

Family and Medical Leave

614.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide general guidance for managing unpaid leave for eligible employees for qualified medical and family reasons, including (29 USC § 2612):

- The birth, adoption, or foster care placement of a child.
- To care for an immediate family member (spouse, child, or parent) with a serious health condition.
- When an employee is unable to work because of the employee's own serious health condition.
- To care for a spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin who is a service member of the United States Armed Forces and who has a serious injury or illness incurred in the line of duty.

This policy does not address all possible situations and circumstances that may arise when an employee requests leave for family or medical reasons. As these leave situations arise, supervisors should consult with the Employee Resources Director or authorized designee to obtain specific guidance regarding leave rights and obligations.

Nothing in this policy supersedes any provision of any employment agreement, civil service or other local rule, or any law that provides greater family or medical leave rights.

614.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Child - A child under 18 years of age, or 18 years of age or older who is incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability (29 USC § 2611; 29 CFR 825.102; 29 CFR 825.122). An employee's child is one for whom the employee has actual day-to-day responsibility for care and includes a biological, adopted, or foster child; stepchild; or a child for whom the employee is standing in loco parentis (in place of a parent).

FMLA - The federal Family and Medical Leave Act (29 USC § 2601 et seq.).

Qualified health care professional - A physician, surgeon, doctor of osteopathy, podiatrist, dentist, psychologist, optometrist, nurse practitioner, nurse midwife, clinical social worker, or physician assistant duly licensed and authorized to practice medicine; chiropractors for some purposes; any health care provider from whom the city benefits plan will accept certification of the existence of a serious health condition to substantiate a claim for benefits (29 CFR 825.125).

Spouse - The person with whom an employee has entered into a marriage defined or recognized by the location in which the marriage was entered into (29 USC § 2611(13); 29 CFR 825.102; 29 CFR 825.122).

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614.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the City to manage unpaid leave for eligible employees for qualified medical and family reasons in compliance with federal law and any applicable employment agreement.

614.3 ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES

Employees are eligible for FMLA after working for the City for at least one year and completing 1,250 hours over the 12 months prior to the commencement of the leave (29 USC § 2611; 29 CFR 825.110). Employees may not be eligible for leave if there are fewer than 50 other employees within 75 miles of the employee's work site.

614.4 TYPE AND DURATION OF LEAVE

Generally, eligible employees are entitled under FMLA to 12 workweeks of unpaid leave during a 12-month period (29 USC § 2612; 29 CFR 825.100). Up to 26 weeks of unpaid leave during a single 12-month period may be available to care for certain injured military service members. The 12-month period is measured backward from the date leave is taken and continuously with each additional leave day taken.

614.4.1 SERIOUS HEALTH CONDITIONS

Eligible employees may take up to 12 weeks of leave to care for a spouse, child, or parent with a serious health condition or when the employee is unable to work because of the employee's own serious health condition (29 USC § 2612(a)(1); 29 CFR 825.200).

If both spouses are employed by the City, the combined number of workweeks to care for a sick parent is limited to 12 workweeks during any 12-month period (29 USC § 2612(f); 29 CFR 825.201).

Generally, a serious health condition is an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves (29 USC § 2611; 29 CFR 825.113):

- An overnight stay in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical care facility (29 CFR 825.114).
- Continuing treatment by a qualified health care professional due to a serious health condition of more than three full consecutive calendar days (29 CFR 825.115(a)).
- Any period of incapacity due to pregnancy complications or prenatal care (29 CFR 825.115(b)).
- A chronic condition that requires treatment (29 CFR 825.115(c)).
- A permanent condition for which treatment may not be effective (such as Alzheimer's or the terminal stages of a disease) (29 CFR 825.115(d)).
- Any period of absence to receive multiple treatments, including any recovery period, either for restorative surgery after an accident or other injury, or for a condition that would likely result in a period of incapacity of more than three consecutive calendar days without medical intervention or treatment (such as cancer chemotherapy or physical therapy for arthritis) (29 CFR 825.115(e)).

