



Protected Leaves Overview

The County of Los Angeles (County) truly values your day-to-day contributions as public servants, and it is committed to making sure that your rights are not only protected, but that you have a good understanding of all of the benefits and programs that are in place to support you and your family. The County offers several leaves of absence which gives you the time off you need to care for your health, and the health and care of your family members. In 2023 alone, approximately 20,300 County employees were approved for a protected leave of absence.

Here's a quick preview of what you can expect from our 2024 Protected Leaves Newsletters:

Week One – Protected Leaves Overview

Week Two – Requesting and Managing Protected Leaves

Week Three – Parental Leave

Week Four – The Protected Leave Wrap-Up



Protected Leave Programs Awareness Month

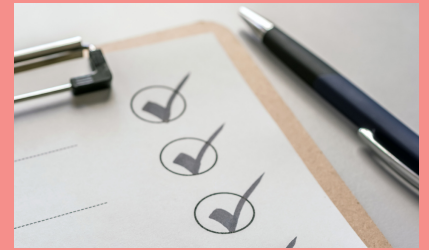
To help ensure that our employees know about these leave programs, the County Board of Supervisors' designates the month of February as "**Protected Leave Programs Awareness Month.**" In support of the Protected Leave Programs Awareness Month, the Department of Human Resources' (DHR) Protected Leave Team offers weekly newsletters with helpful information and resources about the different leaves that are available to eligible employees. We hope that you will find the 2024 edition of the newsletters to be informative and easy to understand. We also encourage you to access previous editions of the newsletters by visiting the DHR Protected Leaves site [HERE](#).

What are protected leaves and why should I care about them?



The term "protected" usually refers to job protection for those employees who need to take time off from work for a reason that is covered by a leave program (i.e., Family and Medical Leave Act [FMLA], California Family Rights Act [CFRA], etc.) This protection is in place to make sure that you can take time off from work without being worried if you will lose your job, that absence from work will hurt your performance rating, or that you will hurt your chances of getting a promotion because you have taken a leave of absence.

Here's more information about the reasons you should feel comfortable asking for a leave of absence:



Job Security: Protected leave allows you to take time off for qualifying reasons (e.g., illness, family emergencies, pregnancy, or military service) without the risk of losing your job; some of the available protections also ensure that you will be returned to your same or similar position after you return from leave. Each leave is different, and the "protection" varies. Your leave coordinator can give you more details once they understand what leave you are requesting, and what leave you qualify for.

Work-Life Balance: Taking a leave of absence can offer you the time and space you need to handle personal, health, and family needs without being worried about your job, or your future with the County.

Legal Rights: As your employer, the County is legally obligated to comply with protected leave laws, and making sure that you can access these leaves without being worried about your job, or worried about retaliation for taking time off. Keep reading to see the list of common types of protected leaves that are available; each leave has different rules for eligibility – so take the time to click on each link and read through these carefully.

**CLICK ON
LINKS BELOW!**

PROTECTED LEAVES AVAILABLE

- [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#)
- [California Family Rights Act \(CFRA\)](#)
- [Crime Victims Leave](#)
- [Family and Medical Leave Act \(FMLA\)](#)
- [Jury Duty](#)
- [Kin Care](#)
- [Leaves for Victims of Domestic Abuse, Sexual Abuse, and Stalking](#)
- [Military Family Leave](#)
- [Military Service Leave](#)
- [Organ & Bone Marrow Donation Leave](#)
- [Pregnancy Disability Leave \(PDL\)](#)
- [Reproductive Loss Leave](#)
- [School Appearance & Activities Leave](#)
- [Voting Leave](#)
- [Witness Leave](#)



Whoa! There are so many different types of leaves. How do I know which one I need?

The kind of protected leave you will need depends on your specific circumstances and the reasons you need to take time off. Your Protected Leave Coordinator (PLC) is a great resource to help you figure this out, but here are some steps to help you determine which protected leave may be right for you:



Review Your Situation: First, think about your personal circumstances and why you need time off. Are you experiencing a medical issue, caring for a family member, expecting a child, or dealing with other life events?



Check in with your Leave Management Unit: Talk to your Leave Management Unit about your situation; your PLC can give you guidance on your available leave options, check your leave eligibility, and walk you through the process for requesting leave.



