



Whitman County Notice of Leave Policies

April 2025

Per Washington State law, Whitman County must post a description of its leave policies for employee review. This posting contains general information. As a result, the policies herein are guidelines only, not promises of specific treatment in specific situations, and the summary is not intended to be nor should it be construed as a contract, express or implied. For further explanation of leave, please contact the **Whitman County Human Resources Department at (509) 397-6205.**

The leave policies, practices and benefits provided in the County are subject to change, deletion and exception at any time. Decisions regarding interpretation and application of the County's policies and practices are also at the County's discretion. Policy updates will be added to this notice annually.

Some Whitman County employees are covered by bargaining unit agreements. If there is conflicting language between this leave description and the bargaining unit agreement, the current agreement will take precedence.

Whitman County offers the following kinds of leave:

Vacation	Bereavement
Holidays	Leave of Absence
Military	Jury Duty
Sick Leave	Family and Medical Leave
Sick Bank	Compensatory Time
Sick Conversion	Pregnancy Disability Leave
Military Family Leave	Domestic Violence Leave
Emergency Leave	Volunteer Emergency Leave

Vacation/Annual Leave:

Full-time, regular employees who qualify are eligible to accrue annual leave at the rate of four hours of leave for each pay period employed. After 5, 10, 15 and 20 years of service, the monthly accrual increases (contact Human Resources for specific information). Future accrual increases as stated above shall be effective on each employee's rounded hire date. The rounded hire date shall be determined by the date the employee began employment and/or became eligible for annual leave. If the employee began employment and/or became eligible on or before the fifteenth (15) of the month, his/her rounded hire date shall be the first of the month he/she began/became eligible.

If the hire date is after the fifteenth of the month, the employee's rounded hire date will be the first of the month following.

Annual leave is pro-rated for part-time employees who qualify. Employees must be hired to work at least 50% time to be eligible for vacation accruals. Temporary employees do not earn annual leave.

Annual leave is allowed subject to approval by the Department Head, and insofar as consistent with the efficient operation of the department, the person in charge shall endeavor to schedule vacation according to the employee's length of service and choice of dates.

Although annual leave benefits are earned from the rounded date of employment, full and part-time employees, who qualify, may not use the benefit until after the first full pay period following ninety days of eligibility. After termination of employment, the employee is eligible to receive payment for accrued annual leave up to the maximum balance of 216 hours, or up to 240 hours for employees with 20 or more years of service, unless the termination occurs during the probation period. Hours obtained due to the sick leave conversion benefit are not eligible for payout.

Annual leave is accrued until December 31st. A maximum annual leave balance of 216 hours (27 working days), or 240 hours (30 working days) for employees with twenty or more years of service, may be carried over at year-end. Any annual leave over these limits will be automatically forfeited without action on the part of any party.

Holidays:

Whitman County recognizes twelve holidays per year. Regular employees qualify for a holiday if their position is classified at least 50% time and they worked twenty (20) hours per week during the corresponding pay period. The following dates are recognized and observed as paid holidays for all regular full and part-time employees who qualify:

New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, President's Day, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day, Native American Heritage Day, Christmas Day and one Floating Holiday.

Whenever a holiday falls on Sunday, the succeeding Monday is observed as the holiday. Whenever a holiday falls on a Saturday, the preceding Friday shall be observed as a holiday. Each holiday is taken on one calendar day per year.

Part-time employees will be eligible for only those recognized holidays which occur on a day they would normally be scheduled to work, and will be eligible for a floating holiday if they are regularly scheduled to and work twenty (20) or more hours per work week. Part-time employees will be compensated on the basis of the number of hours they would normally have been scheduled to work that day.

Temporary employees are not eligible for holidays.

An employee may select one Floating Holiday during each calendar year provided the employee has been continuously employed by the County for at least 90 days and the number of employees selecting a particular day off does not prevent the County from providing continued public service. This holiday is non-cumulative and non-compensable upon termination.

