you—

- Receive medical, dental, or optical examination or treatment
- Are incapacitated by physical or mental illness, injury, pregnancy, or childbirth
- Would, because of exposure to a communicable disease, jeopardize the health of others by your presence on the job
- Must be absent from work for adoption-related activities

In addition, you may use a limited amount* of sick leave to –

- Provide care for a family member as the result of physical or mental illness, injury, pregnancy, childbirth, or medical, dental, or optical examination or treatment
- Make arrangements necessitated by the death of a family member or attend the funeral of a family member

* If you are a full-time employee, you may use up to 40 hours (5 days) of your sick leave each leave year for family care and bereavement purposes. An additional 64 hours (8 days) may be used as long as you maintain a balance of at least 80 hours of six hours in your sick leave account.

Part-time employees and employees with uncommon tours of duty are also covered, and the amount of sick leave they may use for these purposes is pro-rated.

FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE

Under the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA), covered employees are entitled to a total of 12 administrative workweeks of unpaid leave (leave without pay) during any 12-month period for—

- The birth of a son or daughter and care of the newborn
- The placement of a son or daughter with you for adoption or foster care
- The care of your spouse, son, daughter, or parent with a serious health condition
- Your own serious health condition that makes you unable to perform the duties of your position

Upon return from FMLA leave, you must be returned to the same or equivalent position. While on FMLA leave, you are entitled to maintain health benefits coverage. If you are on leave without pay under the FMLA, you are responsible for paying the employee share of the health benefits premium.

You may choose to substitute annual leave for unpaid leave under the FMLA. You may also substitute sick leave in those situations in which the use of sick leave is permitted.

LEAVE FOR BONE-MARROW OR ORGAN DONATION

As a Federal employee, you are entitled to use 7 days of paid leave each calendar year (in addition to annual or sick leave) to serve as a bone-marrow or organ donor.

LEAVE SHARING

If you have a medical emergency and have exhausted your own leave, the leave transfer program allows other Federal employees to donate annual leave to you.

There may also be a leave bank program where you work. These bank programs allow members (those who contribute a specific amount) to apply for leave from the leave bank in the event of a medical emergency.

Federal leave policies can work together to help you manage your work and family responsibilities. Here are some examples of how employees may use leave when facing a personal, medical, or family emergency

- Laura is a single mother with two children who has worked for the Government for 2 1/2 years. Laura has 201 hours of sick leave and 80 hours of annual leave. Laura's children have problems with recurring ear infections and strep throat and must occasionally be kept home from school and afternoon day care. Laura may use up to 13 days of sick leave a year to care for her children when they are ill (as long as her sick leave balance does not drop below 80 hours). By doing so, Laura may be able to conserve her annual leave for a possible family vacation or to care for her children when her child care provider is unavailable.

- Michael has worked for the Federal Government for only 5 months. He had 40 hours of sick leave and 36 hours of annual leave before he underwent an emergency appendectomy last week. He has been absent for 5 days, and his doctor wants him to use at least 6 weeks to recuperate. Fortunately, Michael is a member of his agency's leave bank program. He may apply to the bank for donated leave to help support him until he can return to work. Other employees may also wish to donate leave to Michael through the leave transfer program. He may also request advanced sick and/or annual leave if the donated leave is not sufficient.
- Carol is expecting a baby in 4 months. Carol has 260 hours of sick leave and 200 hours of annual leave. She wants to spend as much time as possible with her new baby. Carol's doctor anticipates that she will need 6 weeks to recuperate after the baby's birth. Carol has requested 240 hours of sick leave. She has also requested 4 weeks of annual leave and 3 months of leave without pay (LWOP). Her supervisor approves the sick and annual leave and informs her of her entitlement to unpaid leave under the FMLA. Carol decides to invoke her FMLA entitlement and use 4 weeks of leave without pay under the FMLA following her approved annual leave. In addition, she and her supervisor work out a leave schedule that permits Carol to use FMLA leave without pay on an intermittent basis 2 days a week for 3 months following her return to work.
- Jeff and his wife plan to travel abroad soon to adopt a child. He has a sick leave balance of 280 hours and an annual leave balance of 160 hours. Jeff may use sick leave for absences related to the adoption, including travel time. His agency may advance him up to 30 days of sick leave if requested. Jeff may also request annual leave to spend time with his new son or daughter after the adoption. In addition, he may invoke his entitlement to leave without pay under the FMLA.
- Tom fell off his roof while cleaning the gutters and broke his hip. The doctor says Tom will need to be absent from work for at least 16 weeks. Tom has 240 hours of sick leave and 137 hours of annual leave. His installation is understaffed, and Tom is worried that when his sick leave is gone, his supervisor will refuse to grant him annual leave. He is most concerned about the possibility of losing his job and with it his medical benefits. Tom may use his sick leave and then invoke his entitlement to unpaid leave under the FMLA. He may then substitute his annual leave for part of the FMLA leave without pay. While he is on FMLA leave, his reemployment rights and medical benefits are protected. In addition, Tom may apply for and use donated leave from his agency's leave transfer program.
- Ruth and her husband have both worked for the Government for 10 years. Their daughter was recently diagnosed with a terminal illness. Ruth and her husband want to care for their daughter at home for as long as possible. They have sufficient sick leave in their accounts for each to use 13 days to care for their daughter. Ruth has also requested 160 hours of annual leave. Ruth's supervisor was sympathetic, but based on work-related needs, he felt he could approve only 80 hours of annual leave. Ruth notified her supervisor of her intent to invoke her entitlement to leave without pay under the FMLA. Ruth used her 80 hours of approved annual leave and then substituted her remaining annual leave for FMLA leave without pay. Her husband may also invoke his entitlement to leave under the FMLA. When their annual leave is exhausted, Ruth and her husband may each apply for and receive donated leave from their agencies' leave transfer programs. In this way, they will be able to care for their daughter at home until hospitalization is necessary.
- Emilio's sister needs a kidney transplant, and Emilio has decided to donate his kidney to her. Emilio may use 7 days of paid leave to be a bone marrow or organ donor. This includes the time required for testing to see if he is a compatible donor, plus the time required to undergo the transplant procedure and recuperate. Emilio may get additional time off from work by requesting annual and/or sick leave, advanced leave, and donated leave through his agency's leave transfer program (if he exhausts his own available paid leave).