

# PROTECTED LEAVES OVERVIEW

In last week's newsletter, we shared some valuable information with you about all the different types of protected leaves of absence, and how to request a protected leave. In this week's newsletter, we want to focus on best practices while on a protected leave, including certification requirements to make taking a leave of absence a stress-free process.



## Navigating The Leave of Absence Process

There are a number of things that you can do to contribute to a good leave of absence process. As soon as you know that you will need to take a leave of absence, we ask that you notify your immediate supervisor or contact your department's Leave Management Unit so that they can provide you with important information and resources to guide you in the leave process. Every department has Leave Coordinator(s) whose job is to provide you with information and resources; they can also help you determine which leaves of absence are available to help support your needs. Click [HERE](#) to find your department's Leave Coordinator email.

It is very important for your manager and your Leave Coordinator to have information about your leave to make sure that your absence is accurately tracked and supported.



- Contact your supervisor or your Leave Coordinator if there are any changes to your leave. For example, if you need additional time off beyond what you initially requested or if you need to shorten your leave time, make sure you notify your supervisor or Leave Coordinator as soon as possible. This will help your Leave Coordinator advise you about next steps, and it will also help your supervisor with managing staffing and planning.



- We understand that the need to take a leave of absence cannot be predicted most of the time. However, we ask that when possible, that you provide 30 days advance notice of need for leave of absence.



- If you are taking a medical leave of absence, be sure to complete and return the Certification of Health Care Provider (CHCP) form and/or required documentation within 15 calendar days. Your leave packet will have all the information you need about the form and the due date for submission.



- If you are taking intermittent leave for planned medical appointments, we ask that you make an effort to schedule your appointments so that any disruption to the department's operation can be minimized. Talk to your supervisor about the best options for you and your unit.



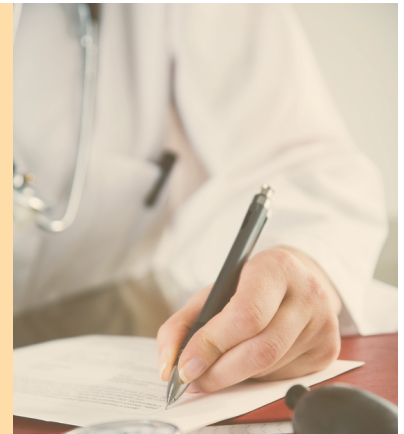
- When using intermittent leave, be sure to comply with departmental attendance policies. For example, if you have a medical condition where you experience periodic flare-ups, you would still need to call in according to your department's policy when you are going to be absent.

When you call in, be sure to let your supervisor know you are calling out due to your approved protected leave reason; this way, your absence will be coded correctly, and your timesheet will be updated with the right code for the absence.

- Click [HERE](#) for more information about your rights and responsibilities.

## Medical Certification and Supporting Documents

Where applicable, your Leave Coordinator will need a completed CHCP form that is signed by your health care provider. The CHCP is a doctor's note that supports your absence for your own medical condition or a qualifying family member's medical condition. Your health care provider will certify the type of leave that is needed (continuous, intermittent or reduced), and the duration (total amount of time) of the leave. Remember, diagnosis will never be requested and should not be provided; if your health care provider does include diagnosis or other information, please ask them to rewrite the document without that information. We take your right to confidentiality of your medical information very seriously.



If you need additional time to submit the completed CHCP form, please alert your Leave Coordinator as soon as possible so that they can offer you an extension. Your department will make every effort to ensure you have sufficient time to submit the CHCP or supporting documentation. However, if you fail to communicate with your Leave Coordinator regarding a need for an extension, or you do not submit the required forms to support your absence, your protected leave request may be denied.

## Returning from a Leave of Absence

As your leave end date approaches, be sure to reach out to your Leave Coordinator and your immediate supervisor to confirm your return. Where applicable, a doctor's note clearing you to return to work (with or without restrictions) may be required before your return to work date.

## Returning from a Leave of Absence with Medical Restrictions



In most cases, you will return to work on the date that your health care provider has indicated, and you will resume your work as usual. However, in some instances, your health care provider might release you to work with medical restrictions. If this is the case, there are specific steps that need to take place.

- Provide your Leave Coordinator with a copy of the return to work note with restrictions as soon as possible; you do not need to wait until the day you are back from your leave to share these restrictions.





- Your Leave Coordinator will connect you to the department's Disability Management and Compliance Coordinator (DMCC) (formerly known as the Return-to-Work Coordinator), so that they can meet with you to review your restrictions and discuss possible reasonable accommodations. This discussion takes place during an Interactive Process Meeting (IPM), where the DMCC, your supervisor, and you can explore accommodation options that will allow you to fully and safely perform your job duties.

## Coding Your Timesheet

Depending on the law(s) that apply to your reason for taking a protected leave of absence (see *Protected Leaves 101, What are protected leaves and why should I know about them?* in last week's newsletter), you may choose to take your leave time with or without pay.

***Plan Ahead!*** Before taking a continuous protected leave of absence, we encourage you to connect with your supervisor or your Leave Coordinator to decide which accrued benefit time (if any) you will be using and how you will apply available benefit time during your leave. This will help your supervisor ensure that your instructions are followed when submitting your timesheet.

If you have an approved intermittent or reduced schedule protected leave, your Leave Coordinator will let you know which event and reason codes to use for absences related to your leave. Please note that your supervisor will cross check their call-out log to ensure the absences you report as part of your protected leave on your timesheet are appropriately reflected.



## Resources Available to Me

There is so much to know about leaves of absence. You can find additional information and valuable resources on the following intranet sites:

- <https://employee.hr.lacounty.gov/leave/>
- <https://employee.hr.lacounty.gov/return-to-work-philosophy/>
- <https://employee.hr.lacounty.gov/disability/>
- <https://employee.hr.lacounty.gov/lactationprogram-2/>

And of course, you can reach out to your departmental leave management unit and the Countywide Protected Leave team with the Department of Human Resources at [ProtectedLeaves@hr.lacounty.gov](mailto:ProtectedLeaves@hr.lacounty.gov).



The next edition of this newsletter will focus on leaves due to pregnancy disability, baby-bonding, and bonding due to surrogacy, foster care, and adoption, and we will offer invaluable information that can help you prepare for this type of absence.



Los Angeles  
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Human Resources



HERE.