

	<b>UNIFIED FIRE AUTHORITY ORGANIZATIONAL MANUAL</b>	
	Affiliation: Human Resources Policies	
	Title: <b>Sick Leave</b> Number: <b>900 - 230</b>	
	Approved: 12/19/2022	By: Fire Chief Dominic Burchett
	Last Reviewed: 12/12/2023	By: Kiley Day

## REFERENCES

[UFA Policy and Procedure – General Human Resources Definitions](#)

[UFA Policy and Procedure – Fitness for Duty Evaluations and Return to Work after Illness or Injury](#)

[UFA Policy and Procedure – Vacation](#)

[UFA Policy and Procedure – Sick Leave Bank](#)

[UFA Policy and Procedure – Separation of Employment –Procedures and Benefits](#)

[UFA Policy and Procedure – Workers’ Compensation](#)

[UFA Policy and Procedure – Vacation and Holiday Scheduling](#)

[UCA 49-16](#)

[Exempt Employee Leave Usage Form](#)

## PURPOSE

All eligible Unified Fire Authority (UFA) employees are provided with compensated sick leave benefits to allow appropriate and necessary time off away from work to recover from an illness, injury, or disability of the employee or to care for an immediate family member. It is essential for employees to build up sufficient sick leave balances to deal with unexpected events and challenges when they occur. Sick leave is considered a privilege and should be used in accordance with this policy.

## POLICY

### 1.0 Eligibility.

- 1.1 All full-time merit, At-Will Staff, and probationary employees accrue and are eligible to use accrued sick leave.

### 2.0 Accumulation of Sick Leave.

- 2.1 Eligible 8-hour (day-staff) firefighter and non-firefighter employees, or At-Will Staff employees, shall accumulate sick leave at the rate of eight (8) hours for each full month worked.
  - 2.1.1 In an effort to attract qualified 8-hour (day-staff) non-firefighter employees with specific skills that are necessary to the UFA, the Fire Chief may authorize up to 40 hours of sick leave to be front loaded into the employee’s leave balance or up to 80 hours for Exempt-at-will employees.

- 2.2 Twenty-four-hour firefighter employees shall accumulate sick leave at the rate of twelve (12) hours for each full month worked.
- 2.3 Unused current and accrued sick leave may be carried forward to succeeding years. However, no more than 640 hours will be carried over from one year to the succeeding year for eligible 8-hour (day-staff) non-firefighter employees. The maximum number of sick leave hours that will be carried over from one year to the succeeding year for firefighter employees will be 960 hours.
- 2.3.1 Employees shall continue to accrue sick leave once they reach their cap of 640 hours for eligible 8-hour (day-staff) non-firefighter employees or 960 hours for firefighter employees. Each year, any hours that the employee has accrued above the established caps of 640 or 960 hours, effective January 1<sup>st</sup>, will be “purchased” by UFA at a rate established by the Board by prior resolution. The amount will be calculated on the March 10<sup>th</sup> payroll and deposited into the employee’s VEBA account, normally within two weeks.
- 2.4 Sick leave shall not be accrued during a period in which an employee has been granted leave without pay.
- 2.5 Employees who use little or no sick leave during the calendar year may choose to have a portion of their unused sick leave converted to additional vacation according to the following formulas:
- Eight-hour (day-staff) firefighter, non-firefighter and At-Will Staff employees:*  
Accrued Credit (maximum of 96 hours) x (multiplied by) 0.3334 - (minus) Used Credit = Converted.
- Twenty-four-hour firefighter employees:*  
Accrued Credit (maximum of 144 hours) x (multiplied by) 0.3334 - (minus) Used Credit = Converted.
- 2.5.1 Prior to February 10th each calendar year, UFA’s payroll department will contact employees by email to let them know if they are eligible for sick leave conversion and the number of hours, they are eligible to convert.
- 2.5.2 Employees will have until February 28th to notify the Payroll Coordinator how many eligible sick leave hours they wish to convert to vacation leave hours.
- 2.5.3 Twenty-four-hour firefighter employees who use little or no sick leave are further eligible for sick leave incentive vacation leave in accordance with UFA Policy and Procedure – Vacation and Holiday Scheduling. There is no requirement to convert sick leave to vacation leave in order to be eligible for this program.

### 3.0 Utilization.

- 3.1 Sick leave may be used to cover an employee's absence from work due to illness, injury, or disability of the employee or immediate family member (see UFA Policy and Procedure – Definitions "*Immediate Family*"). Furthermore, sick leave may be used for parental leave to care for the employee's newborn child within one year of the birth, and in connection with a child's placement with the employee for adoption or foster care as long as it is within one year of the placement.
  - 3.1.1 The Fire Chief, Section Chief or designee will have the responsibility to approve or disapprove sick leave requests and may ask about the general nature of the illness and when the employee expects to return to work and may also require the employee to provide medical clarification or a physician's statement regarding an illness or injury related directly to the employee's absence. Failure by an employee to provide a medical clarification or physician's statement may result in discipline.
- 3.2 Whenever possible, medical, and dental appointments should be arranged during non-working hours. However, in cases where these appointments must take place during regular working hours, the time off may be used as sick leave.
- 3.3 Employees desiring to use sick leave shall report the necessary absence as follows:
  - 3.3.1 24- hour firefighter employees who will be absent from work because of illness or injury, shall notify the Staffing Office, the Operations Chief or designee, as soon as possible but no less than 1 hour prior to the commencement of the scheduled shift, so that changes to the schedule can be made. The employee will confirm the message was received by the Staffing Office, the Operations Chief or designee.
  - 3.3.2 The employee shall also notify the on-duty station Captain/Acting Captain where the employee was scheduled to report for duty before the start of their scheduled shift.
  - 3.3.3 All 8-hour (day-staff) firefighter and non-firefighter employees should notify their immediate supervisor as soon as possible, and no later than one-hour prior to the commencement of their shift.
    - 3.3.3.1 Exempt Merit and At-Will Staff employees will document their sick leave on the electronic timekeeping system and on the Exempt Employee Leave Usage Form, in accordance with UFA Policy and Procedure - Payroll. Documentation and submission of the Leave Usage Form is only required for absences of a full day (typically considered 8-hours) or more.
  - 3.3.4 If the employee is going to be off sick for more than one 24-hour shift for 24-hour firefighter employees, or one 8-hour shift for 8-hour day-staff firefighter and non-firefighter employees, they are required to call in for each shift.

