



## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** March 13, 2006  
**TO:** OIT Directors, Managers, Supervisors  
**FROM:** Steve Smith  
**SUBJECT:** Approving/Disapproving Leave Requests.

Recently, the Statewide Office of Human Resources (SWOHR) conducted a training session for OIT management. This training provided important information about supervising non-exempt employees, with regards to timekeeping. This memorandum is a follow up on procedures for approving and disapproving leave requests.

All regular staff positions at the University of Alaska receive vacation (annual) and medical (sick) leave benefits. Additionally, non-exempt regular employees receive one personal holiday each fiscal year. Supervisors have the discretion to approve or disapprove leave. However, University Regulations outline certain responsibilities when administering these benefits, as summarized in the following list:

1. Disapproval of any leave request must be in writing. Approvals may be in writing or verbal. *R04.06.120B*
2. Extended periods of leave (10 consecutive days or more) as leave without pay (LWOP) require additional levels of approval. *R04.06.190*
3. Employees taking medical leave for serious health conditions may qualify for Family and Medical Leave (FML). *R04.06.160*
4. The cap for annual leave is 240 hours. Accrued annual leave hours in excess of 240 are forfeited each January. *R04.06.120C* - Note: Employees may “cash out” up to 40 hours of annual leave per fiscal year. Details on how to cash out annual leave hours are available online: [http://www.alaska.edu/hr/procedures/reference/al\\_cashin\\_nonunion.xml](http://www.alaska.edu/hr/procedures/reference/al_cashin_nonunion.xml).
5. Regular non-exempt employees receive a personal holiday each fiscal year. This benefit is provided after the employee successfully completes a 6 month probationary period. If not used, the personal holiday is forfeited at the end of the fiscal year. Personal holiday leave may not be used in the pay period which includes July 1<sup>st</sup>. *R04.06.110C*

In addition to these regulations, OIT supervisors are expected to provide a legitimate business reason for disapproving leave requests. This reason should be documented in the written disapproval.

Furthermore, all extended leave requests (10 days or more) should be coordinated with SWOHR to ensure appropriate documentation is completed when required. Managers are expected to contact SWOHR when a request for extended leave is received from an employee. SWOHR will provide assistance in completing the appropriate documentation if the extended absence puts the employee in a LWOP status for ten consecutive days or more.

Attached are some basic guidelines and suggestions for OIT supervisors to reference when establishing leave requests methods and evaluating leave requests. For further guidance, please consult with SWOHR.

## **OIT Best Practices for Approving/Disapproving Employee Leave Requests**

### Establishing a Method for Employees to Submit Requests

Supervisors should identify and clearly explain the preferred method for their employees to submit leave requests, (i.e. email or written memo), and the criteria for granting requests, (i.e. first come, first served). Supervisors should choose a methodology and apply it equally to all requests.

Any changes in the method should be communicated to employees. To the extent possible, the rationale for the particular leave-granting method should be explained to employees. Supervisors should develop a master leave calendar to track approved requests and this calendar should be available for employees' review.

Employees should be expected to give as much notice as possible when making leave requests so appropriate coverage for duties can be coordinated. Employees are responsible for monitoring individual accrued leave balances to ensure they do not lose annual leave hours.

### Evaluating Requests and Indicating Approval/Disapproval

Careful evaluation should be given to each leave request. Approving leave on a first come, first served basis is highly encouraged. Using this method, the supervisor can easily monitor who has requested leave for planning purposes.

First come-first served is an easy decision-making leave method and requires little additional inquiry on the part of a supervisor. Once approved, the supervisor should not "withdraw" permission except in extenuating circumstances where the employee's presence is a matter of necessity due to business needs.

Supervisors have the discretion to disapprove leave. However, a written business justification for disapproving leave requests must be provided to the employee. Examples of sound reasons for disapproving leave include, but are not limited to the following:

- Requested days off occur during an exceptionally busy periods for the department (registration, fiscal year end, etc.);
- Coworkers have already been granted leave for the same time period;
- Time away from work would have serious impact to project completion.

Requests for leave may not be disapproved due to a lack of accrued leave.

For sick leave requests, supervisors have the discretion to require a doctor's note to document illness/injury. However, this practice should be applied fairly to all employees within the department.