

Requesting and Managing Protected Leaves

I need to take a leave, but I do not know where to start!

It is easier than you think! First, taking the time to learn about the different protected leaves will help you in the event that you need to take a leave of absence. Requesting a leave is as simple as letting your supervisor know that you need to take time off from work. Your supervisor can help you get started, or you can reach out directly to your departmental Protected Leave Coordinator (PLC) for help. You do not even have to worry about knowing who to contact. Click [HERE](#) for a list of departmental Protected Leave Unit's email addresses.



Why is protected leave important? Can I just use my accrued leave?

Sure, you can submit a time off request for medically related absences, but your supervisor has the authority to either approve or deny the request. Here are some important reasons to consider taking a protected leave instead of just requesting regular time off:

- Once your protected leave is approved, your requests for time off related to the leave cannot be denied when properly requested, e.g. scheduled appointments or treatments.
- The time you take off when on a protected leave is as if you were never on leave. It cannot be mentioned in your performance evaluations and cannot be counted as absenteeism.
- If you apply for a transfer or promotion, your protected leave absences can not and will not be taken into consideration.
- The County supports your right to protected leave and encourages you to use it when needed! You are protected from any kind of harassment or retaliation for requesting and/or taking a protected leave.

What steps should I take to get started with my leave request?

1

Connect with your Leave Management Unit as soon as possible.

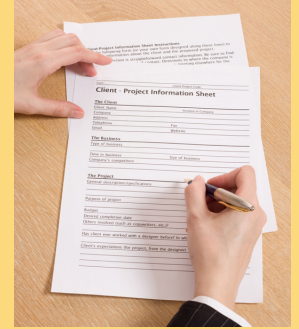
Once you know you will need time off, let your supervisor and the Leave Management Unit know as soon as possible. They will be able to help you figure out if there is a leave that covers the reason for your absence. We understand there are times when you might not be able to give advance notice – do not worry about that and reach out as soon as you can.



2

Complete the required forms.

Your PLC will provide you with the forms you need to review and/or have completed, such as the Certification of Health Care Provider (CHCP). Your PLC will also let you know if you need to submit any forms that might be required to support your leave request, for example, a birth certificate for bonding with a newborn. If you are taking a leave of absence because of a personal health issue or if you need to care for a qualifying family member, you will be required to submit a completed CHCP form. You will have 15 days from the day the PLC provides you with the documents to submit the form. If you need additional time to get the CHCP form signed, contact your PLC as soon as possible. **The CHCP form does not ask for any protected medical or personal health information (PHI), and you will never have to share any information about your diagnosis or treatment plan.**



3

Receipt of approval or denial notice.

Once you submit the leave request form and any required supporting documentation, the PLC will confirm if you are eligible for a protected leave, and you will receive a letter confirming whether your request for protected leave was approved or denied. The PLC will also let your supervisor know if your absence is covered by a protected leave or not. If your leave is approved, proceed to Step Four. If your leave is denied, your letter will include the reason for the denial. Talk to your PLC or your supervisor to determine if there are any other leave options available to you such as leave under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).



4

Tracking your absences.

Whether your leave time off is continuous or intermittent, you need to use specific codes on your timesheet so that your leave time is accurately recorded, and your payroll check is processed correctly. Your PLC will provide you with the applicable timesheet codes for your leave. If there are any issues with your paycheck or benefits, or if you have any questions or concerns, immediately reach out to your Payroll Unit.



I understand protected leaves are unpaid, but can I use my sick or vacation time so that I am paid during my absence?



Yes! While some protected leaves such as Bereavement Leave are paid, the law does not require that leaves like the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), the California Family Rights Act (CFRA), or Pregnancy Disability Leave (PDL) be paid time off. However, you can use any accrued and available paid benefit time such as Sick Leave, Vacation, Holiday time, etc. to cover any time taken during a protected leave of absence. It is very important to talk to your supervisor and your PLC to figure out which accrued benefit time (if any) you can use to cover your absences. If you are a MegaFlex eligible employee, do not forget that you may also be eligible for paid Short-Term Disability (STD) insurance benefits. You can learn more about STD benefits by clicking [HERE](#). You may contact your departmental Benefits Coordinator for additional information related to STD.

Help us protect your confidential medical information.

Sometimes healthcare providers (HCP) will write down PHI on the medical certification that they give you. If any medical certification that your HCP gives you has information that discloses your medical condition, your treatment plan – and even any information about the medication or therapies that you have to take, either ask your HCP to give you an updated medical certification without that information or completely cross out this information with a dark marker. **We do not ever want to receive any PHI.**



Looking for more detailed information on protected leave?

Click [HERE](#) for some helpful Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).



We have more to share!

In the next newsletter, we will focus on the protected parental leaves that are available for time-off related to pregnancy disability, bonding with a newborn or bonding related to surrogacy, foster care, and adoption.