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614.4.2 BIRTH OR PLACEMENT OF A CHILD

Eligible employees may take up to 12 weeks of leave for the birth, adoption, or foster care placement of a child of the employee (29 USC § 2612; 29 CFR 825.200). The leave must be concluded within one year of the birth or placement of the child (29 CFR 825.120; 29 CFR 825.121).

If both parents are employed by the City, the combined number of workweeks of leave is limited to 12 workweeks during any 12-month period (29 USC § 2612(f); 29 CFR 825.120; 29 CFR 825.121).

614.4.3 MILITARY EXIGENCY LEAVE

Eligible employees may take service member leave of up to 12 weeks for qualifying exigencies occurring because a spouse, child, or parent is on covered active duty or has been notified of an impending order to active duty (29 USC § 2612(a)(1)(E); 29 CFR 825.200). This type of leave is available to a family member of a person in the National Guard, Reserves, or members of the regular Armed Forces deployed to a foreign country. Qualifying exigencies include (29 CFR 825.126):

- Addressing issues that arise from a short notice (seven or less days) deployment.
- Attending military events related to the active duty or call to duty.
- Attending family support or assistance programs.
- Making child care or educational arrangements or attending school activities arising from active duty or a call to active duty.
- Making financial and legal arrangements.
- Spending time with a military member who is on short-term rest-and-recuperation leave during a period of deployment.
- Attending post-deployment activities.
- Addressing issues that arise from the death of a military member, such as making funeral arrangements.
- Caring for a military member's parent who is incapable of self-care, such as providing care on an immediate-need basis or arranging for alternative care.

614.4.4 MILITARY CAREGIVER LEAVE

Eligible employees may take up to 26 weeks of leave in a single 12-month period to care for a spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin who has incurred an injury or illness in the line of duty while on active duty in the Armed Forces, provided that such injury or illness may render the family member medically unfit to perform work (29 USC § 2612; 29 CFR 825.200).

Military caregiver leave is also available to family members of covered veterans who were members of the Armed Forces, including the National Guard or Reserves, at any point in the five years preceding the date on which the veteran undergoes medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy (29 USC § 2612; 29 CFR 825.127).

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During the single 12-month period, employees are entitled to no more than a combined total of 26 weeks of FMLA leave. In any case in which both spouses are employed by the City, the combined number of workweeks of leave is limited to 26 workweeks during any 12-month period (29 USC § 2612(f); 29 CFR 825.127).

Service member FMLA leave runs concurrent with other leave entitlements provided under federal, state, and local law. Where FMLA leave qualifies as both military caregiver leave and care for a family member with a serious health condition, the leave will be designated as military caregiver leave first.

614.4.5 INTERMITTENT LEAVE

An employee may take leave for the employee's own serious health condition, for the serious health condition of the employee's spouse, child, or parent, or to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness, intermittently or on a reduced schedule if medically necessary, and if that medical need can best be accommodated by an intermittent schedule as defined in federal law (29 USC § 2612(b); 29 CFR 825.202; 29 CFR 825.124).

Leave due to a military exigency may be taken on an intermittent or reduced leave schedule (29 CFR 825.202).

Intermittent leave for the birth, adoption, or foster care placement of a child is only available if granted at the discretion of the Employee Resources Director, unless the employee has a serious health condition in connection with the birth or if the newborn child has a serious health condition (29 CFR 825.120; 29 CFR 825.121).

Intermittent leave for any employee shall be tracked and calculated.

[Employees requesting intermittent or reduced schedule leave must provide medical certification stating the necessity and expected duration of the leave. The City may, at its discretion and in compliance with applicable laws, temporarily transfer an employee to an alternative position with equivalent pay and benefits if it better accommodates the intermittent leave schedule. Any such transfer will apply only during the approved FMLA leave period and does not guarantee continued placement in the alternative position beyond the approved leave timeframe.](#)

614.4.6 PREGNANCY DISABILITY LEAVE

Pregnant employees who are disabled by pregnancy may be entitled to a disability leave in addition to any FMLA leave. The duration of leave is dependent on the circumstances. The Employee Resources Director shall defer to a pregnant employee's qualified health care professional in assessing the employee's ability to work.

