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HRDG 4630 - Absence and Leave - Section A

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With two exceptions (stated below), the authority to approve absence and leave is delegated through [MRP Directive 4630.1](#) (212.37 KB) to the level of supervision consistent with the authority to approve time and attendance reports. If this level of delegation does not meet their specific needs, individual programs within MRP agencies have the discretion to retain approval authority at higher levels than prescribed in the Directive.

Approving Officials

- The authority to approve restoration of annual leave forfeited due to exigencies of the public business is delegated to the following officials and may not be redelegated:
 - **AMS**: Administrator, Associate Administrator, Deputy Administrators, and Program/Staff Directors.
 - **APHIS**: Administrator, Deputy Administrators, and Directors (Program, Regional, Lab, and Division).

(The parameters of this authority and the applicable procedures are found in Section B, Annual Leave.)

- The authority to approve restoration of annual leave forfeited due to sickness, administrative error, or unwarranted or unjustified personnel action is retained by the Director, Marketing and Regulatory Programs Human Resources.

Managers and supervisors will:

- Advise employees of types of leave available and the policies for requesting and using various types of leave. Relevant materials (e.g., directives, Human Resources Desk Guide, office policy, etc.) will be available to all employees.
- Counsel employees, as needed, on the use of leave to protect their leave rights and to prevent leave abuse.
- Approve or disapprove leave requests.
- Schedule leave so as to maintain the necessary workforce during heavy workload periods and prevent loss of leave.
- Cancel scheduled annual leave only when an operational emergency/exigency prevents the effective accomplishment of public business, and there is no reasonable alternative. Leave will be rescheduled for a time when working conditions permit employees' absence.
- Request, at their discretion, medical certificates or documentation for absences in excess of three (3) days, or whenever deemed necessary, if less than 3 days.
- Ensure that medical documentation supporting an absence is maintained in a secured electronic/hardcopy file that is separate from the T&A file. Access is limited to:
 - Supervisors and managers who require information regarding necessary restrictions on the work or duties of the employee and necessary accommodations;
 - First aid and safety personnel, when appropriate, if the disability might require emergency treatment; and
 - Government officials investigating compliance with 29 C.F.R. 1630(d)(4)(i) will be provided relevant information on request.
- For additional information see: 29 C.F.R. 1630(d)(4)(i).
- Review and sign Time and Attendance (T&A) reports to certify accuracy of leave used and guard against leave abuses.

Managers and Supervisors

Employees will:

Employees

- Learn and observe the policies for requesting and using leave;
- Be aware of current leave entitlements;
- Be aware of annual leave balance and properly schedule any in excess of annual leave ceiling to prevent forfeiture;
- Request non-emergency leave in advance by submitting applications for leave to the appropriate approving official;
- Notify appropriate approving official and apply for proper type of leave at the beginning of business on the first day of any emergency or unplanned absence from duty;
- Provide medical certificates and/or other administratively acceptable evidence, when required, for sick leave usage, when applying for the Voluntary Leave Transfer Program, or when invoking the Family and Medical Leave Act, as applicable; and
- Avoid scheduling excessive amounts of leave at the end of leave year.

Timekeepers will:

Timekeepers

- Accurately record leave on T&A reports;
- Refer to the National Finance Center Time and Attendance (T&A) Handbook and appropriate personal computer user guide for special instructions on recording leave earned and used;
- Maintain T&A records for 6 years;
- Provide information on leave usage for required reports; and
- Prepare leave audits for employees with leave error(s), and for lump sum payments, as required.

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