



PA TURNPIKE COMMISSION POLICY

This is a statement of official Pennsylvania Turnpike Policy

NUMBER: 2.05

APPROVAL DATE: 10/2/1979

EFFECTIVE DATE: 6/22/2005

REVISED DATE: 1/28/2015

POLICY SUBJECT:

Personal Leave (Without Pay)
Authorization

RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT:

Human Resources

A. PURPOSE:

To provide consistent procedures for requesting and approving personal leave without pay.

B. SCOPE:

This policy letter applies to all Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission employees including Supplemental Toll Collectors.

C. GENERAL POLICY:

This policy establishes the role of the requesting employee and all appropriate personnel required for approval. It further establishes the total number of leave without pay days that may be approved by supervisors for an employee within a calendar year. It is the supervisor's responsibility to ensure compliance with this policy. The Human Resources Department will periodically monitor personal leave usage.

Personal leave days are not accrued and should only be approved based on operational needs and the supervisor's ability to maintain efficient operations. This policy does not permit intermittent personal leave.

D. DEFINITIONS:

"Personal leave" is any approved time-off taken by an employee which he/she does not receive compensation. Days used for Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leave, Sick and Accident and Workers' Compensation and waiting periods for Sick and Accident and Workers' Compensation are not counted in this definition of personal leave.

"Days" as used in this policy refers to scheduled work days, unless otherwise stated herein.

"Intermittent Leave" is approval of personal leave in advance to be used at the employee's discretion.

"Year" as used in this policy refers to the calendar year.

E. PROCEDURES:

Authorization for personal leave shall be administered in the following manner:

One (1) to five (5) days per year:

Up to five (5) total days of leave without pay per year may be approved by an employee's immediate supervisor who is authorized to approve leave for the particular employee. The request shall be made directly to the immediate supervisor. The request shall be made in writing, but direct phone contact with the immediate supervisor is acceptable in an emergency. The supervisor will either approve or deny the leave. If approved for three (3) or more consecutive days, the approval must be in writing and include a doctor's certification if the leave was due to medical reasons. The supervisor will retain a copy of the request and response on file.

Six (6) to ten (10) days per year:

Between six (6) and ten (10) total days of leave without pay per year may be approved by the employee's Department Head. The request shall be made in writing and submitted to the Department Head, with a copy to the employee's immediate supervisor, at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the first day of leave requested. The request shall include the total time off requested and the reason for the request. The Department Head shall either approve or deny the leave and send written notification of the determination to the employee with a copy to the employee's immediate supervisor. If the request is for medical reasons, it shall include a doctor's certification. The Department Head shall retain a copy of the request and response on file.

Eleven (11) to fifteen (15) days per year:

Between eleven (11) and fifteen (15) days of leave without pay per year may be approved by the Director of Human Resources. The request shall be made in writing and submitted to the requesting employee's Department Head at least five (5) days prior to the first day of leave requested. The request shall include the total time off requested and the reason for the request. Continuous leaves of more than five (5) days shall be counted on a calendar day basis. If the request is for medical reasons, a doctor's certification must be submitted with the request. The Department Head shall forward the request to the Director of Human Resources and include a recommendation either to approve or deny the leave. This recommendation shall include if and how the employee will be replaced and any impact this leave will have on operations and/or the workforce. The Director of Human Resources shall either approve or deny the leave and send written notification of the determination to the employee with a copy to the employee's immediate supervisor and Department Head.

Sixteen (16) or more days per year:

Requests for sixteen (16) or more days per year may be approved by the Chief Operating Officer when circumstances warrant consideration. The request shall be submitted to the employee's Department Head, with a copy to the employee's immediate supervisor, at least fourteen (14) days prior to the first day of leave requested. The request shall be made in writing. The request shall include the reason for the request and the total time off requested, including the expected end date. Continuous leaves of more than five (5) days shall be counted on a calendar day basis. If the request is for medical reasons, a doctor's certification must be submitted with the request. The Department Head shall forward the request to the Director of Human Resources and include a recommendation either to approve or deny the leave. This recommendation shall include if and how the employee will be replaced and any impact this leave will have on operations and/or the workforce. The Director of Human Resources shall forward the request to the Chief Operating Officer for consideration. The request shall include supporting documentation and a recommendation by the Director of Human Resources either to approve or deny the leave. The Chief Operating Officer shall either approve or deny the leave and send written notification to the Director of Human Resources. The Director of Human Resources shall send written notification of the determination to the employee with a copy to the employee's immediate supervisor and Department Head.

If an employee applies for Sick and Accident or Workers' Compensation and the application is denied, the employee may elect to use either available vacation leave, sick leave, or they may submit a request for consideration of personal leave to the Director of Human Resources for the period of absence.

Continuous leaves of more than five (5) days shall be counted on a calendar day basis and may affect the employee's medical benefit coverage. It is the employee's responsibility to contact the Human Resources Department regarding continuation of medical benefits for leaves that are more than five (5) consecutive days as this is an unpaid leave and does not protect the employee's right to continue employer paid medical benefits.

Guidelines for Approving Personal Leave:

1. All available leave should be exhausted before considering Personal Leave.
2. The absence shall not exceed ninety (90) days in duration, unless specifically extended by the COO based on the employee's circumstance.
3. The reason for the absence cannot be for any form of incarceration, including without limitation, absences due to house arrest or community service.
4. The reason for the absence cannot be for the purpose of engaging in secondary employment or to pursue a postsecondary or other degree.

5. The employee's past leave usage may be considered when reviewing the request.
6. The requested absence will not interfere with the Commission's ability to maintain efficient operations.
7. The employee may be asked to justify the exceptional nature of the request.
8. Exact reasons for approving the absence will vary; however, consideration should be given to at least the following reasons:
 - a. Vacations for a new employee when scheduled prior to receiving an employment offer from the Commission.
 - b. Unforeseen medical emergencies (medical documentation to support the request is required).
 - c. Other reasons as determined by the Commission.

Employees who are denied personal leave, due to operational reasons (such as incurring overtime) where it is not practical to approve leave without pay, may request to use available sick or vacation time. Supervisors may grant paid leave if they can still maintain operations including use of overtime.

If an employee fails to comply with the policy, is not on approved leave, or fails to return to work as scheduled at the expiration of the leave, fails to request an extension of such leave within the time period stated on his/her approval letter, is working elsewhere while on leave or falsifies his/her personal leave request, he/she may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

For Commission employees covered under a Collective Bargaining Agreement, this policy will be applied consistent with Article 15 (Leaves of Absence), Section 6.

This Policy Letter supersedes all previous Policy Letters on this subject.