

APPROPRIATE USES/APPROVAL OF SICK LEAVE

When and/or for what purposes may I use sick leave, how do I request it, and what codes do I use in WebTADS when sick leave is approved? Do you remember when you could only request/use sick leave when **you** were sick or had a medical appointment? Some of you might not – since the early '90s, the law started changing allowing Federal employees to request and use leave to care for family members and bereavement (Family Friendly Sick Leave Act and Family and Medical Leave Act) -- most recently the definition of a family member for sick leave purposes has been expanded. But of course, to request/use sick leave for some other reason besides you being sick, you have to know what to ask for and how to ask for it.

There is so much information involved with this topic. Here are some brief guidelines which summarize the appropriate uses and how to request sick leave at LaRC.

Sick leave may be requested and should be granted when the employee:

- Has sufficient leave to cover the absence/request and followed the proper leave requesting procedures or provisions of counseled leave restrictions/instructions. **Note:** Employees must request and be approved for leave prior to the beginning of the requested leave. In unforeseen circumstances, the employee must contact the supervisor as soon as possible prior to the absence, but generally within the first two hours of the employee's workday.
- Receives medical, dental, or optical examination or treatment.
- Is incapacitated for the performance of duties by physical or mental illness, injury, pregnancy, or childbirth.
- As determined by health authorities, for absence related to exposure to a communicable disease.
- For adoption purposes.

For the reasons cited above, the employee may request sick leave through WebTADS and record approved absence as 'SL'. Absences greater than 3 days, or for a lesser period when determined necessary by the supervisor, may require a medical certificate or other administratively acceptable evidence.

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- Provides care for a family member who is incapacitated by a medical or mental condition or attends to a family member receiving medical, dental, or optical examination or treatment. **An employee may not use more than 104 hours of sick leave in a leave year for these reasons.** For part-time or uncommon tour of duty employees, the amount of leave that may be granted for this purpose is the amount he/she would normally accrue in a leave year.

For the reasons cited above, the employee may request sick leave through WebTADS and record approved absence as 'FFSL'. Absences greater than 3 days, or for a lesser period when determined necessary by the supervisor, may require a medical certificate or other administratively acceptable evidence.

- Provides care for a family member with a serious health condition. **An employee may not use more than 480 hours (12 weeks) of sick leave in a leave year for this purpose.** For part-time or uncommon tour of duty employees, the maximum amount of sick to be used for this purpose is 12 times the average number of hours in his/her scheduled tour of duty each week.

For the above reason, leave may still be recorded as 'FFSL' OR may invoke an entitlement to sick leave under the FMLA which is coded as 'FMSF' in WebTADS.

To invoke FMLA, the employee must complete/submit a request via the Langley Form 54 along with medical documentation from the family member's physician. The LF 54 can be accessed through LMS.

The main difference between 'FFSL' and FMLA ('FMSF') for caring for a family member with a serious health condition is under 'FFSL' the employee may use up to 480 hours of sick leave within a calendar (leave) year; whereas, under FMLA ('FMSF') the employee may use up to 480 hours within a 12-month period of time beginning with the date the employee invoked FMLA.

- Makes arrangements necessitated by death of a family member or attends the funeral of a family member. **An employee may not use more than 104 hours of sick leave for this purpose.** Time is requested in WebTADS and charged as 'FFSL'. Absences greater than 3 days, or for a lesser period when determined necessary by the supervisor, may require administratively acceptable evidence.
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An employee is entitled to a total of 480 hours (12 weeks) of sick leave for total family care in a leave year. In other words, if an employee used 104 hours of sick leave to care for an ill family member and/or bereavement, and subsequently, the employee needs sick leave to care for a family member with a serious health condition, he/she is entitled to 480 hours of leave minus the 104 hours previously used for other family care reasons.

To summarize, there are several different types of sick leave. Each has a different purpose and is coded differently in WebTADS. Sick leave used for self is 'SL' in WebTADS (unlimited amount of available SL may be requested) **OR** an employee may invoke FMLA and enter the sick leave

code 'FMSS'. Sick leave used for a family member is either 'FFSL' (up to 104 hours for typically non-serious health related issues or up to 480 hours for caring for a family member with a serious health condition) **OR an employee** may invoke FMLA and enter the sick leave code 'FMFS'. Just remember, to invoke FMLA, the employee has to submit through the management chain a completed Langley Form 54 with appropriate medical documentation.

Questions regarding the above may be referred to OHCM, Kate Spruill @ 41808 or Nicole Smith @ 48783. Questions regarding WebTADS should be referred to Michelle Johnson @ 224-4107.