



# SEASONAL LEAVES OF ABSENCE

When the workload of a department is such that the duties and responsibilities of a position diminish and there is a lack of work to keep an employee(s) busy, a seasonal leave of absence may be in order. This may be a full leave or a partial leave of absence, depending on the department's needs. A seasonal leave of absence is not considered a break in service.

HR408 Leave of Absence policy addresses a seasonal leave of absence as follows:

“Employees in Housing, Food Services or similar units which periodically and temporarily close down or reduce the extent of their operation for specific periods of time not in excess of three (3) months may be granted a leave of absence during these periods when it is agreed that the employees will return to work at the earliest date their services are required. Leaves for temporary close down may not be extended beyond the period of three (3) months.”



## An Employee's Responsibility

An employee is responsible for paying his/her portion of benefit costs during the seasonal leave of absence and the University continues to pay its portion.

Employees on a seasonal leave of absence may elect to remain in “pay” status by charging the leave to accrued leave balances (vacation/personal days); if any. The employee can elect to have enough of his/her vacation and/or personal days paid out during this leave time to cover the cost of benefits, since benefits continue during this leave period. The employee also has the ability to take leave without pay and save their accrued vacation and personal days for future use. These are all options for an employee to consider.

Human Resource Services has worked out an arrangement with the Missouri Credit Union whereby employees can, via payroll deduction, set aside money into an account to access and pay for benefits costs and/or to provide income relief during the seasonal leave.

## Impact on Benefits

An employee who is placed on a seasonal leave of absence retains his/her benefits during this leave as follows:

- ◆ The period of the seasonal leave of absence counts toward vesting and service credit (up to 3 months) in the University retirement plan.
- ◆ During the leave period an employee is eligible to continue participation in the University of Missouri's staff benefit program (medical, dental, life, accidental death and long-term disability).
- ◆ Employees are granted personal days during the leave of absence. However, employees may not use personal days during the leave of absence and all unused personal days are lost at the end of the anniversary year if the employee is on leave of absence.
- ◆ Employees do not receive pay for holidays falling during an unpaid leave of absence.
- ◆ While the period of the leave of absence is counted as length of service in computing vacation accrual rates, employees do not accumulate vacation or sick leave during the leave of absence.

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## Frequently Asked Questions

*Are employees on leave due to a temporary shutdown (seasonal leave) required to exhaust vacation?*

No. A seasonal leave is at the employer's discretion, so employees do not have to exhaust accrued vacation. However, an employee may, at his/her discretion, access accrued vacation leave in order to make him/her whole in terms of pay.

*Can an employee request a seasonal leave of absence from his/her supervisor?*

Generally, a seasonal leave of absence is employer initiated and based on the needs and workload of the department. An employee may request a seasonal leave of absence, but it is at the department's and supervisor's discretion as to whether a seasonal leave is granted.

*Are employees on a seasonal leave of absence eligible for unemployment compensation?*

Employees may be eligible for unemployment compensation, which is determined on a case-by-case basis. For a final determination, employees should consult with the Missouri Division of Employment Security at (573) 751-9730.

*Can an employee elect not to continue health and welfare benefits as currently enrolled at the time of the seasonal leave?*

An employee may elect to suspend coverage of benefits during the seasonal leave period. The employee MUST notify Faculty and Staff Benefits at 882-2146 of the suspension of benefits before the leave begins, and of restarting the benefits upon return from the leave of absence.

*If an employee is on a seasonal leave of absence, is s/he eligible to work on campus?*

Yes, an employee is eligible to work in a non benefit-eligible temporary job during this seasonal leave of absence.

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