




STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
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March 24, 2021

TO: All Appointing Authorities
FROM:  Todd Dowler, Human Resource Director
SUBJECT: COVID-19 Immunization Leave Workforce Guidelines

The State has an interest in reducing the spread of COVID-19 in our workplaces by removing potential barriers in order to further encourage employees to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Receiving the vaccine is voluntary and the department continues to encourage those who are eligible to receive the vaccine, to do so.

As an Appointing Authority, you may authorize reasonable leave for employees to travel and receive the vaccine when it is not provided at the workplace. This leave is only provided during the employees scheduled work time. Employees using leave to travel and receive the vaccine will not be reimbursed for mileage or other expenses.

Below are some questions and answers related to the COVID-19 Immunization leave for your reference:

What is immunization leave?

General government agencies not offering the COVID-19 immunization (vaccine) must permit employees to take a reasonable amount of leave with pay for the employee to travel and receive each dose of the COVID-19 if the vaccine is not offered at the worksite.

Is this leave in addition to the employee's accrued leave?

Yes, this leave is paid leave in addition to the employee's accrued leave.

Can the leave be used for side effects directly attributed to the Covid-19 vaccine?

No, this leave is only for a reasonable amount of time to travel and receive each dose of the vaccine.

Are there other leave types available to employees experiencing side effects from the Covid-19 vaccine?

Employees may use other leave types, including accrued sick leave, vacation in lieu of sick, compensatory time, and exchange time. An employee may also request shared leave or may qualify for FMLA depending on the circumstances.

Can the leave be used for an employee to take a family member to receive the vaccine?

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No, this type of leave is only available for employees to receive the vaccine themselves; however, other leave types may be available depending on the circumstances, including accrued sick leave, vacation in lieu of sick, compensatory time, and exchange time. The employee may also request shared leave or may qualify for FMLA depending on the circumstances.

Is there a new leave code to use for this type of leave?

No. The miscellaneous leave code 9045 should be used.

How much notice should I expect my employee to give me prior to the leave?

Please treat this similarly as other requests for leave.

When is this leave effective?

This leave became effective upon the filing of the emergency rule on March 1, 2021.

Have the unions been notified?

A notice was sent by OFM Labor Relations to the labor unions for contracts bargained by OFM on March 8, 2021.

If you have any questions, please contact your local human resource office.

cc: Human Resource Extended Management