614.5 EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS WHILE ON LEAVE

While on leave, employees will continue to be covered by any group health insurance to the same extent that coverage is provided while the employee is on the job (29 USC § 2614(c); 29 CFR 825.209). [Retirement contributions and other City-paid benefits will only continue if the employee](#)

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[remains in a paid status \(i.e., using vacation, sick, or personal leave\)](#). However, employees will not continue to be covered under non-health benefit plans.

Employees are responsible for any health plan employee contributions while on leave (29 CFR 825.210). Employee contribution rates are subject to any change in rates that occurs while the employee is on leave. If an employee fails to return to work after the leave entitlement has been exhausted or expires, the City may recover its share of health plan premiums for the entire leave period unless the employee does not return because of the continuation, recurrence, or onset of a serious health condition of the employee or the employee's family member that would entitle the employee to leave, or because of circumstances beyond the employee's control (29 CFR 825.213). The City may recover premiums through deduction from any sums (e.g., unpaid wages, vacation pay).

[Employees enrolled in voluntary benefits \(e.g., supplemental insurance\) may have the option to port or continue coverage at their own expense. It is the employee's responsibility to coordinate payment arrangements with the Employee Resources Department to avoid a lapse in coverage.](#)

Employees may not earn additional time off while on unpaid leave.

614.5.1 POST FMLA COVERAGE AND COBRA REQUIREMENT

[If an employee exhausts their FMLA leave entitlement and remains on an unpaid leave status, they will no longer be eligible for employer-paid health insurance benefits. At that point, the employee may be responsible for continuing their health coverage under COBRA, subject to the terms and conditions of the City's health plan. The employee will be required to pay the full cost of COBRA premiums, including any applicable administrative fees. Failure to make timely premium payments may result in the termination of coverage.](#)

614.5.2 AFFORDABLE CARE ACT (ACA) COMPLIANCE

[In compliance with the Affordable Care Act \(ACA\), the City will continue to evaluate an employee's eligibility for health insurance based on applicable measurement and stability periods. Employees who remain in a leave status beyond the FMLA leave period may be entitled to continued health coverage if they meet the ACA's full-time employee requirements. Employees should contact the Employee Resources Department to understand their options for maintaining health benefits under COBRA or ACA provisions.](#)

614.6 SUBSTITUTION OF PAID ACCRUED LEAVES

Subject to applicable employment agreements and [public civil](#) service rules, employees are required to exhaust all applicable paid accrued leave before taking unpaid leave. Paid accrued leave includes vacation leave, sick leave, personal leave, and compensatory time earned in lieu of overtime, pursuant to the Fair Labor Standards Act, during FMLA leave. Employees may not use paid accrued leave to extend FMLA leave beyond 12 workweeks per year.

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614.7 USE OF FMLA LEAVE

If an employee takes a leave of absence for any reason that is FMLA qualifying, the City may designate that non-FMLA leave as running concurrently with the employee's 12-week FMLA leave entitlement.

614.8 PROCEDURES

The following procedures will apply for all employees requesting leave under FMLA:

- (a) When a leave is requested for a medical or other FMLA-related treatment appointment, the employee must make a reasonable effort to schedule the appointment at a time that minimizes disruption to city operations (29 USC § 2612; 29 CFR 825.302).
- (b) An employee who wishes to take FMLA leave must provide the employee's supervisor with 30 days' advanced notice when the leave is foreseeable or as soon as practicable if the need for leave is not foreseeable (29 USC § 2612; 29 CFR 825.302; 29 CFR 825.303).
- (c) At the time of the request, the employee must complete an FMLA request form [from Employee Resources to ensure all required documentation is submitted for review and approval.](#)

Requests for medical leave shall be accompanied by a qualified health care professional statement, including the date on which the serious health condition began and the estimated date of return to work (29 USC § 2613; 29 CFR 825.302).

Once the leave is requested or designated by the City, the supervisor should forward the request and any medical certifications to the Employee Resources Director or the authorized designee and ensure the employee is provided the necessary forms and FMLA information and required notices within five business days (29 CFR 825.300).

Employees are required to provide medical certification of a qualified health care professional or military documentation, if requested (29 CFR 825.305; 29 CFR 825.308; 29 CFR 825.309; 29 CFR 825.310).

