

# VACATION LEAVE POLICY



**Policy Title:** Vacation Leave

**Effective Date:** August 1, 2017

**Policy Number:** 4.01

**Replaces Policy Number:** 104-01; 102-05

**Authorization:** Grand Forks County Commission

**Approval Date:** August 1, 2017

## POLICY STATEMENT

Vacation Leave is a benefit provided by Grand Forks County to eligible employees. This benefit provides opportunities for employees to use accrued Vacation Leave to take time off from work to rest, relax, and attend to personal matters without loss of compensation or benefits and to maintain a healthy balance between personal life and work-related obligations.

## RATIONALE

To establish guidelines for the administration of the Vacation Leave benefit.

## APPLIES TO

All eligible employees, who regularly work an average of at least 20 hours per week. Elected officials, temporary/seasonal employees, and employees who regularly work *less* than an average of 20 hour per week are not eligible to accrue Vacation Leave.

Positions in Social Services follow the North Dakota Administrative guidelines regarding Vacation (Annual) Leave.

## DEFINITIONS

**Eligible Employee:** Employees who work an average of at least 20 hours per week/1,040 hours per year.

**Temporary/Seasonal:** Employees who are expected to remain in a position only for a certain amount of time.

**Active Pay Status:** Employees who are at work or on approved leave with pay, such as vacation or sick leave.

**Inactive Pay Status:** Employees who are not receiving regular pay for hours worked.

**Exempt:** Employee not eligible to be paid overtime.

**Non-Exempt:** Employees are eligible to be paid for overtime hours worked.

**Business Needs:** What is needed to maintain optimal productivity, performance, and service levels.

**Employee Assistance Program (EAP):** A problem assessment and resource referral service for employees and immediate family members.

## GUIDELINES

### ACCRUAL OF VACATION LEAVE

Eligible employees accrue Vacation Leave from the day of hire. Vacation leave is accrued at the completion of each month based on actual hours paid. Regular part-time employees shall earn such leave on a pro-rated basis.

Vacation Leave does not accrue when an employee is on an inactive pay status.

Grand Forks County will not accept any Vacation Leave that a new employee accrued when employed by another county, city, or state department.

**Annual Vacation Leave for regular full-time employees shall be accrued in accordance with the following schedule:**

Years of Service	Hours per Month	Days per Year
0 - 3 Years (0-36 months)	Up to 8 hours	Up to 12 days
4 - 7 Years (37-84 months)	Up to 10 hours	Up to 15 days
8 - 12 Years (85-144 months)	Up to 12 hours	Up to 18 days
13 - 18 Years (145-215 months)	Up to 14 hours	Up to 21 days
Over 18 Years (216 months +)	Up to 16 hours	Up to 24 days

Employees are strongly encouraged to take earned Vacation Leave during the year that accrues. Employees are allowed to carry over a maximum of 240 hours of accrued Vacation Leave to the next calendar year.

- Vacation Leave earned in excess of 240 hours must be used in the calendar year it is earned.
- Employees who exceed 240 hours on December 31 will lose the excess hours.
- Exceptions require Department Head, with Human Resources consultation, prior to December 31<sup>st</sup>, and if necessary review with the Administrative Committee.

### **USE AND PAYMENT OF VACATION LEAVE**

Vacation Leave is calculated on the employee's base rate at the time of the absence. Employees may request/use Vacation Leave up to, but not to exceed, the number of hours they are scheduled to work. Vacation Leave does not include shift differential, incentive pay, bonuses, or other special forms of compensation and not considered hours worked for purposes of determining overtime.

Time-off without pay for regularly scheduled work hours is not permitted if the employee has Vacation Leave balance; unless the employee is on Military Leave or on non-job related Witness Leave. Employees on Military Leave or non-job related Witness Leave have an option of retaining their Vacation Leave balance.

A non-exempt employee who does not work all their regularly scheduled hours during a pay period is required to use Vacation Leave to reach their normal scheduled hours; unless the reason for the reduction in hours is due to lack of work, in which case the use of Vacation Leave is at the option of the employee.

When an employee takes Vacation Leave that is not approved, the absence will be designated as unauthorized and may be subjected to corrective action.

Extenuating circumstances will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the Department Head and consultation with Human Resources.

### **SCHEDULING**

Vacation Leave shall be scheduled in advance by the employee whenever possible, and use is subject to approval by the Department Head or their designee. It is the responsibility of the employee to provide their supervisor or Department Head with reasonable notice.

Department Heads or their designee should attempt to approve an employee's request for Vacation Leave, provided the County's operations are not adversely affected by the time off request; however, they have the authority to approve or deny the use of Vacation Leave for any period of absence unrelated to illness or injury. The existence of Vacation Leave shall not be a presumption of approval of its use.

## MINIMUM USAGE

For non-exempt employees, Vacation Leave is used in 15 minutes increments.

Exempt employees, Vacation Leave is used in full day increments. (8, 10, or 12 hours) However, if Vacation Leave is used in lieu of Sick Leave, Vacation Leave may be used in one (1) hour increments.

## BORROWING

Vacation Leave pay advances are not permitted. Hours earned in a month will be available for use in the following month. Requesting leave in the same period it is earned could result in an unauthorized leave without pay.

## PAY IN LIEU OF VACATION

Vacation Leave payouts during active employment is not permitted.

## SEPARATION OF EMPLOYMENT

Employees separating from employment with the County shall be paid for the entire balance of Vacation Leave. Accrued but unused Vacation Leave will be paid with the next regularly scheduled semi-monthly paycheck, in one lump sum, at the employee's current rate.

Vacation Leave shall not be used to extend an employee's actual date of separation and the employee's last day of employment may not be Vacation Leave.

In the event of an Employee's death, the Vacation Leave payout will be made to the personal representative of the estate.

## ROLES

Department Head or designee are responsible for ensuring that vacation time is accrued and used in accordance with this policy.

Employees are responsible for requesting and reporting their vacation time.

Payroll will record and track all vacation through the County's Payroll system.

*This policy is intended as a guideline to assist in the consistent application of Grand Forks County policies and procedures for employees. The policy does not create a contract implied or expressed with any Grand Forks County employees. Grand Forks County reserves the right to modify this policy in whole or in part, at any time, in its sole discretion. This policy will be reviewed no less than every three years, unless required by Federal, State, or Local law.*

## RESOURCES

Contact Human Resources if you have any questions or if you would like additional information about this policy.

## FORMS

*Time Off Request and Payment Form*

## RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Sick Leave  
Attendance Policy  
Family and Medical Leave Act  
Personal Leave of Absence  
Employee Assistance Program