

POLICY STATEMENT

Attendance is an essential aspect of every position of the *Department of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation*. This policy is not intended to supersede university regulations or policies and should be read in conjunction with university regulations, policies and procedures. Unsatisfactory attendance will be dealt with in accordance with University Regulations.

DEFINITIONS:

Work Hours

- a) The minimum workweek for fulltime employees is forty (40) hours. A scheduled workday for a full-time employee will typically include a lunch period and may include rest breaks. Schedules shall be determined by the supervisor.
- b) Employees are expected to adhere to their specified work schedule, report to work on time every scheduled workday, and be at their workstation ready to begin work at the start of their shift.
- c) Non-exempt employees must accurately report actual time worked and must be compensated for all hours worked.
- d) Any modifications to work schedules including overtime, or flex time, should be requested and approved in advance.

Call-in procedure

- a) In the event of unanticipated absences, including sickness or lateness, employees must call and speak directly to their immediate supervisor as soon as possible, but no later than fifteen (15) minutes after the start of their shift.
- b) If the immediate supervisor is unavailable, the employee should contact the main office as defined by area and leave a number where they can be reached. The supervisor may then return the call.
- c) Failure to follow proper call-in procedure will result in appropriate discipline action.

Breaks

The University recognizes that employees work better when they are rested and refreshed.

- a) During each four (4) hours that an employee works, a fifteen (15)-minute rest period is permitted whenever possible. Supervisors should advise employees of particular arrangements for rest breaks in their sections. When taking work breaks, you are requested to do so no earlier than one hour before/after each work period (e.g. work break occurs between 9:00 -11:00 am when working 8:00am -12:00pm).
- b) Rest-periods may not be accumulated for later use (to extend lunch breaks, or arrive late or leave early) and may not be combined to use for longer breaks.
- c) Rest-periods are to be counted as time-worked and there is no need to record the time in the system.

- d) Employees are expected to take their scheduled lunch break at the designated time and for the scheduled duration.
- e) Non-exempt employees are not permitted to work during their lunch breaks and must accurately report the time.

Tardiness

- a) Tardiness is defined as reporting to work late at the beginning of the work shift, leaving early or returning late from a work break or lunch, or leaving work early at the end of the work day, all without approval.
- b) Tardiness will result in unauthorized leave without pay, unless leave with pay is approved by the supervisor for extenuating circumstances.
- c) The university's system of "rounding time" does not excuse tardiness nor apply to beginning or end of the work shift. It only applies to the way leave is reflected in the system.
- d) Excessive tardiness [three (3) or more instances in a thirty (30) day period] will result in appropriate disciplinary action.

Leave Plans:

Vacation

- a) Vacation leave may only be taken after approval is received from the employee's immediate supervisor.
- b) Except for emergencies, employees should submit requests for vacation in advance. Vacation request for more than three days should be submitted at least one week in advance. Requests for one day or less should be submitted at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance.
- c) The granting of vacation leave is at the supervisor's discretion based on departmental needs and workload.
- d) Vacation leave will not be permitted when an employee calls in sick except for Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) qualifying absences. However, when vacation leave has been properly requested and approved, employees may use it for any personal reason including medical appointments.

Sick Leave

- a) Sick leave may be used for an employee's illness, or injury, or exposure to a contagious disease, or medical appointments.
- b) Sick leave may also be used in reasonable amounts for an immediate family member's illness, or injury, or medical appointment or death.
- c) Employees must follow proper departmental call-in procedure to notify their supervisor directly when they are out sick. If the employee is not able to call the supervisor directly

on the first day of the absence, they must do so as soon as possible thereafter. At that time if the illness is expected to be longer than one day the employee should indicate the expected length of the absence. For absences longer than the expected time, the employee must follow call in procedures on the next day, to keep the supervisor informed. The exception is where medical documentation has been submitted informing the supervisor of the duration of the absence.

- d) When possible, employees should try to schedule routine medical appointments for times that are least disruptive to the department. Also, employees should notify and obtain approval from their supervisors prior to scheduling and using leave for routine medical appointments.
- e) Where an employee has exhausted their accrued sick leave, future unscheduled absences may result in leave without pay, unless the absence is FMLA-qualifying (for which accrued vacation leave can be used).
- f) More than three (3) occurrences of sick leave in any 30-day period may be considered excessive. An “occurrence” is defined as a single absence consisting of consecutive time periods. Employees may be required to submit documentation from a health care provider after each occurrence of sick leave if their sick leave usage is considered excessive or develops into an identifiable pattern.
- g) For an occurrence of three (3) or more consecutive workdays, employees may be required to submit a doctor’s note upon their return to work.
- h) Employees who call in sick after they have requested and been denied vacation will be required to submit a doctor’s note.

Compensatory Leave

Employees who have accrued overtime, regular, or special compensatory leave, must use such leave prior to using vacation leave. Employees must request and receive supervisory approval prior to using any type of compensatory leave.

Administrative Leave

An employee may be granted administrative leave for court/jury duty/witness, death in the immediate family or other situations as approved by appropriate university authorities. An employee who is summoned for jury duty should notify their supervisor of the expected absence as soon as possible and submit a copy of the subpoena. Full-time employees may use up to two (2) days of administrative leave for each occurrence of death in their immediate family. The 2-day benefit is prorated for part-time employees. When requested, the employee must provide their supervisor with the name of the deceased and the affiliation with the employee.

Leave Without Pay (LWOP)

Leave without pay will result where employees who have exhausted their accrued leave balance have their supervisor’s approval for their absence. Leave without pay can also be used to make an employee’s FTE whole where an employee with an FMLA qualifying event uses intermittent leave during an extended leave of absence. Leave without pay must be approved in advance by the supervisor.

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

Employees are entitled to up to twelve (12) workweeks or four hundred eighty (480) hours of unpaid leave per fiscal year for absences relating to birth of a child or adoption or foster care; or when an employee or his or her spouse, parent, or child has a serious health condition.

- a) An employee requesting leave under the FMLA must submit a Certification of Health Care Provider form completed by their physician. The form is available online at <http://www.hr.ufl.edu/forms/benefits/healthcarecertification.pdf>.
- b) Employees may use any type of leave towards their FMLA-related absences, however, when overtime compensatory leave is used during FMLA-related absence, it does not count toward the twelve (12) weeks entitlement.
- c) FMLA-related absences must be properly reflected in the system using the appropriate time reporting code.

Conclusion:

Leave is a benefit available for employees to attend to personal needs. Supervisors should inform employees about the importance of good attendance, and the effect of unsatisfactory attendance on coworkers, daily operations, and ultimately the division. The *Department of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation* employees are expected and encouraged to take personal responsibility for their attendance and appropriate use of available leave benefits. Supervisors should make every effort to accommodate leave request that are submitted appropriately and in a timely manner. However, abuse of leave, or failure to report to work as scheduled, or a pattern of unscheduled and/or excessive absences or tardiness will not be tolerated. These constitute unsatisfactory attendance for which appropriate disciplinary action could result. Also, time worked and leave must be accurately entered in the system. Falsification will not be tolerated under any circumstances, and will result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

The *Department of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation* values its employees and their efforts towards achieving the goals and missions of the University. We hope these guidelines will help employees understand the expectations of the University pertaining to attendance and leave usage. Please feel free to discuss any concerns with your supervisor or contact your Employee Relations Satellite office at (352) 392-4777.