In accordance with State law, qualifying employees are entitled to two unpaid holidays per calendar year for reasons of faith or conscience or for an organized activity conducted under the auspices of a religious denomination, church, or religious organization. Selection of the dates requires approval with the department head/elected official. Contact Human Resources for further information.

Military Leave:

Military leave is granted as provided by law and in addition to any vacation or sick leave to which the employee is entitled.

Volunteer Emergency Services Personnel Leave:

Personnel also serving as volunteer emergency services are entitled to specific leave in the case of an emergency. Leave parameters are dictated by RCW 49.12.460.

Sick Leave:

Sick leave for full-time employees is accrued at a rate of four hours for each completed pay period. For part-time employees working 50% time or more who qualify, sick leave shall be prorated. See Human Resources for details on eligibility. It can be accumulated to a total of 960 hours. Any excess accrual is lost at the end of each calendar year.

Employees begin accruing on their rounded hire dates. The rounded hire date shall be determined by the date the employee began employment and/or became eligible for annual leave. If the employee began employment and/or became eligible on or before the fifteenth (15) of the month, his/her rounded hire date shall be the first of the month he/she began/became eligible. If the hire date is after the fifteenth of the month, the employee's rounded hire date will be the first of the month following.

Regular employees working less than 50% time and temporary employees earn one hour of sick leave for every forty hours worked.

Employees are not allowed to draw on accumulated sick leave benefits for ninety days after being hired unless they are covered by a union contract that specifies otherwise. Benefits cannot be used or earned during a leave without pay and cannot be used or earned during a suspension without pay. Sick leave may be taken for the following reasons:

1. An illness or injury incapacitating the employee.
2. Exposure to a contagious disease, during which attendance at work would constitute a health threat to other employees or the public.
3. Doctor or dental appointments.
4. Illness or death in the immediate family (see the policy for a definition of "immediate").

5. Death of an immediate family member. Restrictions apply.
6. When the employee's workplace or child's school or place of care has been closed by a public official for a health-related reason; or declaration of emergency by a local, state or federal government.
7. For absences qualifying under the state's Domestic Violence Leave Act.

Sick leave is only to be taken under the conditions outlined in this section and in the full policy. It is not to be used for additional annual leave or to compensate employees for time off the job for any reason. Abuse of sick leave privileges may be reason for disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Employees are responsible to notify their immediate supervisor of an absence due to illness as soon as they become aware of such illness or no later than the beginning of the work shift. Department Heads/Elected Officials may require a certificate of illness from a doctor after three days of absence. Restrictions apply. See the county's sick leave policy.

Four hours of sick leave in excess of 960 may be converted to one hour of vacation. All accrual maximums still apply. Converted hours may not be paid out upon ending employment. See union contracts and county policy for conversion ratio details.

Sick Conversion:

Courthouse Bargaining Unit, Road Bargaining Unit, Solid Waste Bargaining Unit and non-represented employees are allowed a conversion of sick leave to annual leave for all sick leave in excess of nine hundred sixty hours. See county policy and collective bargaining agreements for conversion ratios. Employees cannot accrue more than 216 hours, or for employees with twenty or more years of service, 240 hours of annual leave in any given year. Annual leave, when converted, is not compensable upon an employee's departure from employment.

Sick Leave Bank:

The County has established a sick leave bank for the purpose of assisting employees who have need of additional sick leave due to a serious illness or medical condition. Employees may donate sick leave to an individual or a general donation to the sick leave bank. There are specific rules and guidelines set for each group of employees regarding how much time they must have to contribute, how much time they can contribute and the frequency of contributions. The Commissioners have also established criteria that an employee must meet in order to be granted time from the bank.

Bereavement Leave:

Accrued sick leave up to five days may be used in the event of a death in the immediate family. If the employee requires additional time, annual leave or a leave of absence without pay may be granted at the discretion of the Department Head. See the sick leave policy for a definition of immediate family.

