



# WOODS HOLE OCEANOGRAPHIC INSTITUTION INSTITUTION POLICY

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## PAID ABSENCES

### POLICY INFORMATION

**Responsible Member of the Directorate:** Vice President of Finance & Administration  
**Responsible Office:** Human Resources Office  
**Issued:** April 1, 1994  
**Last Revised:** February 16, 2007

### POLICY STATEMENT

The Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution provides payment for absences associated with a variety of personal and professional circumstances. Time away from work must be approved in advance and recorded to protect the interests of both the Institution and its employees.

### REASON FOR POLICY

The Institution wants employees to fully understand their rights to paid time away from work while, at the same time, placing reasonable limits to ensure that business needs are met and that all eligible employees are treated equitably.

### WHO SHOULD BE FAMILIAR WITH THIS POLICY

- Eligible Employees
- Managers, Supervisors, and Administrators
- Human Resources Staff
- Payroll Staff

# PAID ABSENCES

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PAID ABSENCES (CONT'D.)

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Casual Status Employee</b>                         | An employee expected to work less than 40 hours per each pay period worked. All Casual employees are classified as non-exempt.   |
| <b>Exempt Employee</b>                                | An employee who is classified as exempt from the overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).   |
| <b>Health Care Provider</b>                           | A primary care physician or other healthcare professional that helps in identifying, preventing, and/or treating illness or disability.  |
| <b>Long-term Disability (LTD)</b>                     | Salary continuation at 60% for qualified employees whose illness or injury prevents them from working beyond six (6) months.   |
| <b>Non-exempt Employee</b>                            | An employee who is not exempt from the minimum wage and overtime pay provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).  |
| <b>Prorated</b>                                       | To divide or distribute proportionally.  |
| <b>Regular Full-time Employee</b>                     | An employee expected to work no less than eighty (80) hours per pay period for an indefinite period of time, but at least twelve (12) consecutive months.  |
| <b>Regular <math>\frac{3}{4}</math>-time Employee</b> | An employee expected to work at least sixty (60) hours per pay period but less than eighty (80) hours per pay period for an indefinite period of time, but at least twelve (12) consecutive months.  |
| <b>Regular Half-time Employee</b>                     | An employee expected to work at least forty (40) hours per pay period but less than sixty (60) hours per pay period for an indefinite period of time, but at least twelve (12) consecutive months.   |
| <b>Short-term Disability Income (STD)</b>             | Salary continuation for qualified employees who are out of work for more than two (2) consecutive weeks due to illness or injury. The amount of salary continuation is calculated via a formula based on years of service.   |
| <b>Temporary Employee</b>                             | A temporary employee expected to work at least forty (40) hours per pay period with an appointment less than twelve (12) consecutive months. Temporary employees are not eligible for full benefits, but do accrue vacation time, do receive holiday pay, and may charge time to occasional illness. |

**OVERVIEW & PROCEDURES**

**Notice and Maintenance of Records** When there are planned absences, employees are expected to give as much advance notice as possible. For certain absences, such as those associated with vacations and floating holidays, advance approval is required before the absence takes place.

For all paid absences covered by this policy, employees and departments are responsible for maintaining the accuracy of time records.

**Vacation** Regular full-time, ¾-time, half-time, benefits-eligible temporary employees, and temporary employees are eligible to accrue vacation.

Eligible full-time employees earn vacation per pay period in accordance with the following schedule:

| <u>Length of Employment</u>               | <u>Vacation Earned</u> |
|---|------------------------|
| Up to completion of 5 yrs .....           | 16 days per year       |
| Beginning of year 6 through year 19 ..... | 20 days per year       |
| Beginning of year 20 on.....              | 26 days per year       |

Length of employment is all service during which the employee was eligible to earn vacation.

Regular employees working less than eighty (80) hours per pay period, but a minimum of forty (40) hours in a pay period, will earn prorated vacation based on actual hours worked (not including overtime).

Temporary employees will earn vacation equivalent to a regular employee with less than completion of five (5) years service, prorated based on actual hours worked in a pay period (not including overtime).

Members of the Resident Scientific Staff who hold tenured positions, Senior Research Specialists, Principal Engineers and Senior Information Systems Specialists earn vacation at the rate of twenty-six (26) days per year.

Masters and Chief Engineers of Institution vessels and ALVIN Group Expedition Leaders will earn vacation at the rate of twenty-six (26) days per year.

Certain senior administrative personnel, designated by the President and Director, will earn vacation at a rate of twenty (20) or twenty-six (26) days per year. The accrual rate is at the discretion of the President and Director.