- 3.3.4.1 However, when the employee knows in advance that he/she will be off for more than 2 consecutive 24-hour shifts, or 5 consecutive 8-hour shifts, the employee does not need to call every shift/day but is required to communicate with the Staffing Office, or immediate Supervisor for day-staff employees, as to their work status the first shift of each set or week, depending on their work schedule
- 3.4 Following a lengthy illness, major injury, or significant medical event, or at the conclusion of a light duty assignment, the employee will be required to follow the procedures outlined in UFA Policy and Procedure - Fitness for Duty Evaluations and Return to Work after Illness or Injury.
- 3.5 Employees who become ill while on approved vacation may request sick leave in lieu of vacation.
- 3.6 When utilized, sick leave will be rounded to the nearest quarter hour.
- 3.7 Employees shall not be allowed to use sick leave for any period of time beyond, or in advance of, time already accrued unless approved for Sick Leave Bank hours in accordance with UFA Policy and Procedure - Sick Leave Bank. In the event that this occurs; the Payroll Coordinator may use the employee's accrued comp-time, holiday leave or vacation to cover the absence after approval by the employee's supervisor and will also notify the Division Supervisor/Section Chief or designee that an employee did not have enough accrued sick leave to cover the absence. The Division Supervisor /Section Chief or designee will notify the employee, research the situation, and may issue discipline.
- 3.8 In rare situations, where there are extenuating circumstances beyond the employee's control (i.e., a serious personal or family emergency) that **do not** qualify as sick leave under this policy, the Staffing Office may grant vacation to the employee. Refer to UFA Policy and Procedure-Vacation.
- 3.9 The "donation" of sick leave by UFA employees to another employee is not permitted.
- 3.10 Day-staff employees must not use sick leave hours to exceed the standard work week hours (40 hours). (Example: The employee works M-Th from 07:00 to 17:00 (10 hrs.). If the employee were to take 10 hours of sick leave on Monday and then work 4 additional hours on Friday this would give the employee 4 hours of additional straight time compensation. The employee must reduce their sick leave hours by the number of hours worked on Friday (4) to keep their hours at 40.)
  - 3.10.1 An exception to 3.10 would be call out/back work done outside of the typical work week (Monday – Friday).

#### 4.0 Death

- 4.1 Merit and probationary employees who die will receive payment for sick leave hours accrued, in accordance with UFA Policy and Procedure - Termination of Employment – Procedures and Benefits.

## 5.0 Termination

- 5.1 Employees terminating employment for any other reason than death or retirement will not be compensated for unused sick leave accumulated prior to the termination date.
- 5.2 Employees who have given notice of their intent to terminate employment are still subject to the provisions of this policy.
- 5.3 If an employee requests sick leave after giving notice of their intent to terminate, the employee will be required to provide a medical clarification or a physician's statement regarding an illness or injury related directly to the employee's absence.
- 5.4 At the discretion of the Fire Chief, failure to provide the medical clarification or a physician's statement will result in an employee's sick leave being changed to vacation leave and may result in the employee being ineligible for re-employment.

## 6.0 Retirement.

- 6.1 Employee's retiring pursuant to the provisions of the Utah State Retirement System, as applicable, shall be cashed out in the following manner: Hours up to the established thresholds will be cashed out at twenty-five percent (25%) of their accumulated sick leave at their current daily rate of pay. Any accumulated hours over the established thresholds will be "purchased" at a rate established by the Board in accordance with 3.3.1 and deposited into the employee's VEBA account. Payment for accrued sick leave shall be calculated through the day of termination, by the hourly rate in effect on the day of termination.

**NOTE:** even though only the maximum number of hours may be carried over from one year to the next, it is possible for employees, during the course of the year, to have, and be paid for, balances that reflect more than the 640 or 960 hours threshold.

- 6.1.1 In lieu of, or in addition to, a cash payment, UFA may deposit all or a portion of the cash value of the payment into the employee's VEBA account in accordance with the plan document in effect on the date of retirement.
- 6.1.2 If an employee retires while on light duty in accordance with UFA Policy and Procedure - Fitness for Duty Evaluations and Return to Work After Illness or Injury, the hourly rate used to calculate the pay-out amount shall be converted from an 8-hour rate to a 24-hour rate if the employee held a 24-hour position immediately prior to the light duty assignment.

6.1.3 Employees who have given notice of their intent to retire are still subject to the provisions of this policy.

6.2 Employees who have previously retired with the Utah Retirement System (URS), and subsequently been hired by UFA, will be cashed out in accordance with the provisions of 6.1.

7.0 Workers' Compensation.

7.1 Refer to UFA Policy and Procedure - Workers' Compensation regarding the coordination and use of sick leave involving a Workers' Compensation claim.

Replaces policy dated May 26, 2022