Understand Your Legal Rights: Take the time to familiarize yourself with the leave laws and your rights. The DHR Leave website provides resources to learn about different leaves, and your legal rights. Visit us [HERE](#).



Documentation: In most cases, you will need to provide appropriate documentation to support your request for protected leave; this may include medical certificates, birth certificates, or other relevant documents. If you need to submit information from your healthcare provider, be sure the medical certificate DOES NOT include any protected information, like details about a medical condition or treatment plan. Information about your medical condition and treatment is Protected Health Information (PHI) and is NEVER required to support your request for a leave of absence.



Understand Applicable Policies: Your Department may have specific policies and procedures in place related to requesting and taking protected leaves. Make sure to follow your Department's procedures to ensure a smooth process.



Communicate Clearly: When requesting protected leave, it is very important to be clear about your leave needs to your supervisor and/or the Leave Management Unit. Provide as much notice as possible regarding your anticipated leave start date (if known), and about how long you expect to be out on leave. Remember, you should never have to disclose any details of your medical condition, or the medical condition of your family member.



Reach out to DHR's Protected Leave Team: If after talking to your PLC you are still unsure about taking a leave, which leave you should consider, or if you have concerns about how your Department is handling your leave request, please reach out to the County's Protected Leave experts by emailing us at ProtectedLeaves@hr.lacounty.gov.



How can I find out if I am eligible for protected leave?

Each protected leave type has specific eligibility rules that apply. For example, to take a leave of absence that is protected by the FMLA and CFRA, you must have worked for 1,250 hours in the last 12 months, AND you must have completed 12-months of County service in the past seven (7) years.

Other leaves have different requirements. For example, employees are eligible for Pregnancy Disability Leave (PDL) from their first day of employment.

I've gone through the list of leaves, and nothing seems to fit what I need. What now?

Before you give up and assume that there is no leave available to support your needs, please contact your PLC or DHR's Protected Leave experts for guidance; we can help answer your questions and determine if there are leave options that you can consider.



How much leave can I take?

The amount of leave you are eligible to take depends on several factors, including the specific type of leave that applies to your circumstance, what leaves you may be eligible for, and how much protected leave you may have already taken.

Different types of protected leave have different amounts of entitlement (the amount of leave time you can take). For example, FMLA allows eligible employees with up to 12 weeks of job-protected leave in a 12-month period. Leave time can be taken in a couple of different ways, depending on your needs. For example:

Continuous Leave – You can take this time in full-day increments over a period of consecutive days. *Example: You are placed off work by your healthcare provider for six (6) consecutive weeks.*

Intermittent Leave – You can take this leave in blocks of time as small as 15 minutes to meet specific needs. *Example: You have a note from your healthcare provider that reads, “My patient needs to be off work three (3) times per month for up to four (4) hours per episode to take their mother to treatment sessions.”*

Reduced Schedule – This leave type applies when you have a note from your healthcare provider that limits the number of hours you can work each day, or the number of days that you can work each week. *Example: You have a note from your healthcare provider that reads, “My patient can only work three (3) days per week, Monday – Wednesday, for the next two (2) months.”*

Ultimately, it is very important for you to communicate your need for taking a leave of absence with your supervisor and your Leave Management Unit as soon as you know you will need to take time off. It is also important to be well informed about your rights and what you need to do to apply for a leave, and to know about your Department’s leave request procedures so that there are not any delays or miscommunications about your leave request.

Will I be paid while I am on a leave of absence?

While some protected leaves only offer unpaid time off, you may choose to use any available and accrued benefit time, such as sick and vacation time, to cover your leave of absence. Your PLC or Payroll Unit can help you figure out how to use your accrued benefit time so that you are paid while out on an approved leave.



How do I request a leave of absence?

It is VERY simple. Once you know that you will need to take a leave of absence, get in touch with your PLC and your immediate supervisor right away and they will walk you through the process. Need more help? Reach out to DHR’s Protected Leave Team at ProtectedLeaves@hr.lacounty.gov.

How do I find out who my PLC is?

We made this easy for you! No matter what department you are in, you can easily reach your PLC; click [HERE](#) to find the email address for your Department’s Leave Management Unit. If you need additional assistance, feel free to email DHR’s Protected Leaves team at ProtectedLeaves@hr.lacounty.gov.



We have more to share!

Next week we will be sharing tips to support you “before, during, and after” your leave experience.