All vacation will be paid at the employee's regular rate of pay.

Requests for vacation must be approved in advance by the supervisor. Approval is dependent upon staffing and workload.

Vacation may be coordinated with STD or LTD income benefits. Coordination is up to 100% of the employee's regular rate of pay.

An employee on vacation who incurs an illness or disability may charge the respective time to Occasional Illness. Appropriate documentation from the attending health care provider may be required.

If an Institution Holiday falls within an employee's vacation period, time for that day should be recorded as Holiday.

If an employee is on vacation when the Institution closes due to inclement weather (Emergency Leave), the employee's time off should continue to be reported as vacation.

Vacation may be accrued for up to two years, based on the accrual for the prior fifty-two (52) pay periods.

❖ **Important to Note:** All vacation in excess of this limit will be forfeited at the end of the first pay period in April of each year.

Forfeiture of vacation does not apply to marine crew members or Alvin Operations Group members on WHOI research vessels. Marine crew members and Alvin Operations Group members assigned to WHOI research vessels may request pay in lieu of time off for any accrued vacation. The Vice President of Marine Operations must approve such payment in advance.

It is not the intent of the Institution to allow negative vacation balances to accumulate. However, a negative balance up to 40 hour may be allowed if the employee can reasonably justify the need for this. If an employee terminates with a negative vacation balance, her/his final paycheck will be adjusted at the current rate of pay. If an employee's status changes to Casual with a negative vacation balance, his/her next pay will be adjusted at the current rate of pay.

An employee who leaves the Institution will be paid for accrued, unused vacation to which s/he is entitled. The maximum payment in lieu of vacation is for the vacation earned in the previous 52 pay periods. (This maximum does not apply to marine crew members or Alvin Operations Group members.) Any payment in lieu of vacation will be at the employee's current rate of pay at the time of separation.

Pre-retirement employees may request to use their accrued vacation in conjunction with an impending retirement. Vacation will continue to accrue if the employee returns to work on the last day prior to commencement of retirement benefits. However, if the employee elects to terminate from vacation, there will be no accrual of vacation during this period.

### **Sea and Ice Duty Compensation**

A regular full-time or casual employee of the Institution (other than marine crew members or Alvin Operations Group members) who is a member of a scientific party, will earn Sea and Ice Duty Compensation at the rate of four (4) hours for each seven (7) consecutive days of sea/ice duty while participating in research cruises on WHOI research vessels or vessels from other institutions or at ice camps. Time spent in port prior to ship departure or following ship arrival is not 'at sea' time. An employee joining and/or leaving a vessel at intermediate ports will include the date of reporting on board and/or leaving in the calculation of consecutive days of assignment.

Sea and Ice Duty Compensation that is not paid to the employee may be taken as time off. Any employee who wishes to take this compensation as time off, rather than being paid for it, must check the appropriate box on the pink Overtime Report (or the Report of Cruise Leave and/or Sea Duty) requesting that the compensation be recognized as time off. Otherwise, earned Sea and Ice Duty Compensation will automatically be paid when the Payroll Office receives the report.

- ❖ **Important to Note:** Sea and Ice Duty Compensation can only be earned if the grant or contract supporting the research activity has provided specific funding for such payment.

Any Sea and Ice Duty Compensation being held for time-off will be paid to the employee if it is not taken within six (6) full pay periods after the end of the leg/cruise/trip on which it is earned.

Sea and Ice Duty Compensation will be paid at the earned rate of pay whether paid immediately or at a later date.

If an employee has an available balance of Sea and Ice Duty Compensation which has been held as time-off, he or she must charge absences against this balance prior to using any accrued vacation time. If an employee charges vacation time when he or she has a balance of unused Sea and Ice Duty, Payroll will correct the timecard accordingly. The timecard will be returned to the employee for acknowledgement and initialing.

**Cruise/Ice Leave**

An exempt employee who is a member of a scientific party may earn Cruise/Ice Leave while participating in research cruises on research vessels and/or ice camps.

- ❖ **Important to Note:** Cruise Leave can only be earned if the grant or contract supporting the research activity has provided specific funding for such payment.

Non-exempt employees, Fellows, students, guests, etc., are not eligible for Cruise/Ice Leave. Non-exempt employees are eligible for overtime pay as outlined in the policy for 'Payment for Overtime'.

Cruise/Ice Leave is computed on the basis of one day for each Saturday, Sunday or holiday at sea/ice, traveling, or working in ports other than Woods Hole. This is reduced by equivalent days taken off while in these ports.

