

School Assistance and Volunteer Service Leave

Application: Classified and "At-Will" employees

POLICY

It is the policy of the Commonwealth to grant employees up to 16 hours of paid leave in any leave year to provide volunteer services through eligible non-profit organizations within or outside their communities. Such service may be provided as a member of a service organization or through authorized school assistance.

§2.2-2821.2 of the Code of Virginia increases from 16 to 24 the number of hours of paid leave in any leave year (in addition to other paid leave) that may be allowed to state employees to serve with a volunteer fire department and rescue squad or auxiliary unit thereof.

Note: This time is not in addition to the 16 hours of paid volunteer service leave to provide other volunteer services or school assistance.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to set forth the Commonwealth's philosophy and administrative guidelines regarding volunteer and school assistance leave and to support the Governor's Commission on National and Community Service which encourages Virginians to dedicate service to others.

AUTHORITY

The Director of the Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM) is responsible for the official interpretation of this policy pursuant to the authority provided § 2.2-1201 of the Code of Virginia. DHRM reserves the right to revise or eliminate this policy as necessary.

The Virginia Personnel Act, Code of Virginia § 2.2-2900 *et. seq.* specifies that agency heads shall be the appointing authorities of their respective agencies and shall establish methods of personnel administration within their agencies.

Agencies may supplement this policy to accommodate specific business needs. Supplemental policies must be consistent with the provisions of DHRM policy and must be communicated to all agency employees.

RELATED POLICIES

Policy 4.17 - Emergency/Disaster Leave

REASONS FOR LEAVE

Leave under this policy may be used for providing volunteer service through volunteering for non-profit organizations or for school assistance as outlined below.

A Volunteer Opportunities

- 1 Volunteer Fire Departments and Rescue Squads - Members of volunteer fire departments and rescue squads, or auxiliary units thereof, shall be granted paid leave of up to 24 hours under this policy in accordance with §2.2-2821.2 of the Code of Virginia.
- 2 Other Volunteer Service Activities - Employees may be granted paid leave under this policy to provide voluntary service as part of an organized service project sponsored by a community, national or other service organization. For example, an employee could be granted volunteer leave to:
 - a deliver meals to the elderly or to needy community citizens through an organization such as Meals on Wheels;
 - b attend non-profit boards and committee meetings (Scouts, Big Brother/Big Sister, Red Cross, etc.);
 - c participate in activities directly related to non-profit fundraising (e.g., set up/take down, registration, answering phones, recruiting/organizing/training volunteers);
 - d do yard work, painting, cleaning, maintenance through a non-profit organization, or;
 - e volunteer for Scouts, Big Brother/Big Sister, or other non-profit organization.

B School Assistance

- 1 Employees with children may be granted paid leave under this policy to:
 - a meet with a teacher or administrator of a public or private preschool, elementary school, middle school, or high school concerning their children, step-children, or children for whom the employee has legal custody; or
 - b attend a school function in which such children are participating.
- 2 Any employee may be granted paid leave under this policy to perform volunteer work approved by any teacher or school administrator to assist a **public** preschool, elementary school, middle school, or high school.

C Home Schooling

Employees may be granted paid leave under this policy to assist in the education of their child (or step-child or child for whom the employee has legal custody) in state-approved home education curricula, including meetings with local school board officials and required field trips.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

A Supervisor's Approval

- 1 Employees must receive approval from their supervisors prior to using volunteer leave. If response to emergency situations as a member of a volunteer fire department or rescue squad will result in tardiness, employees must notify their supervisors according to agency procedures.
- 2 Supervisors may require written verification from an official of the service organization for use of volunteer leave. If the leave is used for school assistance, written verification should be from a school administrator or teacher.

B Scheduling

- 1 Agencies should attempt to approve leave at the time requested by employees, but have discretion to disapprove leave if it would significantly impact agency operations.
- 2 Agencies may determine that it is not possible to release certain employees under this policy, such as employees in direct care or public safety positions, due to staffing requirements. When adequate, capable back-up staff is readily available, or if it is possible to adjust employees' schedules, employees' requests should be granted. If they are unable to grant volunteer leave requests, agencies should inform affected employees as soon as possible after the decision are made.

AMOUNT / AVAILABILITY of LEAVE

A Full-Time Employees

- 1 Volunteer Leave may be used in increments of one hour at a time (or less if the agency's leave system can accommodate it.)
- 2 A maximum of 16 hours of paid leave per leave calendar year will be made available to current employees on January 10 each year and to new employees upon beginning employment.

Note: Employees who are members of a volunteer fire or rescue squad departments *must* be granted an additional 8 hours of paid leave to be used exclusively for the purpose of providing firefighting and rescue services.

B Quasi Full-Time and Part-Time Employees (Q & P)

Hours of paid leave will be made available to Q & P salaried employees in an amount proportionate to the percentage of hours they work in a full 40-hour workweek.

Example: Employees working 32 hours per week are entitled to 12.8 hours (or, in the case of a volunteer firefighter, 19.2 hours) of volunteer leave.

C Duration

- 1 No Carryover - Leave not taken under this policy in a calendar year will not be carried forward to the next year.
- 2 No Payout - There will be no payment for unused volunteer leave upon employees' separation from state service.

GLOSSARY

Eligible Agencies - A public or private nonprofit organization that is representative of a community or a significant segment of a community, and is engaged in meeting human, educational, environmental, or public safety community needs. Excluded is service provided through a church where the only recipients of the service are the constituents of the church (e.g. painting and maintenance of church buildings, yard work, serving on the church Board, etc.).

Note: Activities involving political groups or causes do not qualify for use of this leave.

Pre-School - An early childhood program that serves children for more than nine hours per week, at any time from their birth until their eligibility to enter elementary school. While a preschool program may be home-based, like all other such programs, it must be registered, licensed or certified by the Virginia Department of Social Services, unless it is exempt from licensure under §63.2-1715 of the Code of Virginia.

School - Schools for which this leave may be granted include any public preschool, elementary, middle or high school. This term may include private preschools, elementary, middle or high schools only if the employee has children, step-children or children for whom the employee has custody attending the private school.

School Assistance - Participation in school activities including meeting with teachers or school administrators, attending school functions or performing volunteer work, as described in this policy, which has been approved by a teacher or school administrator.

Service Organizations - Organizations that (1) are community based or that have extensions of their organizations within a community, that (2) provide services through voluntary efforts of citizens in the following ways:

- Relief to physically or mentally challenged persons;

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- Relief to victims of natural disasters or catastrophes (see Policy 4.17, Emergency/Disaster Leave);
- Health services, emergency relief and shelter, transportation and preparation or delivery of meals;
- Other direct health or welfare services for the economically disadvantaged; or
- Community services which assist residents, including child and youth development.
- Examples of eligible organizations include those represented in the Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign, volunteer rescue squads, volunteer fire departments, the American Red Cross and Habitat for Humanity.