



LAC LA BICHE COUNTY PROCEDURE

TITLE: Compassionate/Emergency Leave Standard
Operating Procedure

PROCEDURE NO: CS-03-016-08

SPECIAL NOTES/CROSS REFERENCE: POLICY CS-03-016 AMENDMENT DATE:

1.0 Definitions

Dependant: any parent, spouse, partner, child, or other individual living as part of an employee's family for whom that employee is the primary caregiver. This can include any person who relies on an employee for personal assistance or care.

Family: any living arrangement or cohabitation within the employee's home with other persons, including children and unmarried and/or same-sex partners. Family also includes grandparents, aunts, uncles, first cousins, nieces, nephews, foster children, foster parents, foster brothers, foster sisters, step-parents, step-children, step-brothers, and step-sisters. This definition does not include tenants, lodgers, or boarders who live in the employee's home.

Emergency Leave: any serious situation requiring the immediate attention of an employee (e.g. illness of a dependent, automobile accident, disaster involving the employee's property, etc.).

Compassionate Leave: a family bereavement or the serious sudden injury of a family member requiring the immediate presence of the employee. This may also include a sudden breakdown of normal caregiver arrangements where no immediate solution is available.

2.0 General Guidelines

The following statements set forth all procedures for granting compassionate and emergency leave to employees:

Paid emergency or compassionate leave will normally be authorized to cover the duration of the initial situation. However, the County understands that some situations may require greater time to remedy the situation. Generally, it is up to the supervisor's discretion to determine the length of the extended leave, as well as whether the leave will be paid or unpaid. In certain circumstances, the employee may use a combination of paid leave, unpaid leave, annual vacation time, accrued over time or parental leave (if applicable).

Emergency or compassionate leave shall have no impact on an employee's current salary and/or benefits. Performance objectives and goals for the employee will be adjusted so that he or she will not be penalized for being absent.

Employees are legally protected from dismissal, termination, selection for redundancy, or any other detriment to employment for making appropriate and authorized use of this policy and SOP.

Employees may be authorized unpaid emergency leave under provincial legislation.

Leave will be authorized for serious illness or injury of a family member, (e.g. any bodily threat deemed grave, critical, or life-threatening), including sudden injuries (e.g. automobile accident) or even less serious illnesses or injuries of family members wherein the absence of the employee would result in great personal hardship for the immediate family.

Emergency or compassionate leave is not intended for personal employee illnesses or for scheduled doctor/dentist/other health practitioner visits – all routine wellness visits must defer to the County’s Sick Leave Policy and SOP.

Emergency or compassionate leave for dependants is not intended to be used for taking or accompanying dependants to planned routine wellness visits (i.e. flu shot visits to the hospital, dental appointments, etc.). If the employee knows in advance that a dependant will be admitted to hospital, the employee must make alternated working arrangements. In these circumstances, an employee may request holiday leave, unpaid leave or Special Leave (if applicable).

At the discretion of the County, authorized unpaid additional leave for up to eight (8) working weeks, subject to operational requirements, may be granted when extensive time is needed to care for an ill dependant or family member, and the employee’s domestic responsibilities increase greatly. In situations such as these, it may be possible to grant the employee part-time hours for a defined period.

Situations may arise that are not addressed by the SOP statements above. These uncovered situations will be addressed sympathetically by Lac La Biche County on a case-by-case basis.

3.0 Application for Leave

Employees must inform their supervisors immediately once they know that emergency or compassionate leave is required.

The employee shall inform his or her supervisor of the situation at hand, and how much leave will likely be required to address the situation.

The employee will also advise his or her supervisor and the Human Resources department of any potential longer-term implications as soon as they make themselves evident.

Supervisors will listen to requests sensitively and diplomatically, and then make a sound decision as to whether paid or unpaid leave is warranted. The decision will be made using the “Two-Up” approval process, without delay.

In deciding on what type of leave to approve (e.g. paid or unpaid, a combination of the two with vacation leave, etc.), supervisors should consider if the situation is exceptional, if operational needs can still be met, the amount of emergency or compassionate leave used by the employee in the last twelve (12) months, and whether or not alternative working arrangements can be made with the employee.

Supervisors should exercise discretion when inquiring about type of leave, especially where bereavement is concerned. In some cases, the supervisor should wait until the employee returns from a funeral before discussing leave.

There will likely be circumstances where the employee contacts his or her supervisor on extremely short notice to explain that they are not able to attend work that day because of a crisis. Again, the supervisor should use their discretion and may want to wait until the employee returns before discussing leave.

Both the employee and the supervisor will agree to the type and extent of leave, confirm this agreement in writing, and will each sign the document. The agreement shall be forwarded to the Human Resources and payroll departments.

Human Resources can be contacted at any time for assistance with this policy and SOP, including clarifying which type of leave best suits the employee circumstances.

“Original Signed”
Chief Administrative Officer

November 8, 2013
Date