Cruise/Ice Leave will be paid to the employee unless the appropriate box is checked on the Cruise/Ice Report requesting time off in lieu of pay. However, if Cruise/Ice Leave is to be taken as time off and is not used within six (6) full pay periods, it will be paid to the employee. All payments will be made at the rate the Leave was earned. Compensation for properly reported and approved Cruise/Ice Leave will be added to the employee's regular earnings on the next regular pay day following receipt by the Payroll Office prior to the payroll cutoff for that pay period.

If an employee has an available balance of Cruise/Ice Leave which has been held as time-off, he or she must charge absences against this balance prior to using any accrued vacation time. If an employee charges vacation time when he or she has a balance of unused Cruise/Ice Leave, Payroll will correct the timecard accordingly. The timecard will be returned to the employee for acknowledgement and initialing.

**Shore Leave**

For information concerning Shore Leave, Marine Crew members should refer to the 'Marine Crew Member Procedures', and members of the Alvin Operations Group should refer to the policy on 'Operational Scientific Services'.

**Sick Leave**

For information on what was formerly designated as Sick Leave, refer to the policy on 'Occasional Illness'.

**Emergency Leave**

The President and Director, Vice Presidents, Department Chairs and Administrative Managers are authorized to grant paid Emergency Leave to regular employees. Emergency leave is in

addition to vacation or Occasional Illness Leave, and will be granted to cover absences associated with either:

- Death in the immediate family or household only
- Inclement weather

To ensure equal treatment for all eligible employees, and consistency among supervisors in granting Emergency Leave, the following categories apply.

Category A (up to 5 days)

Spouse  
Son/Daughter  
Mother/Father  
Brother/Sister  
Step-Mother/Step-Father  
Step-Child

Category B (up to 3 days)

Grandmother/Grandfather  
Mother-/Father-in-law  
Brother-/Sister-in-law  
Daughter-/Son-in-law  
Other relatives residing in the employee's home

In the event the Institution officially closes due to inclement weather, Emergency Leave may be charged for this absence.

Inclement Weather Policy can be found here:

<http://www.who.edu/services/HR/ppp/413.htm>

## **Jury Duty**

A regular employee subpoenaed as a witness or juror in Federal or Commonwealth courts will be granted Jury Duty leave. The following also applies for when subpoenaed as a witness by an official committee or board or a federal or state agency.

Federal: Jurors and witnesses, by statute, receive compensation for each day of attendance. Upon employee submission of a copy of the court summons, the Institution will pay the difference, if any, between the employee's regular salary and the Federal court allowance. While absent for jury duty, if the court duty permits, the employee must report for schedule work on a part-time basis.

Commonwealth: The Institution will pay the difference between the eligible employee's regular salary and the State court allowance. While absent for jury duty the employee must report for work on a part-time basis as court duty permits. Upon receipt, the employee must submit a copy of the juror's certificate of attendance to the Institution. (Certificates are mailed to the juror by the court approximately one week after the first day of service.)

For purpose of State jury service, 'regular' employment includes part-time, temporary, and casual employment, as long as the employee's hours may be determined by a schedule or by work pattern established during the three-month period preceding the term of service of the juror.

Under State statute, a witness in Commonwealth courts receives compensation for each day of attendance. The difference, if any between the State's fee and the employee's regular salary will be paid by the Institution. The employee must report for work on a part-time basis as court duty permits. Upon receipt, the employee must submit appropriate court documentation to the Institution.

In all cases above, the Institution pays the employee's regular salary. When the employee receives payment from the court, s/he must properly endorse the check and present it to the Payroll Office.

The employer copy of the Juror Service Certificate must be received in the Payroll Office no later than one month from the date of service. An employee who is unable to provide confirmation of juror service within this time period must submit a revised time report, charging the absence either to vacation or time without pay.

**Military Leave**

A regular employee who is required to participate in active duty, active duty training, or inactive duty training as a member of a reserve or National Guard organization of the U.S. Armed Forces will be granted Military Leave. During such leave, the employee will be paid for up to 15 days (120 hours, prorated for part-time and half-time employees) of such leave, at her/his regular Institution salary.

**Scholastic Leave**

Regular employees are eligible for Scholastic Leave. The President and Director, a Vice President, a Department Chair, or Administrative Manager may approve a Scholastic Leave for a period not to exceed 30 calendar days. Approval may include expenses such as fees, tuition, living expenses and travel with a stipulated maximum total cost. A Scholastic Leave greater than 30 calendar days must be approved by the President and Director. This leave is to be used for attending seminars and schools or sitting for licenses, where it is deemed to be in the best interest of the Institution.

Approved by:



Susan K. Avery, President and Director

Date: February 19, 2008