



Leave Of Absence Policy

EFFECTIVE DATE: AUGUST 5, 1993

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To establish a procedure for the request and approval of Leaves of Absence without pay.
- 1.2 To provide guidelines for the administration of Leaves of Absence without pay.

2. REFERENCES

- 2.1 All Memoranda of Understanding with the City and the Document Describing Wages, Hours and Other Terms and Conditions of Employment for Units 10, 11, & 12
- 2.2 State and Federal laws regarding leaves.
- 2.3 City of Santa Rosa Policy for administration of Family Leaves.
- 2.4 City of Santa Rosa Policy Guidelines for Permanent Part-Time Bus Operators.

3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 Leave of Absence is time away from work which the employee has requested and the Department Head or City Manager has approved, for which the employee is not paid.
- 3.2 Medical leave is a Leave of Absence without pay where an employee is unable to work due to a medical condition.
- 3.3 Personal leave is a Leave of Absence without pay where an employee is physically able to work but is not working for personal reasons.
- 3.4 Family leave is time away from work following the birth or adoption of a child, to care for a spouse, child or parent with a serious health condition, or for the serious health condition of the employee, and may include a medical leave or a personal leave.
- 3.5 Serious Health Condition is an illness, injury, impairment or physical or mental condition requiring either in-patient treatment at a hospital, hospice or residential care facility or continuing treatment by a health care provider.
- 3.6 The first working day of the month is an employee's first regularly scheduled work day in a month, except as described below.

3.6.1 For Permanent Part-Time Bus Operators, the first working day of the month is defined in the Policy Guidelines for Permanent Part-Time Bus Operators.

4. POLICY

- 4.1** A Leave of Absence shall be requested in advance by the employee.
- 4.1.1** If an employee is unable to prepare a request for leave of absence due to emergency or other circumstances, the employee's supervisor will make every reasonable effort to assist the employee in completing the necessary form and advising the employee regarding the conditions of the leave.
- 4.2** Before a Leave of Absence is granted, an employee shall exhaust all usable leave balances as determined by this policy and the employee's Memorandum of Understanding.
- 4.2.1** When a Memorandum of Understanding states that the accumulated paid leave is to be exhausted prior to granting a Leave of Absence, then all usable leave balances shall be exhausted prior to the beginning of a Leave of Absence.
- 4.2.2** When a Memorandum of Understanding states which leaves must be exhausted, then any leave balances not mentioned may remain on the books when a Leave of Absence is begun.
- 4.2.3** In the Executive and Mid Management units the initial 20 hours of Administrative Leave shall be used prior to beginning a Leave of Absence. Special Management Benefit is not required to be exhausted before a Leave of Absence is begun.
- 4.2.4** Sick leave cannot be used in association with Personal Leaves of Absence.
- 4.3** Any employee who has requested and received Catastrophic Leave shall exhaust the Catastrophic Leave balance, in addition to the appropriate balances listed above, before beginning a Leave of Absence.
- 4.4** New employees with insufficient service to take earned vacation leave (either 6 or 12 months, depending on unit) shall obtain approval to use accrued balances in accordance with the respective Memorandum of Understanding prior to requesting a Leave of Absence.
- 4.5** The insurance benefits of an employee who is on a Leave of Absence, which does not include the first working day of the month will continue to be paid by the City.
- 4.6** For a Leave of Absence which is part of a "Family Leave", health insurance premiums will be paid by the City for the first 12 weeks of "Family Leave" per year.

- 4.6.1** Time spent on "Family Leave" where the employee is on a paid status (e.g. sick leave, vacation leave, catastrophic leave, etc.) counts as part of the 12 weeks.
- 4.6.2** Insurance benefits other than health benefits may be continued if the employee pays the premium for the coverages.
- 4.6.3** When a Leave of Absence for Family Leave extends beyond the time the health insurance premiums are paid, the employee will need to pay the premiums to continue coverage past the first day of the following month.
- 4.7** When a Leave of Absence is not part of a 12 week "Family Leave", all insurance benefits shall cease on the last day of the month the leave begins.
 - 4.7.1** If the employee wishes to continue insurance benefits, the monthly premiums shall be prepaid by the employee. When the employee elects to continue insurance benefits, all benefits shall be continued.
 - 4.7.2** If the employee elects not to continue the insurance benefits, the waiting periods which apply to new employees shall apply when the Leave of Absence is completed. In addition, evidence of insurability may be required prior to reinstatement.
- 4.8** In no instance shall an employee, on the first working day of a month, be allowed to return from Leave of Absence status, on either a regular pay status or using a leave balance, and then return to Leave of Absence status for the purpose of having insurance coverage paid by the City.
- 4.9** An employee shall not accrue vacation, sick leave, or holiday benefits during a Leave of Absence.
- 4.10** An employee on probation shall have the probationary period extended by the length of the Leave of Absence at the discretion of the department head, with the approval of the City Manager, and with notification to the employee prior to expiration of the original probationary period, in accordance with the City Personnel Rules and Regulations. In instances where the length of the leave does not affect the ability to evaluate an employee's performance, a department head may choose not to extend the employee's probation.
- 4.11** If leave is granted for medical reasons the City shall require the employee to provide medical information indicating the nature of the illness or injury, the prognosis, and estimated date of return. In addition, for leaves for an employee's medical condition, the City shall require, prior to the employee's return to work, written approval from his or her doctor to resume job duties. The City shall require an employee to sign a form authorizing release to the City of any and all medical information prior to granting a Leave of Absence for medical reasons. If the department head determines that documentation of illness or injury and ability to return to work is unnecessary, the requirement to provide medical information and doctor's release may be waived.

5. PROCEDURE

- 5.1** Leaves of Absence of over 24 working hours in a week, or leaves of less than 24 working hours which include the first working day of the month, shall be requested on the "Request for Leave of Absence" form.
 - 5.1.1** A Leave of Absence requested on a "Request for Leave of Absence" form shall be recommended by the Department Head, reviewed for completeness by the Personnel Department, and approved by the City Manager.
 - 5.1.2** The employee should be aware of the cost of the insurance premiums when requesting the Leave of Absence. Information regarding the cost of the premiums is available from the Accounting Services Division. The employee shall contact the Accounting Services Division to make all necessary arrangements for insurance coverage, determining appropriate insurance premiums, method of payment, and date payment is due. If payment is not received when due, the City shall discontinue all insurance coverage without further notice.
- 5.2** Leaves of Absence of 24 working hours or under in a pay period, and which do not include the first working day of the month, shall be requested on a "blue card".
 - 5.2.1** A Leave of Absence requested on a "blue card" may be approved by the Department Head.
- 5.3** When a department head is reviewing a request for Leave of Absence, factors to be considered include insuring that the requirements of this policy have been followed, the operating needs of the department, and the medical or personal needs of the employee.