



**Office of Human Resources
Standard Operating Procedure
HR SOP #601**

Subject: Annual Leave

Effective Date: June 1, 2017

Policy Statement:

Annual leave may be earned by eligible employees each pay period and may be used after proper request has been made by an employee and upon approval of the Leave Approving Authority.

Definitions:

Annual Leave: Leave earned by an eligible employee that is accrued and may be taken in accordance with the provisions of this policy. Annual leave is generally used for vacations or any other time necessary for the employee to be absent from work to attend to personal business.

Eligible Employee: Non-temporary, salaried employee who is regularly scheduled to work 20 hours a week or more, on a leave-earning position, and is not receiving retirement annuity payments during the first 1040 hours of work performed in the calendar year under the Employees' Retirement System of Georgia.

Leave Approving Authority: Managers and Supervisors designated by the Appointing Authority to approve leave.

Procedure:

Accrual of Annual Leave:

Annual leave is earned on a semi-monthly basis by employees who are eligible for leave benefits. A full-time employee must be in pay status for a minimum of 40 hours during a pay period to earn annual leave for that pay period. Annual leave is accrued on the 15th day and the last day of the month provided the employee is in pay status for the requisite number of hours each pay period. Accrued leave is not available for use by the employee until the first day of the next pay period (16th and 1st).

Annual leave is accrued at the following rates:

LENGTH OF CONTINUOUS SERVICE	SEMI-MONTHLY ACCRUAL
0 through 60 months	5 hours per pay period
61 through 120 months	6 hours per pay period
More than 120 months	7 hours per pay period

For purposes of leave accrual, the length of service will be computed from current, continuous, unbroken service in a position entitled to earn leave with a state agency.

Accrual of annual leave at the increased rate begins on the first day of the pay period following completion of the required months of service. An eligible employee in pay status for less than 40 hours during a *pay period*, that is regularly scheduled to work 40 hours a *week*, will not accrue annual leave for that pay period. An eligible employee, regularly scheduled to work less than 40 hours a week, earns annual leave on a pro-rated basis. The minimum number of hours in pay status required to accrue leave for the pay period is also pro-rated. Annual leave may accumulate for a total of 360 hours. Any leave earned in excess of 360 hours will be forfeited, but may be restored to the employee under certain conditions, listed below.

Request for Annual Leave:

An employee must request annual leave using the *Employee Request for Leave* (Attachment 1) or for EPD employees only, the *Environmental Protection Division Employee Request for Leave* (Attachment 2) in accordance with that employee's Division leave practice.

Approval/disapproval for the use of annual leave remains with the designated Leave Approving Authority.

Annual leave should be requested and approved in advance, except when an emergency prevents either the advance request or approval from occurring. In emergency situations, the designated Leave Approving Authority will determine whether the absence will be charged to annual leave or leave without pay.

Reasonable efforts to accommodate employee leave requests should be made; however, use of annual leave is not an entitlement. Therefore, a Leave Approving Authority or designee is not obligated to grant annual leave for a requested time period if granting the leave would adversely affect daily business operations. (For example, disruption of work schedules; shift or office coverage; inconvenience to the workforce or the public; employee's failure to fulfill total work responsibilities; or demonstrated excessive or abusive use of 'any' leave)

Managers must direct employees to use holiday deferral time and/or FLSA compensatory time before annual leave.

NOTE: The approval/disapproval of annual leave by the Leave Approving Authority is not eligible for review through the Employee Complaint Resolution procedure.

Restoration of Forfeited Annual Leave:

In the event of illness or disability which exhausts all available leave, including annual, sick, personal and compensatory time, the employee may request restoration of forfeited annual leave. The employee requests the leave restoration through their division management. Leave Approving Authorities must submit a request to the DNR HR Director with recommendation and amount of leave to be restored, including a statement from the employee and medical certification from a licensed treating physician (M.D. or D.O.) outlining specific reasons for the illness or disability. The DNR HR Director will make the final determination, after reviewing the request and recommendation.

Forfeited annual leave restored as sick leave is limited as follows:

- The amount required by the circumstances of the medical condition; and
- The leave forfeited during the current period of employment.

Transferring Annual Leave:

When an employee transfers to another state entity, all leave must be entered prior to the employee being transferred. Division HR Representatives:

- Must notify the Office of Human Resources (OHR) Transactions Unit when all leave usage has been entered;
- Should certify the accuracy of the final leave balances on the transfer Personnel Action Request Form, when possible; and
- Must email leave certifications to OHR.

Leave balances to be transferred between Executive Branch agencies using TeamWorks (PeopleSoft) will be the certified balances in TeamWorks. OHR will provide certification of leave balances to the HR offices of non-TeamWorks agencies, upon request. OHR will make adjustments in TeamWorks for non-TeamWorks agencies when leave is transferred.

OHR and the HR offices of non-Executive Branch State government entities will communicate when leave transfer is possible, as noted in the following chart, to determine if any leave will transfer. OHR will make adjustments in TeamWorks for non-Executive Branch government entities that do not use TeamWorks when leave is transferred.

Annual Leave *may* be transferred to or from the Department of Natural Resources when an employee transfers to or from a State government entity without a break in service from a position entitled to accrue leave to a position entitled to accrue leave. Annual leave will be transferred in accordance with the following chart:

Organization that Annual Leave Transfers From	Organization that Annual Leave Transfers To	Conditions
Executive Branch Agency	DNR	Leave will transfer without conditions.
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Legislative or Judicial Branch Agency	DNR	Leave will transfer only when the losing and receiving organizations have the same leave accrual.
DNR	Legislative or Judicial Branch Agency	Leave will transfer to the extent that the receiving agency agrees to accept the transfer.
Board of Regents	DNR	Leave will not transfer.
DNR	Board of Regents	Leave will transfer to the extent that the receiving agency agrees to accept the transfer.

Organization that Annual Leave Transfers From	Organization that Annual Leave Transfers To	Conditions
State Authorities	DNR	Leave will transfer only when the losing and receiving organizations have the same leave accrual program.
DNR	State Authorities	Leave will transfer to the extent that the receiving agency agrees to accept the transfer.
Community Service Boards, County Boards of Health, & Board of Health Community Operated Programs	DNR	Leave will not transfer.
DNR	Community Service Boards, County Boards of Health, & Board of Health Community Operated Programs	Leave will transfer to the extent that the receiving agency agrees to accept the transfer.

Payment of Accrued Annual Leave:

When an employee is granted a leave of absence *without* pay for 30 days or more (Regular or Contingent Leave Without Pay, or Military Leave), the employee may, upon written request through the Division management, be paid in lump sum for all accrued annual leave, not to exceed 360 hours.

The payment of annual leave to an individual who has left employment with the department cannot exceed 360 hours. If the employee is leaving for employment other than to a state agency that accepts the transfer of annual leave, the payment of the balance of accrued unused annual leave that has not been forfeited will be made no earlier than the first pay period following the effective date of separation.

Once a separation date has been identified and the employee has completed their last day of work, the annual leave payout will be calculated. Annual leave may not be used to extend the period of employment for any reason.

Attachments:

Attachment 1 – *Employee Request For Leave*

Attachment 2 – *Environmental Protection Division Employee Request For Leave*