

Vacation Leave Guidelines for Unionized Staff

Purpose

- To ensure consistent and equitable vacation scheduling.
- To maintain a consistent number of regular staff on the work unit at all times.
- To ensure staff receive vacation in accordance with the collective agreements.
- To ensure all approved vacation is taken with a minimum of disruption to patient care.
- To relieve vacation at straight time, not overtime, where relief is required.
- To ensure sufficient vacation relief lines are built into every unit/department or service as appropriate.

Definitions

Hold Back Days To assist staff in obtaining last-minute vacation plans or unexpected time away, they may “hold back” some of their vacation entitlement to book off after annual vacation planning ends.

- **Community, Facilities & Health Science Professionals**
Community (CBA) and Facilities’ (FBA) Subsector and Health Science Professionals’ (HSPBA) employees may retain or “hold back” up to 20% of their vacation entitlement as permitted by the Vacation Guidelines.
- **Nurses** Nurses (NBA) may retain or “hold back” up to 37.5 hours (prorated for part-time staff) of their vacation entitlement as permitted by their collective agreement.

Baseline positions are regular full-time (FT) and regular part-time (PT) positions necessary to provide daily coverage (e.g., daily coverage is 5/4/3).

Block is defined as an uninterrupted number of shifts off on vacation. Any time back at work between vacation periods results in another block and must be submitted as another vacation choice.

Padding is the process where Staffing schedules any additional vacation hours that are accrued above a PT employee’s full-time equivalent (FTE) into their rotation to be paid out, as these hours cannot be taken within a PT employee’s rotation. This does not apply to staff covered under the Nurses’ Bargaining Association (NBA) Provincial Collective Agreement.

Vacation Relief Lines (VRLs) are additional **regular** positions used to replace staff in baseline positions when they go on vacation.

- All nursing units/programs have VRLs that cover at least 80% of the unit’s/program’s vacation.
- Other departments/service areas will have VRLs as appropriate.

Vacation Leave is granted to regular employees based upon the operational requirements of the unit/department/service area and the terms of the collective agreement(s).

Vacation Entitlement is to be taken in full by December 31, except as otherwise specified in the collective agreement(s).

Vacation Carry Over & Pay Out

- There is no vacation carry over for health care support workers covered under the Facilities Subsector collective agreement.

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- There is no vacation carry over for nurses in the NBA except for operational reasons. When this occurs, every effort will be made to reschedule vacation based on a mutually satisfactory date.
- There is no vacation carry over for staff in the Health Science Professionals Bargaining Association (HSPBA) except for operational reasons or as requested by an employee and approved by PHC.
- Concern for the health and wellness of PHC employees precludes the pay out of vacation leave. Vacation is only paid out upon termination or when an employee on sick leave has exhausted all of their sick leave credits and do not have other income replacement such as long-term disability (LTD) or compensation from WorkSafeBC (WSBC). In this case, employees may request their vacation bank paid out; these requests are reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
- Employees on Maternity or Paternity Leave, LTD or workers compensation may take their vacation at the end of their leave prior to their return to work.

Principles of Vacation Scheduling

- Each unit/department/service area has a coordinated plan for vacation coverage in place well in advance that provides appropriate coverage.
- Approximately 15 to 20% of staff in each job category in a unit/department/service area scheduled in a 24-hour period are on vacation at any point in time, unless bed/program closures allow staff to be off without replacement.
- Vacation is scheduled in blocks.
- Other leave requests are considered after third round vacation requests have been approved.

Guidelines

Nurses' Bargaining Association (NBA) Staff

- Vacation should be smoothed throughout the year.
- The selection and posting of approved vacation is to be completed by December 31 of each calendar year;
- Approximately 15 to 20% of staff in each job category in a unit scheduled in a 24-hour period can be on vacation at any point in time, unless bed/program closures allow staff to be off without replacement. For example:
 - If you have one to 10 shifts scheduled in 24-hour period, one to two staff can be off on vacation at a time.
 - If you have 11 to 20 shifts scheduled in a 24-hour period, two to three staff can be off on vacation at a time.
 - If you have 21 to 30 shifts scheduled in a 24-hour period, three to four staff can be off on vacation at a time.
 - The exact number of staff who can be off on vacation at a time depends on the amount of vacation to be given, the ability to replace at regular rates and the requirements of the collective agreement(s).

Health Science Professionals Bargaining Association (HSPBA) Staff

- The Health Science Professionals collective agreement requires that each staff member have the opportunity to have two consecutive weeks off between June and September unless this unduly interrupts the Employer's services.
- Devolved Allied staff (occupational therapists (OT), social workers (SW) and physiotherapists (PT)) vacation requests should be considered collectively (site or program rather than individual unit).

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- The selection of vacation is to be completed by December 31 of each calendar year.

Facilities Bargaining Association (FBA) Staff

- The Facilities Subsector collective agreement requires that 60% of staff have the opportunity to take vacation between June and September.

Vacation Request Process

- Vacation planning begins in the fall of each year.
- In late September, Payroll distributes a vacation entitlement report to all leaders/managers for planning purposes.
- Staff are required to indicate their preferred choices according to established dates.
- Community Bargaining Association (CBA), FBA and HSPBA staff must request 80% to 100% of their vacation entitlement by the deadlines provided by their leader, otherwise Staffing will schedule their vacation.
- Nurses must schedule all hours of their vacation entitlement, with a maximum hold-back of 37.5 hours (prorated for PT staff) by the respective deadlines. Otherwise, vacation will be assigned by the Manager/Staffing.
- Vacation choices are granted according to seniority as per each collective agreement.

Changes to Approved Vacation

- If a staff member's position or rotation changes, every attempt will be made to honour their previously approved vacation.
- Staff may submit incidental requests ("hold-back" days) for vacation during the calendar year. Requests will be considered based on the operational requirements of the unit/department including the number of relief staff available to backfill vacation at regular rates.
- Changes to previously approved vacation will be considered in exceptional circumstances and by mutual agreement only.

Collective Agreement Articles

- Nurses Bargaining Association – Article 45 – Leave – Vacation
- Health Sciences Professional Bargaining Association – Article 23 – Leave – Vacation
- Facilities Bargaining Association – Article 28 – Vacations
- Community Bargaining Association – Article 18 – Vacation Entitlement