



6.06 CATASTROPHIC LEAVE

Purpose

Catastrophic Leave is a leave sharing program intended to provide a means for employees to assist another employee who, because of a personal non-occupational catastrophic illness, or the catastrophic illness of a family member, will be in leave without pay status for a minimum of 10 consecutive working days.

Employees will be allowed to donate or receive accrued vacation hours in accordance with this rule.

Catastrophic Illness Definition

A catastrophic illness of an employee is any non-occupational illness, injury or physical or mental condition of such serious nature as to require long-term absence from work. Catastrophic illness of a family member shall be defined as those illnesses, injuries, or physical or mental conditions which are of such serious nature as to require long term and/or full time care by the employee. Family members are defined as the employee's spouse/domestic partner, parent, parent-in-law, child, or other person for whom the employee is legal guardian. Chronic illnesses or injuries which result in intermittent absences from work may be considered catastrophic however eligibility for catastrophic leave under these circumstances is determined on a case by case basis.

Eligibility to Receive Catastrophic Leave

To be eligible for catastrophic leave the following requirements must be met:

1. The employee must be eligible to receive and use vacation leave in accordance with the Administrative Rule for Vacation.
 2. The employee or family member has a catastrophic illness as defined above.
 3. The employee must exhaust all earned leave credits, including personal leave, vacation, sick leave up to the amount authorized by the administrative rules and compensatory time during a leave of absence due to catastrophic illness, causing the employee to be in a leave without pay status for a minimum of 10 consecutive working days.
 4. An employee who is receiving, or is eligible to receive, salary continuation benefits from city sponsored Long Term Disability (LTD), the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS), the Fire & Police Disability & Retirement Fund (FPDRF), or benefits under Social Security disability is not eligible to receive catastrophic leave. An employee may receive catastrophic leave donations up to the amount necessary to cover any applicable waiting period for the above entitlements.
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5. The recipient employee must file with the appointing authority:
 - A Request for Catastrophic Leave Form.
 - A [Medical Certification](#) Form from their health care provider or the family member's health care provider, verifying catastrophic illness.

The City retains the right to require periodic medical certification to verify eligibility. Periodic updates are typically one per month. Eligibility shall cease when the employee can return to work or the family member is once again able to care for him/her self.

Conditions for Receiving Leave Donations

An employee may receive and use leave donated by another City employee under the following conditions:

1. An employee who receives any donated leave credits must **first** exhaust all earned leave credits, including personal leave, vacation, sick leave up to the amount authorized by the administrative rules and compensatory time.
2. If an employee is otherwise eligible for City sponsored long-term disability benefits, disability benefits from PERS or the FPDRF and/or eligible to receive a disability benefit from the Social Security Administration the employee may receive catastrophic leave donations up to the amount necessary to cover the eligibility waiting period applicable to the employee's coverage.

The employee or their representative shall contact the Benefits Office (823-6130) for questions concerning long term disability coverage. Based on the employee's coverage, the employee or their representative shall contact Risk (823-6123), PERS or the FPDRF, and the Social Security Administration regarding disability benefits.

After the eligibility waiting period, the Catastrophic Leave Coordinator shall confirm whether the employee has been approved for disability benefits. If the employee has been approved for any entitlements, no additional donations may be credited to the employee.

3. Donated leave may not be used to extend employment beyond the point that it would otherwise end by rule or law. For example, if an employee would have otherwise been terminated due to layoff or other reasons, donated leave may not be used to extend employment.
4. An employee who uses donated leave is not on "pay status" and does not accrue personal holidays, vacation, or sick leave benefits nor do they earn pay for holidays.
5. If an employee is otherwise eligible for City-paid health benefits the employee will continue to receive those benefits while receiving donated leave. If not eligible for City-paid health benefits, the employee will be provided a notice of their COBRA continuation rights.

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6. Leave donations requested within the first pay period after an employee has returned to work may be collected and applied retroactively to cover the unpaid status period.
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Limits on Leave Donation

An employee may only receive catastrophic leave donations up to the amount of time the health care provider has indicated the employee will be unable to work. For the care of the employee's family member, catastrophic leave donations may only be received for the amount of time the health care provider has indicated the family member will require long term or full time care by the employee.

