



# Oklahoma Conservation Commission

## District Directors' Responsibilities:

### A 10-Minute Guide Series

This is one in a continuing series of informational/discussion topics designed to help conservation district directors become more informed and knowledgeable about their responsibilities. It is suggested that board members review these guides before a board meeting and then have a ten minute discussion on them at a meeting.

#### *Guide No. 15 - Understanding Types of Leave for Conservation District Employees*

One of the benefits afforded a conservation district employee is the accrual of annual and sick leave. There are different types of leave and rules for using leave. In order for district directors to effectively manage district employee's time, they need to be familiar with the types of leave earned by employees and how that leave may be used. District boards should closely review the use and accrual of leave on the employee's monthly timesheet prior to approval.

#### **Eligibility & Accrual of Leave**

Permanent employees are eligible to accrue, use, and receive pay for sick, annual, and holiday time. Annual and sick leave accrual rates and accumulation limits are based on total service with the district.

For purposes of leave rules, total service means total service as a permanent employee. Total service does not include periods of employment as a temporary or seasonal employee.

Temporary employees and other limited term employees are not eligible to accrue, use, or receive pay for sick, annual, or holiday time.

**Leave accrues only when an employee is in pay status and cannot be taken in advance. Leave accrues on the last day of the month and may not be used until the following month.**

#### **Establishing Leave Policy**

The Conservation Commission recommends that boards establish a policy on minimum leave balance requirements. An example policy that a board could adopt would be that an employee must maintain a combined total of 40 hours of sick and annual leave before any annual leave shall be granted.

#### **Types of Leave**

##### **Annual Leave**

This type of leave is to be used for vacations, personal business and other time taken off not covered by sick leave or holiday provisions. Accrued annual leave may be used for sick leave if an employee has exhausted all available sick leave.

The district should establish a policy on how annual leave will be requested. Annual leave should be requested in advance to taking the leave.

Upon resignation or termination of an employee, the employee must be paid for accumulated annual leave up to the maximum annual leave accumulation limits.

##### **Sick Leave**

Sick leave is to be used when an employee is prevented from working because of sickness, injury, medical reasons (surgical, dental, optical examinations) or jeopardy to other's health if present at work.

Sick leave cannot be used for annual leave. If an absence because of illness or injury extends beyond the sick leave accrued, such additional time may be charged to accrued annual leave.

The board may require that the employee furnish medical statements of illness and treatment from the attending physician in order to qualify for sick pay.

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## (Sick Leave Continued)

Upon resignation or termination of an employee, the employee is **not** paid for accumulated sick leave. If an employee leaves service from the district but is rehired by a conservation district within two years of his/her last working day the sick leave amount may be reinstated.

### **Enforced Leave**

A permanent employee may be granted time off from regular duties, with compensation, for absence necessary when some member of the immediate family or household requires the employee's care because of illness or injury. Other instances when enforced leave may be use is in the case of death in the immediate family or if there is a personal disaster.

This leave must be charged against the employee's sick leave and may not be granted in excess of accumulated sick leave. The number of days granted will be governed by the circumstance of the case, but in no event can it exceed 10 days (80 hours) per calendar year.

### **Family Leave**

An eligible employee may be granted up to 12 weeks (480 hours) of family leave in a 12-month period for any Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) qualifying event. Those events include the birth of a child, the placement of a child for adoption or foster care, care for a child, spouse or parent who has a serious health condition, or a serious health condition of the employee.

Employees can account for time off by using accrued annual and/or sick leave, or can request leave without pay. Employees shall provide the board advanced notice whenever family leave is needed. All family leave requests must be presented to the board in writing for approval.

### **Holiday Leave**

Holidays may be granted in accordance with state law and the Governor's Proclamations as they are observed by the individual districts in accordance with workload and policies.

The Oklahoma Conservation Commission will notify districts of holidays for each year.

Some offices are also federal offices. Federal holidays differ from those of state offices; therefore, it is at the board's discretion as to which holidays to observe.

Under no circumstances shall the number of paid holidays exceed the number designated by the state.

Holiday leave is calculated as an 8 hour day. If employees work a compressed work schedule (9 hour days) it will be necessary for an employee to take an hour of leave for that holiday.

### **Leave without pay**

The district board may approve a request from a permanent employee for leave without pay. The request must be in writing and must include the reasons for the leave.

Leave without pay cannot be approved for more than 12 months. However, an employee may request an extension before the end of the approved leave period. This request must also be in writing to the board.

An employee may return to work before the specified date of return if the board approves a written request from the employee to return earlier. If the employee fails to report for work on the specified date of return, the board may terminate the employee. The board may cancel leave without pay at any time and require the employee to return to work before the specified date of return.

If an employee is absent from work without proper authorization, the employee may not receive pay for such absence and may be subject to termination.

### **Other types of Leave**

Consult the district handbook for discussions on military leave of absence, maternity leave and leave for court and jury service.

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