

# Sick Leave Policy

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*Effective Date: Adopted 8/65; Revised 2/74, 11/81, 10/82, 6/92, 11/93, 8/95, 1/96, 4/00, 4/06, 12/11, 10/15, 06/17*

## **§-I. PURPOSE**

To provide regulations concerning the accrual and use of sick leave by County employees.

**§-II. SCOPE** All Employees.

## **§-III. POLICY**

Sick leave is granted to employees to guard against the loss of earnings due to illness or accident. All full-time employees shall be entitled to accrue sick leave credit from the commencement of employment. All employees are responsible for the appropriate use of sick leave, and an employee may be required to furnish a certificate from an attending licensed health care provider or to present other evidence satisfactory to the Department Head/Agency Head/Elected Official to justify the use of sick leave.

## **§-IV. PROCEDURES**

### **A. Accrual of Sick Leave**

Sick leave accrues at the rate of 4.0 hours per bi-weekly pay period for 40-hour-week employees and at the rate of 6.0 hours per bi-weekly pay period for 56-hour-week employees. Any employee working a work week other than 40 or 56 hours will accrue sick leave based upon the same ratio.

A 40-hour-week employee in pay status for 40 hours or more during a bi-weekly pay period earns sick leave for that bi-weekly pay period. A 40-hour-week employee in pay status less than 40 hours during a bi-weekly pay period earns no sick leave for that bi-weekly. A 56-hour-week employee in pay status for 56 hours or more during a bi-weekly period earns sick leave for that bi-weekly pay period. An employee on a work week other than these earns sick leave based upon the same ratio. Sick leave accrues at the end of the bi-weekly process.

Sick leave may be carried over without a maximum accumulation, but is only payable upon termination if the employee meets the requirements for receiving a sick leave payout as set forth in this policy.

Sick leave accrues only to employees who are in leave-with-pay status, such as annual, sick, court and military leave with pay.

An employee who is transferred from one department to another shall retain the sick leave balance accrued in his previous department.

## **B. Use of Sick Leave**

A full-time employee may utilize sick leave in increments of 15 minutes upon approval from the employee's department, agency or office for absence due to illness, injury, death or medical appointments involving: (1) the employee; (2) the employee's spouse, child, parent, sibling, grandchild, or grandparent (including adoptive and step relationships); (3) any person for whom the employee is the legal guardian; ~~or~~ (4) any member of the employee's household who is a relative and had the same principal abode for the entire year preceding the request, is dependent on the employee for health care, and for whom the employee provides at least half of the individual's annual support; or (5) other dependents who are listed on the employee's most recent tax return.

In the case of accidental injury or occupational disease covered by the Georgia Workers' Compensation Act, the employee shall utilize sick leave during a period of disability only to the extent of the difference between such compensation and the employee's regular salary and with the consideration that the sick leave period may be extended.

Paid sick leave shall not be granted to emergency, temporary, part-time, or per diem employees.

Employees will be charged for sick leave only on days when they would otherwise work and receive pay. No charges will be made for sick leave on scheduled days off, holidays, or other non-work days established by the Governing Authority of the County.

When an employee is absent for reasons covered by this policy and exhausts all sick leave, additional leave will be charged to any available compensatory leave balance or annual leave balance.

If all accrued sick, compensatory and annual leave is exhausted, the employee may apply for:

- Annual leave donation; or
- Leave of absence without pay.

If the employee's leave is exhausted and the above options are either unavailable and/or not granted, the employee will be subject to dismissal.

## **C. Abuse of Sick Leave**

Employees are responsible for the appropriate use of sick leave, and may be disciplined for sick leave abuse. Sick leave abuse occurs when an employee uses sick leave for unauthorized purposes or misrepresents the actual reason for charging an absence to sick leave. Abuse may also occur when an employee establishes a pattern of sick leave usage over a period of time such as: the day before or after a holiday, on Mondays and Fridays, after payday, on any one specific day, or has a continued pattern of maintaining zero or near zero leave balances.

#### **D. Sick Leave Buy-Back Plan**

Sick Leave Buy-Back Plan participation is limited to employees with at least four (4) weeks, or 160 hours, of accrued sick leave. Employees who elect to participate in the sick leave buy-back plan will accumulate sick leave at a reduced rate. The sick leave buy-back plan year begins at the outset of the bi-weekly preceding the last bi-weekly period of the calendar year.

The accrual rates for employees who participate in this plan are: 1 hour 36 minutes per bi-weekly for 40-hour-week employees or 2 hours 24 minutes for 56 hour-week employees. (Any employee working a work week other than 40 or 56 hours will have sick leave computed at the same ratio.) To participate, an employee must be in full-time status on the first day of the last pay period of the preceding calendar year.

Eligible accrued hours will be earned at the conclusion of the designated sick leave buy-back plan year. Hours paid shall be deducted from accumulated sick leave. Such payment shall be subject to funding and approval of the Board of Commissioners on an annual basis.

#### **E. Sick Leave Payout**

Any employee retiring from the County at age 60 or above, with a minimum of 10 years of consecutive full-time service, will be eligible for pay for accumulated sick leave up to a maximum of 480 hours for 40-hour week employees and 720 hours for 56-hour week employees. Such compensation will not extend the date of the employee's separation date, which shall be the last day of active service.

Related Policy: *Leave of Absence Policy*