



CITY OF WATAUGA – PERSONNEL, ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCIAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

POLICY TITLE	Sick Leave
INITIAL EFFECTIVE DATE	March 27, 2017
LAST REVISION DATE	January 1, 2023
POLICY NUMBER	8.03

OBJECTIVE This policy provides procedures for administering sick leave.

SCOPE This policy applies to eligible employees. Sick leave eligibility is dependent upon a variety of factors including employee classification.

POLICY

A. Purpose

The intent of sick leave is to prevent loss of income to employees who are absent due to illness or injury that is not job-related.

B. Administrative Guidelines

1. Full-time regular employees are eligible for sick leave. Part-time regular employees are eligible for sick leave. Seasonal, temporary, part-time (working under 20 hours a week) employees are not eligible for sick leave.
2. Sick leave accrual is unlimited. Eligible employees begin to accrue sick leave upon employment.
3. Probationary employees may use accrued sick leave from the first day of employment with supervisor's approval.
4. Employees shall continue to accrue sick leave during absences from work on legal holidays, during sick leave and vacation leave. Sick leave accumulation shall be at the regularly prescribed rate during absence, as though such employee were on duty.
5. Employees on leave without pay, disability leave, family medical leave, workers' compensation injury leave (after period of salary continuation) or receiving donated sick leave who have exhausted all leave shall not accrue sick leave. Sick leave will accrue based on a prorated-basis of the actual hours worked within that month.

6. Sick leave abuse will not be tolerated. Supervisors will counsel employees if abuse is suspected. Continued abuse will result in further disciplinary action up to and including termination.
7. Sick leave may be allowed in case of medical-related appointments, personal illness, physical or mental incapacity of an employee, when it is necessary to care for an ill or incapacitated spouse, child, or for a parent.
8. Employees are expected to schedule health/preventative appointments so that there will be minimal disruption to the work areas. For regularly scheduled appointments, employees are to give the supervisor as much notice as possible for the upcoming appointment.
9. The preferred method of notification is to call the supervisor at their work number. Individual supervisors may approve alternate methods of notification such as email, texting or calling the supervisor's cell phone.
10. Whenever possible, notice of absence due to an illness, injury, or other unexpected reason must be given by the employee to a supervisor within one (1) hour before starting time. The employee shall report on each succeeding day of absence. Failure to give notice may result in the employee being declared absent without leave and subject to disciplinary action.
11. An employee may be required to furnish their supervisor or the City Manager with a statement from an attending licensed physician, as to the employee's ability to perform the essential functions of the employee's job when:
 - a. The employee's safety or ability to work is in question
 - b. The safety or efficiency of the work unit is in question
 - c. There is a question of sick leave abuse
 - d. There is question as to the merits of an employee's claim that their absence was due to illness or injury of the employee or of a family member
 - e. The employee has been absent from work for three (3) work days or longer
12. The Human Resources Department must be notified as soon as an employee is absent three (3) full days. Upon notification, Human Resources will contact the employee to assess the employee's eligibility for Family Medical Leave. **See Policy 8.04 Family Medical Leave Policy**
13. An employee who has been absent because of illness or injury may be required to submit to a physical examination by a licensed physician selected by the City. In such cases, the employee may return to work upon certification by the examining physician that the employee is physically or mentally fit to return to work, or if the employee is certified fit for limited or light duty.

14. An employee who is released by an examining physician to return to regular or light duty and refuses to report for work or perform their assigned duties is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
15. When an employee's accumulated sick leave has been exhausted, unused vacation or compensatory time may be used as sick leave upon request of the employee and approval of the Department Director.
16. Sick Leave cannot be advanced.
17. Sick leave will not be authorized during a disciplinary suspension as a means to supplement pay lost as a direct result of the suspension.
18. If an employee changes status to a status not eligible for sick leave, they will be paid their accumulated sick leave balance at the conclusion of the pay period prior to the status change in accordance with this policy under the terms applicable if the employee were separated from employment.
19. Employees on sick leave may not work a second job even if they have been authorized for outside employment by their Department Director. **See Policy 10.07 Outside Employment**
20. Should an employee transfer to a different hour schedule/shift the employees current sick leave balance will not change. Only the accruals going forward will change based on the effective date of the change.
21. Exceptions to this policy must be approved by the City Manager.

C. Sick Leave Accrual

Eligible regular full-time and regular part-time employees accrue sick leave according to their scheduled work hours in monthly accrual amounts.

Scheduled Hours	Monthly Accrual Amount
20-29 per week	4.5 Hrs
40 per week	10 Hrs
Police Officers (12 Hour Shift) Firefighters (24 Hour Shift)	15 Hrs

D. Sick Leave Pay at Separation

1. Employees may not use accrued sick leave during the last two (2) weeks of employment without prior approval from the Department Director.
2. Employees (non-Civil Service): Accumulated sick leave is not compensable upon separation from the City.
3. The City Manager may, at the City's option, implement a sick leave buy back program for employees who have accrued at least 80 hours of vacation leave and 80 hours of sick leave.
4. Civil Service Employees: Upon separation from employment, Civil Service employees shall receive in a lump-sum payment for the full amount of the person's salary for accumulated sick leave for up to but not more than 90 days of accumulated sick leave. The lump-sum payment is computed by compensating the employee for the accumulated time at the highest permanent pay classification for which the person was eligible during the last six months of employment. Probationary employees may accumulate sick leave but will not receive payment for accumulated sick leave upon separation from employment. Firefighters on 24-hour shifts will be paid at the 12 hour rate in accordance with their leave accrual.
5. Upon separating employment with the City, all sick leave credits shall be canceled and shall not be reinstated should the employee later be re-employed.