Leave of Absence:

A personal leave of absence is a privilege the County may extend to qualified employees for specific periods of time under certain circumstances.

Leaves of absence may be allowed any full-time or part-time employee for a limited period not to exceed ninety calendar days. Leaves of absence are subject to the approval of the Department Head and the County Commissioners in advance, provided the leave is not a detriment to the department or County. The employee is not required to use accrued sick leave or annual leave for a leave of absence. During a leave of absence without pay, benefits must be paid directly by the employee. Sick, vacation, and service time credits will not be accumulated during this time if the leave is beyond half of the employee's regular service month.

A leave of absence without pay must be requested in writing, in advance stating the reason for the leave and the anticipated date of departure and return. The request shall be received at least thirty days prior to the effective date of leave, except in emergency situations when the thirty days may be waived by the Department Head.

The County reserves the sole discretion and right to grant or deny any leave request.

Jury Duty:

Any employee who is called to jury duty or is subpoenaed to appear as a witness before any court or other public body, in any proceeding in which the employee is not a party of interest in the litigation, shall receive from the County his/her normal rate of pay for the time actually required to be absent from work because of such obligation. However, if such employee shall receive compensation, excluding mileage, for jury duty or as a witness, such compensation received shall be deposited into the appropriate general County fund. Any such absence from duty shall not be considered sick or annual leave.

If an employee is called to jury duty or subpoenaed as a witness in Whitman County and is dismissed prior to the end of the work shift, the employee shall report to work for the remainder of the work shift.

Family Leave (FMLA/PFLA):

The federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and state Paid Family and Medical Leave Act (PFMLA) give eligible employees the right to take unpaid leave, or paid leave in specific circumstances, for a period of up to 12 weeks in any 12 months due to:

- the birth of a child or the placement of a child for adoption or foster care;
- the employee is required to care for a seriously ill relative;
- the employee being unable to do his or her job because of a serious health condition; or
- the employee is preparing for a relative's military pre or post deployment.

Different rules and restrictions apply. Contact Human Resources for further information.

Pregnancy Disability Leave:

Pregnancy disability leave is available for pregnant employees placed on disability rest by their physicians. Contact Human Resources for details regarding eligibility and coordination with other forms of leave.

Military Family Leave:

An employee whose spouse is a member of the United States armed forces, national guard, or reserves who has been notified of an impending call or order to active duty; or who has been deployed; or when the military spouse is on leave from deployment, may have a total of fifteen days of unpaid leave per deployment.

An employee who is the spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin of a covered service member who is recovering from a serious illness or injury sustained in the line of duty while on active duty is entitled to up to 26 weeks of leave in a single 12-month period to care for the service member. This military caregiver leave is available during “a single 12-month period” during which an eligible employee is entitled to a combined total of 26 weeks of all types of FMLA leave. See Human Resources for details and eligibility.

Domestic Violence Leave:

Washington State allows victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking to take reasonable leave from work. Employees may use sick leave or other paid time off, compensatory time, or unpaid leave time. Family members may also take reasonable leave to help a victim obtain needed treatment or services. Family member includes a child, spouse, parent, parent-in-law, grandparent or person with whom the employee is dating. See Human Resources for details and eligibility.

Compensatory Time:

Eligible employees may earn compensatory time instead of paid overtime. For each hour of overtime worked, qualified employees may earn an hour and a half of compensatory time. The maximum compensatory time balance that may be accumulated at year’s end is 48 hours unless otherwise stated in a collective bargaining agreement. Compensatory time must be agreed to by the employee and the supervisor prior to the performance of work.

Temporary Emergency Leave in Response to a Shelter-in-Place/Stay-at-Home Order

Emergency Leave is in response to an official shelter-in-place or stay-at-home order. Employees are paid full wages if they are asked to stay home due to the emergency. The leave ends when the order is stopped. Rules and restrictions apply. See the full policy or contact the Human Resources Department.