

ARTICLE 20

EXCUSED ABSENCE/ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE

SECTION 1

Excused absence (sometimes called "administrative leave") is an absence from duty which is administratively authorized without loss of pay and without charge to leave.

SECTION 2

Polling places throughout the United States are open for extended periods of time on election days. Employees should generally, therefore, not need excused absence to vote. When voting polls are not open, however, for at least three (3) hours before or after an employee's regular hours of work (i.e., not including time earning credit time), the Employer will normally approve an employee's written request for enough time off without charge to leave to report for work three hours after the polls first open and then report for work expeditiously, or leave work three hours early to vote shortly before the polls close, whichever requires the lesser amount of time off. Employees on alternative work schedules will attempt to arrange their schedules to work the maximum number of hours while still being able to vote. The employee's mode of transportation to work and related schedule flexibility will be considered in granting excused absence for voting. If an employee's voting place is beyond normal commuting distances and voting by absentee ballot is not permitted, the employee will normally be granted sufficient time off to make the trip to the voting place to cast a ballot but not to exceed 3 hours.

SECTION 3

- A. With advance supervisory approval, employees will normally be granted excused absence of up to four (4) hours on the day of donating blood during an official Bloodmobile visit to the worksite or other blood donation sites away from the worksite. Additional time may be allowed, if necessary, because of the location of the donation site, the type of donation process, the effects of donation on the physical condition of the donor or other factors as determined by the leave approving official. If the employee is requested by a hospital to provide blood as a special donor, the employee will be given excused absence at a time that the supervisor and the employee mutually agree. In unusual cases, such as electrophoresis, the Employer will grant excused absence up to eight (8) hours, if needed, in the view of appropriate health officials. The employee will notify the Employer as soon as practical that an appointment for any type of blood donation is scheduled.
- B. If the Employer is unable to grant the excused absence under 3A, the Employer will grant the excused absence as soon as practicable but no later than within the next five (5) workdays.

SECTION 4

- A. When it becomes necessary to delay the opening of, or not to open an office because of hazardous weather or other emergency conditions, the Employer, when applicable, will make a reasonable effort to inform employees through appropriate communications media.
- B. If the decision to close the workplace or office occurs during the workday, the notice of specific release will be communicated through supervisory channels.
- C. If hazardous weather or other emergency conditions occur during the workday and an administrative order to close the workplace has not been issued, the Employer may grant excused absence for all or part of the workday if the employee provides the supervisor with acceptable written justification that a reasonable effort was made to get to work, but severe weather or other emergency conditions prevented him or her from doing so. The Employer's decision will be fair and equitable. If the employee has a disability, his or her disability must be taken into account in determining what constitutes a reasonable effort. If the supervisor denies a written request for excused absence, upon request, the denial will be in writing.

SECTION 5

- A. Pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 6327, each employee is entitled to a maximum of seven (7) days of absence per calendar year, without charge to leave to which the employee is otherwise entitled and without any reduction in pay, to serve as a bone-marrow donor, or a maximum of thirty (30) days per year to serve as an organ donor.
- B. Additional leave for this purpose may be authorized in accordance with other leave provisions and charged accordingly.

SECTION 6

Volunteer Work

If workload permits, employees who are rated fully successful and above may be granted up to eight (8) hours of excused absence (administrative leave) per year to volunteer their time to legitimate public service organizations. Time spent in such activities outside an employee's regular working hours is not hours of work. Excused absence for volunteer activities will be limited to those situations in which the employee's absence, as determined by the Employer, is not specifically prohibited by law and meets at least one (1) of the following criteria:

- The absence is directly related to the HHS or Agency mission;
- The absence is officially sponsored or sanctioned by the Secretary of HHS or the Agency Commissioner;

- The absence will clearly enhance the professional development or skills of the employee in his or her current position; or
- The absence is brief and is determined to be in the interest of the Employer. In all cases, the employee must provide acceptable evidence that the time was used for volunteer activities.

SECTION 7

Employees have the responsibility to arrive at work on time. However, infrequent tardiness of less than one (1) hour beyond the employee's start time or the start of core hours may be excused without charge to leave, when the employee provides a reasonable explanation acceptable to the Employer as to why s/he is tardy. The Employer's decision will be fair and equitable.