E. Sick Time Donation

1. Sick leave may be contributed from one employee to another for illness, injury, exposure to contagious disease, or routine medical or dental appointments which cannot reasonably be scheduled outside of working hours.
2. Sick leave may not be transferred from one employee to another within (fourteen) 14 days of separation from employment of either employee, whether by retirement or discharge.
3. Employees must have accrued over 80 hours of sick leave to be eligible to transfer hours to another employee, and employees opting to transfer must have a balance of 80 hours left in their sick leave after the transfer.
4. The Human Resources Department will notify all employees when a request is made for Sick Leave and will provide the donation form.
5. The donations will not be processed until the eligible recipient employee has used all hours of their accumulated leave. The employee will only be given the hours for each payroll period as needed. Hours donated must be used when donated and may not be

accumulated for future use. Donated hours will be deducted in equal amounts as needed. Only one request for donations is allowed per occurrence.

F. Well Pay Incentive Program

1. The Well Pay Incentive Program is designed to reward employees for good attendance by annually converting a portion of their unused sick leave into Well Pay hours.
2. In order to be eligible to participate in the Well Pay Incentive Program, employees must:
 - a. Be eligible to accrue sick leave;
 - b. Have completed 12 months of employment;
 - c. Not have disciplinary suspensions or received a final warning in the preceding 12 months;
 - d. Have not received any sick leave donations within the preceding 12 months; and
 - e. Have at least 80 hours of sick leave remaining after the conversion.
3. In order to participate in the Well Pay Incentive Program, employees must meet one (1) of the following requirements:
 - a. Employee must have used no more than five (5) days of sick leave during the period of January 1 through December 31 of the prior year. Sick leave used during approved FMLA does not count. Only full day absences will be used in the calculation of sick day absences for this purpose, not partial days; OR
 - b. Employee has the equivalent balance of 60 days of sick leave available. Days are calculated based on the employees' scheduled work hours and leave accrual rate.
4. Well Pay Leave will be issued in February of each year.
5. Eligible employees must submit the Well Pay Conversion Form to Human Resources in the specified time annually. *See Well Pay Conversion Form.*
6. Employees will have from February 1 of the conversion calendar year until January 31 of the following calendar year to use Well Pay hours. Upon written request from the employee, the City Manager may extend the usage period for up to 90 days based on operational needs.
7. The accumulation and use of Well Pay hours do not affect the employee's vacation usage requirement. Employees are required to use vacation as required by **Policy 8.02 Vacation Leave.**
8. Well Pay Hours are not paid upon separation of employment.
9. Once sick hours are converted to Well Pay Hours they cannot be changed.

10. Well Pay Hours are intended to provide time away from the work environment to pursue activities that promote the well-being of the employee and use must be approved by the employee's supervisor.

11. Sick Leave will converted to Well Pay Leave based on the following:

Eligible Sick Hours For Conversion	Well Pay Hours Received after Conversion
80 (10 Days)	40 (5 Days)
40 (5 Days)	20 (2.5 Days)



Well Pay Conversion Form

Employee: _____

Department: _____

I have read and understand the City of Watauga policy *Well Pay Incentive Program* found in Policy 8.03 Sick Leave, Section F.

- I meet all of the following eligibility requirements: I am eligible to accrue sick leave; I have completed 12 months of employment; I have not had disciplinary suspensions or received a final warning in the preceding 12 months; I have not received any sick leave donations within the preceding 12 months; and I will have at least 80 hours of sick leave remaining after the conversion.
- I am eligible to participate in the Well Pay Incentive Program because: (check all that apply)
 I have used five (5) days or less of sick leave during the period of January 1 through December 31 of the prior year. Sick leave used during approved FMLA does not count. Only full day absences will be used in the calculation of sick day absences for this purpose, not partial days.
 I have the equivalent balance of 60 days of sick leave available. Days are calculated based on the employees' scheduled work hours and leave accrual rate.
- I understand that I will have from February 1 to January 31 to use Well Pay hours.
- I understand that the accumulation and use of Well Pay hours do not affect my employee's vacation usage requirement per Policy 8.02 Vacation Leave.
- I understand Well Pay Hours are not paid upon separation of employment.
- I understand once sick hours are converted to Well Pay Hours they cannot be changed.
- I understand Well Pay Hours are intended to provide time away from the work environment to pursue activities that promote the well-being of the employee and use must be approved by the employee's supervisor.

Check One:

I would like to convert 80 of my Sick Hours (10 days) to 40 Well Pay Hours (5 Days)

I would like to convert 40 of my Sick Hours (5 Days) to 20 Well Pay Hours (2.5 Days)

Employee's Signature

Date

INTERNAL USE ONLY

Date form was received: _____

Number of Sick Hours used between January 1 and December 31: _____

Number of Sick Hours converted to Well Pay Hours: _____

Human Resources Authorization

Date