

**FOSTERING A SUPPORTED & EMPOWERED STAFF:
UNPAID LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUESTS**

COMMITTEE:	Strategic Leadership Team	PASSED:	September 9, 2004
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MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

Requests for unpaid leaves of absence will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Approvals may be granted on the basis the absence will not:

- Add significant personnel replacement costs,
- Negatively impact the delivery of Library services and the efficient operation of the department, or
- Generate excessive (re)training costs.

A leave of absence should be considered as a privilege and not a right.

Leave periods beyond six months and to a maximum leave of one year, will only be considered for those employees with greater than ten years of Library service.

All unpaid leave of absence requests will be considered of their own merit and the overall impact on the operations will be of primary consideration. Upon receiving approval, the leave will be granted in accordance with the terms and conditions outline in these Guidelines.

1. UNPAID LEAVE OF ABSENCE PROCEDURE

- 1.1 All leave requests must be in writing to the Manager, and contain information sufficient to allow proper consideration of the request and to be documented for time entry purposes (code LOA No Pay).
- 1.2 A minimum of 30 days' notice is recommended, and more notice is encouraged for longer leaves.
- 1.3 For employees with vacation banks and banked time, these must be exhausted in advance of the leave commencing.
- 1.4 For employees with benefits, it is that employee's responsibility to address the continuation or cancellation of their benefits in a timely manner. Once leave has been approved, prior arrangements of benefit elections must be made through HR. The employee, through Human

Resources, will co-ordinate prepayment of premiums. Otherwise, coverage for medical/benefit plans will cease at the end of the month in which the leave commences.

1.5 Persons on unpaid leave will continue to be employees of the Library. They are not, however, considered to be “actively in service” due to voluntarily choosing to take the unpaid leave of absence. As certain benefits are accrued and based on “active service,” those benefits will be affected accordingly by the leave and are addressed as follows:

- **Medical/Benefit Plans:** for leaves of less than one month, benefit coverage will continue and the employer/employee premium shares will not be affected for Health and Welfare Benefits Plans i.e., MSP, Extended Health, Dental, Group Life Insurance and AD&D and LTD (where applicable). Those with optional group Life coverage should contact the carrier directly regarding their continuation of coverage.

For leaves of one month or longer, MSP, extended Health, Dental, Group Life Insurance and AD&D (where applicable) coverage may be continued. The full cost of the premiums will be borne by the employee and paid in advance of the leave commencing.

LTD coverage (as applicable) is not available for leaves of one month or longer.

- **Vacation:** Vacation is prorated for the period of all leaves and earned vacation will be reduced accordingly. Service trigger dates for vacation entitlements for leaves of up to one year will not be affected.
- **Municipal Pension:** Unpaid leave periods may be purchased within five years after the end of the leave period. The employee pays both the employer’s and employee’s contribution.
- **Increments:** Leaves of one month or longer will not be counted as service toward increments and the eligibility of the increment will be postponed accordingly.
- **Sick Leave:** Sick leave is not earned nor can sick leave credits be used during unpaid leaves.
- **Bereavement Leave and Jury Witness Duty Leave:** Not available during the period of leave.
- **Service Severance Pay:** For leaves in excess of three (3) months or longer, Service Severance Pay (as applicable) if eligible at retirement or termination will be reduced accordingly.
- **Retirement Benefit:** If eligible at retirement the 30 Day Retirement Benefit (as applicable) is unaffected.
- **Security:** For leaves of one month or longer, the return of any Library property is required i.e., cell phones, access fob, keys, credit cards etc., as well as computer access during the period.

- **Position Retention:** for approved leaves up to one year, the incumbent's position will be held. Should, however, there be unanticipated but necessary change to the workforce that impacts the incumbents' position, layoff and bumping rights, and notice or pay in lieu of notice, and/or re-assignment to a similar position will be applied as required.
- **Notice of Return to Work:** For a leave of absence of up to three months, the employee shall give written notice two weeks prior to the return to work. For leave of absence in excess of three months, four weeks written notice is required.
- **Cancellation of Leave of Absence:** Requests to cancel or shorten a period of leave require a minimum of two weeks written notice. However, where operationally feasible, the employer may accommodate an expedited (immediate) return to work. Leaves where a person has been hired to temporarily backfill the vacancy, the Library is obliged to give that employee appropriate reassignment or notice of termination.