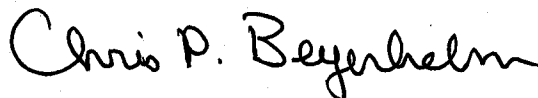


For: FSA and RMA Employees in Washington, DC, Area

Handling Preapproved Leave in the Washington, DC, Area During Federal Office Closures

Approved by: Associate Administrator for Operations and Management



1 Preapproved Leave Practice Update

A Background

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) recently updated the dismissal and emergency procedures for the Washington, DC, area. These procedures are based on the principle that the Federal Government’s vital business **must** continue without compromising the safety of employees and the general public. The update changed the practice associated with not charging preapproved paid leave on a workday when federal offices are closed.

B Purpose

This notice:

- explains the updated, preapproved leave practices during a federal office closure in the Washington, DC, area, and
- provides guidance for employees.

C Labor Management Obligations

Where contract language addresses these policies and procedures for bargaining unit employees, contract language prevails.

D Authorities

Authorities for the policy in this notice are:

- DR 4080-811-002, USDA Telework Program,
- Telework Enhancement Act of 2010, and
- 34-PM available at <http://intranet.fsa.usda.gov/dam/handbooks/handbooks.asp>.

Disposal Date	Distribution
July 1, 2015	All FSA and RMA employees in the Washington, DC, area and all FSA and RMA supervisors; State Offices relay to County Offices

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1 Preapproved Leave Practice Update (Continued)

E Preapproved Excused Absence

In the past, when federal offices were closed, most agency operations were shut down and the federal closure day was considered a nonworkday for affected employees. On a nonworkday, the employee’s preapproved leave was cancelled and the employee received an excused absence, because the office closure was viewed as preventing the employee from working.

Now, when federal offices are **closed** in the Washington, DC, area, an employee on preapproved leave will no longer automatically be allowed to receive an excused absence (administrative leave). The employee’s option will vary, depending on the following:

- type of leave for which the employee was preapproved, and
- whether the employee is telework-approved, that is telework-ready with a telework agreement in place.

OPM’s federal closure operating status announcement will no longer state that all non-emergency employees on preapproved paid leave receive excused absence. An employee on preapproved paid leave will generally remain on leave if the federal office at which the employee works is closed. However, if the employee is scheduled to use sick leave for a medical appointment and that medical appointment is cancelled, the legal basis for the sick leave has been eliminated and the sick leave must be cancelled. In addition, if an employee has scheduled annual leave, that leave may be cancelled if the employee is ready, willing, and able to telework (telework-ready with a telework agreement in place) and agrees to perform telework in lieu of the scheduled leave. (See Decision Matrix below for further guidance.)

Decision Matrix on the Application of the Updated Leave Practice

Pre-Approved Paid Leave on a Day When Federal Offices Are Closed			
Scenario	Employees Required to Telework		Employees NOT Required to Telework
Sick leave for routine doctor appointment. Doctor’s appointment is canceled. As a result, the employee’s sick leave must also be canceled *	Options		Receive excused absence
	Perform Telework	Request annual leave or other time off	
Sick leave for employee illness *	Remains on sick leave. Employee is sick and unable to work.		
Annual Leave **	Remains on annual leave. The employee is not prevented from working and there is no expectation for the employee to perform work.		

Notice PM-2931

1 Preapproved Leave Practice Update (Continued)

E Preapproved Excused Absence (Continued)

Notes: *Sick leave may only be used in accordance with law and regulation. See 5 CFR 630.401.

**Employees on annual leave on a day when federal offices are closed will remain on leave. However, since the administration of leave remains at the discretion of the agency, agency-specific rules concerning when an employee will be permitted to cancel leave remains subject to agency policy in accordance with any applicable collective bargaining agreements or requirements (as consistent with law). For example, agency policies may allow an employee with a telework agreement to cancel annual leave to perform telework.

F Contact

If assistance is needed with telework policy, then contact Yolanda Provost, Chief, Policy and Accountability Branch by either of the following:

- e-mail to yolanda.provost@wdc.usda.gov, or
- telephone at 202-205-9282.