Employees shall be required to periodically report on their status and intent to return to work (29 USC § 2614; 29 CFR 825.311). This may assist in avoiding a delay in reinstatement when the employee is ready to return to work.

Employees returning from a medical leave for the employee's own serious health condition will be required to present medical verification from a qualified health care professional of the employee's ability to return to work and a list of any restrictions that need to be accommodated (29 USC § 2614; 29 CFR 825.100; 29 CFR 825.312).

614.9 REINSTATEMENT FOLLOWING LEAVE

[If an employee is on FMLA leave due to their own serious health condition, they may be required to provide a fitness-for-duty certification from a qualified health care provider before returning to](#)

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[work. The certification must confirm the employee's ability to perform the essential functions of their job. The City may require an independent medical evaluation if necessary.](#)

Generally, employees returning from FMLA leave within the qualified period will be restored to their original job or to an equivalent job with equivalent pay and benefits (but not seniority), unless the employee would not otherwise have been employed at the time reinstatement is requested (e.g., in the case of a layoff) (29 USC § 2614; 29 CFR 825.214; 29 CFR 825.216).

If the same position is no longer available, such as in a layoff, the employee will be entitled to a position that is comparable in pay, job content, and promotional opportunities and geographic location, if such a comparable position exists.

If upon return from leave an employee is unable to perform the essential functions of the job because of a physical or mental disability, the supervisor should work with the Employee Resources Director or the authorized designee to engage in an interactive process with the employee to identify a potential reasonable accommodation.

After exhausting paid FMLA leave, non-paid leave ~~may~~ **will** continue until the conclusion of the protected 12- or 26-week time limit. Following the protected leave, the Employee Resources Director or the authorized designee in consultation with the legal counsel will determine whether non-FMLA leave should apply.

614.9.1 PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS AND PAY INCREASES

[FMLA leave will not be considered a break in service, and employees will not be penalized for using leave. However, if an employee's performance review date falls during their leave, the evaluation and any associated pay increases may be deferred until the employee has returned and worked for a reasonable evaluation period.](#)

614.10 RESPONSIBILITY

The responsibilities of the Employee Resources Director or the authorized designee include but are not limited to (29 CFR 825.108; 29 CFR 825.110; 29 CFR 825.112; 29 CFR 825.300; 29 CFR 825.301):

- (a) Attempting to determine whether an employee absence of four or more days may qualify as FMLA leave.
- (b) Determining if an employee is eligible for FMLA leave.
- (c) Determining if leave is for an FMLA-qualifying reason.
- (d) Granting or denying a request for FMLA leave and providing designation notice to the employee within five business days of designation.
- (e) Providing eligibility notice to the employee within five business days of the request for FMLA leave or when acquiring knowledge that an employee's leave may be for FMLA.
 1. If the employee is not eligible for FMLA leave, the notice must state at least one reason why the employee is not eligible.

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- (f) Providing a written rights and responsibilities notice each time the eligibility notice is provided to an employee.

The Employee Resources Director or the authorized designee should work with legal counsel regarding questions relating to leave or reinstatement from leave under this policy.

614.10.1 STATE FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE CONSIDERATIONS

The City will comply with the requirements of any applicable state-specific laws providing for family and medical leave. The City Manager or the authorized designee is also responsible for establishing a process for implementing applicable family and medical leave requirements, including consideration of whether an employee is eligible for paid family or medical leave under state law, if applicable.

614.11 RECORDS

The City will maintain leave-related records as required by 29 CFR 825.500 for at least three years and in compliance with the city's established records retention schedule.

Records and documents related to doctor certifications and other medical information created for purposes of complying with FMLA and this policy shall be maintained as confidential medical records in separate files from employee personnel files.

614.12 NOTICE TO EMPLOYEES

The Employee Resources Director or the authorized designee should ensure that a notice explaining the FMLA's provisions and procedures is prominently posted in conspicuous places in the City where it can be readily seen by all employees and applicants for employment. Electronic posting is sufficient as long as the other posting requirements have been met as provided by 29 CFR 825.300 (29 CFR 825.300).