

 PA TURNPIKE COMMISSION POLICY <i>This is a statement of official Pennsylvania Turnpike Policy</i>		NUMBER: 2.12 APPROVAL DATE: 07-01-2003 EFFECTIVE DATE: 07-01-2003 REVISED DATE: 05-02-2023
POLICY SUBJECT: Vacation and Sick Leave Runout to Retirement or Voluntary Separation	RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT: Human Resources	

A. PURPOSE:

This policy provides procedures for the use of Available Vacation Leave and Available Sick Leave (collectively referred to as Available Accrued Leave) prior to a Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission (Commission) employee's retirement date or voluntary resignation date (hereafter Separation Date).

B. SCOPE:

This policy letter applies to employees who voluntarily separate their employment with the Commission and who are vested with the State Employee's Retirement System (SERS). This includes employees who will be vested by the time their Available Accrued Leave is exhausted.

C. GENERAL POLICY:

The Commission may, at its sole discretion, permit a Vested Employee (hereafter known as Employee) to request a date prior to their Separation Date on which they will no longer report to work but will remain actively employed until their Available Accrued Leave expires (hereafter a Leave Runout Period).

An employee may be eligible to use a Leave Runout Period if they have not been terminated from their position or if the employee is not ending Commission employment to accept a new position where they will be contributing to SERS or the Public-School Employees' Retirement System.

A Department Head (DH) may request an employee's Leave Runout Period be used to create a part-time work schedule through an employee's actual Separation Date. This option is only available to meet the needs of the Commission and shall be requested and approved at the sole discretion of the Chief Operating Officer (COO). An employee should either work or use Available Accrued Leave on all days of the Leave Runout Period. The employee may use Accrued Sick Leave during the Leave Runout Period due to illness but cannot use it to extend the Separation Date once that date has been established.

Upon acceptance of the employee's resignation, they will have no rights to return to their position. Their position will be treated as a vacancy and Commission may immediately proceed to fill the position during the employee's Leave Runout Period.

D. DEFINITIONS:

Active Health Benefit Status: Shall mean that the employee will continue to receive the same health benefits, (medical, prescription, dental and vision), as active employees while they remain in compensable status.

Annuitant - reemployment of persons who have previously left Commission service and elected to and will continue to receive a State Employees' Retirement System (SERS) retirement benefit.

Available Accrued Leave: A combination of Available Sick Leave and Available Vacation Leave.

Available Sick Leave: The available balance of Accrued Sick Leave on the last day before the Leave Runout Period begins. Sick leave may only be used for purposes of the employee's own illness.

Available Vacation Leave: The available balance of Accrued Vacation Leave, on the last day before the Leave Runout Period begins.

Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA): An increase to counteract the effects of rising prices in the economy, called inflation.

Department Head (DH): The Chief or Director whose position is graded at highest level over an entire department.

Double Booked Position: When two employees are both in the HRIS system under the same position number so they can both receive compensation. This can only be done when both employees have the same title and pay grade. The employees can, however, have different salaries.

Leave Runout Period: The time between the start of an employee's use of Available Accrued Leave and their Separation Date. This can include a part-time schedule during which an employee must either work or use Available Accrued Leave for all 40 hours in the work week.

Separation Date: The day after the employee's active employment in Compensable Status ends. For purposes of this policy, the day after the employee runs out their Available Accrued Leave.

Vested Employee: Commission employees who have met their Vested Service requirements.

Vested Service: State service as determined as vested through SERS based on an employee's hire date and years of service.

E. PROCEDURES:

At least two weeks prior to separating employment, the employee must submit a written resignation letter to their supervisor requesting a Leave Runout Period. In their resignation letter, the employee may request to use some or all Available Vacation Leave. The employee may also request to use some or all Available Sick Leave for the employee's own health condition.

The employee's supervisor shall forward all requests to their DH for review. If approved, the DH shall forward the request with a Recommendation for Personnel Action (72-52) form to Human Resources (HR). HR will verify the employee's actual Available Accrued Leave and approve or deny the request. Upon approval, Payroll will work with the employee and their supervisor to set a Separation Date. Once a Separation Date is established, it is the employee's final Separation Date and cannot be changed.

For critical and hard to fill positions only, a DH may request a Leave Runout Period to create a part-time work schedule. The employee must remain in compensable status each day of the pay period until the actual Separation Date (e.g., five days working and five vacation leave days during the pay period). Requesting a part-time schedule should be only used for employees that the Commission would normally request the employee return as an Annuitant. This will only be approved on a case-by-case basis by the COO.

The part-time work schedule shall only remain in effect if it is necessary to maintain efficient Commission operations. Should the employee's position be filled, there may no longer be a need for the employee to remain part-time. If the DH determines that the employee working part-time is no longer needed to maintain efficient operations, the employee may use Available Accrued Leave for the remainder of their Leave Runout Period on a full-time basis and work with Payroll to change their Separation Date.

During the Leave Runout Period: (1) retirement deductions will continue to be taken out of the employee's bi-weekly paychecks and SERS service will continue to accrue; (2) the employee will stop accruing leave and will not be eligible for holiday pay; (3) the employee will not be eligible for salary or COLA increases; and (4) the employee will remain in Active Health Benefit Status until the first day of the month following the actual Separation Date.

If the employee is eligible for retiree health benefits, the employee and eligible family members will be placed in retiree health benefit plans on the first of the month following the employee's Separation Date. Employees who are not eligible for retiree health benefits will be offered COBRA continuation coverage at self-pay at that time. The employee's life insurance policy will remain in effect until the last day of the month which includes their Separation Date.

The Commission reserves the right to modify at any time the Vacation and Sick Runout to Retirement policy, including, but not limited to, terminating the program, or making an exception or change based on immediate need to maintain operations.

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