If an employee is otherwise eligible for City LTD benefits, disability benefits from PERS or the FPDRF and/or eligible to receive a disability benefit from the Social Security Administration the employee may only receive catastrophic leave donations up to the amount necessary to cover the eligibility waiting period applicable to the employee's coverage, whether or not the employee actually applies for those benefits, or 960 hours, whichever is less. Catastrophic leave is not intended to take the place of available entitlements.

An employee may receive a maximum of 480 hours of donated paid leave at any one time. If the employee exhausts the donated leave before the employee can return to work, the employee may request to receive additional donated leave. At no time may an employee have more than 480 hours of donated leave at his or her disposal nor may an employee receive more than 960 hours of leave in any one year.

Donated Time Not Used

When the recipient employee returns to work, any donated leave which was not used by the recipient will be divided equally between vacation and sick leave and retained by the recipient.

If the recipient employee terminates from city service for any reason, any donated leave hours which were not used by the recipient and were converted to vacation under the above formula will be paid to the recipient or his or her survivors.

Eligibility to Donate

An employee, having a minimum of 6 months of city service, may voluntarily donate vacation leave but is bound by the requirements under the provisions of this administrative rule.

Conditions for Making Leave Donations

An employee may donate leave to another City employee under the following conditions:

1. Donors may donate time which they would otherwise forfeit, except in the month of December, an employee may not donate vacation hours if their excess vacation hours exceed the number of workday hours left in the year.
 2. Donations must be made in increments of whole hours.
 3. Donors must sign a declaration that their donation is voluntary, is intended
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as a gift, and has been made without coercion, compensation or for other consideration.

4. Donations are irrevocable. If the recipient employee returns to work, or terminates employment for any reason, the leave donated to him or her will be converted to vacation and sick leave per the Section on Donated Time Not Used.
 5. An inter-bureau transfer of accrued vacation is allowed.
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Calculating Donated Leave

The dollar value of the donated leave will be calculated by multiplying the donor's hourly rate times the number of hours donated. The product will then be divided by the recipient's hourly rate to arrive at the corresponding number of hours of donated leave available for use by the recipient employee.

Solicitation of Donations

Donations may be solicited by the recipient employee or on his or her behalf by coworkers or their union representatives. The employing bureau may, at the recipient employee's request, notify bureau employees that the recipient employee is eligible to receive voluntary donations of accrued vacation and compensatory leave, but may not solicit donations on the employee's behalf. The bureau may not release any medical information regarding the recipient employee or his or her family member, unless authorized by the employee or family member.

Employees are prohibited from threatening or coercing other employees concerning any aspect of this rule including, but not limited to, pressuring another employee to donate time or refuse to accept donated time.

Procedure for Requesting Catastrophic Leave

1. Employee submits a completed [Request for Catastrophic Leave form](#) and Medical Certification form to the bureau Catastrophic Leave Coordinator.
 2. The Catastrophic Leave Coordinator completes their portion of the request form and submits forms to the Bureau of Human Resources.
 3. If approved by Human Resources, Human Resources e-mails the approval letter, donation posting and donation form to the Catastrophic Leave Coordinator.
 4. Bureau Catastrophic Leave Coordinator will distribute the posting and donation forms as authorized by the recipient employee.
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Administration

The Bureau of Human Resources is authorized to establish necessary procedures to implement and monitor the program and may modify as necessary the procedures it has established to carry out the intent of the City Council.

This Program is not subject to the grievance and arbitration section of any collective bargaining agreement, nor is it subject to any appeal procedure provided for under the Administrative Rules of the City of Portland or the Portland City Charter. The City of Portland retains the right to change, modify or discontinue the program at any time. If the City chooses to discontinue the program, the recipient members already involved in the program shall be allowed to continue using accrued donated hours unless exhausted, or until no longer necessary. However, no further

contributions beyond the number received by the effective date of discontinuance will be allowed.

Contact Information

Questions about Catastrophic Leave should be directed to Labor/Employee Relations.

Administrative Rule History

Adopted by Council March 6, 2002, Ordinance No. 176302
Effective April 5, 2002
Revised July 28, 2003
Revised July 1, 2004
Revised September 16, 2005
