

FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE (FMLA) POLICY

A. General Provisions

Under this policy, The Town of Hopkinton will grant up to 12 weeks (or up to 26 weeks of military caregiver leave to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness) during a 12-month period to eligible employees. The leave may be paid, unpaid or a combination of paid and unpaid leave, depending on the circumstances of the leave and as specified in this policy and policies regarding vacation time, sick time and personal time usage. A separate sheet detailing the policy is provided each year by Human Resources.

B. Eligibility

To qualify to take family or medical leave under this policy, the employee must meet all of the following conditions:

- 1) The employee must have worked for the Town for 12 months or 52 weeks. The 12 months or 52 weeks need not have been consecutive. Separate periods of employment will be counted, provided that the break in service does not exceed seven years. Separate periods of employment will be counted if the break in service exceeds seven years due to National Guard or Reserve military service obligations or when there is a written agreement, including a collective bargaining agreement, stating the employer's intention to rehire the employee after the service break.
- 2) The employee must have worked at least 1,250 hours during the 12-month period immediately before the date when the leave is requested to commence. The FLSA does not include time spent on paid or unpaid leave as hours worked. Consequently, these hours of leave should not be counted in determining the 1,250 hours eligibility test for an employee under FMLA.

C. Type of Leave Covered

To qualify as FMLA leave under this policy, the employee must be taking leave for one of the reasons listed below:

- 1) *The birth of a child and in order to care for that child.*
- 2) *The placement of a child for adoption or foster care and to care for the newly placed child.*
- 3) *To care for a spouse, child or parent with a serious health condition (described below).*
- 4) *The serious health condition (described below) of the employee.*

A serious health condition is defined as a condition that requires inpatient care at a hospital, hospice or residential medical care facility, including any period of incapacity or any subsequent treatment in connection with such inpatient care or a condition that requires continuing care by a licensed health care provider. This policy covers illnesses of a serious and long-term nature, resulting in recurring or lengthy absences. Generally, a chronic or long-term health condition that would result in a period of five (5) consecutive days of incapacity with the first visit to the health care provider within seven days of the onset of the incapacity and a second visit within 30 days of the incapacity would be considered a serious health condition. For chronic conditions requiring periodic health care visits for treatment, such visits must take place at least twice a year.

The Town of Hopkinton may place employees on FMLA who have been out for more than three days to care for their own serious health condition or any of the reasons for FMLA leave listed above. Employees with questions about the FMLA policy should consult with the HR Director. If an employee takes paid sick leave for a condition that progresses into a serious health condition and the employee requests unpaid

leave as provided under this policy, the Town may designate all or some portion of related leave taken as leave under this policy, to the extent that the earlier leave meets the necessary qualifications.

5) Qualifying exigency leave for families of members of the National Guard and Reserves when the covered military member is on active duty or called to active duty in support of a contingency operation.

An employee whose spouse, non-minor child or parent either has been notified of an impending call or order to active military duty or who is already on active duty may take up to 12 weeks of leave for reasons related to or affected by the family member's call-up or service. The qualifying exigency must be one of the following: 1) short-notice deployment, 2) military events and activities, 3) child care and school activities, 4) financial and legal arrangements, 5) counseling, 6) rest and recuperation, 7) post-deployment activities and 8) additional activities that arise out of active duty, provided that the employer and employee agree, including agreement on timing and duration of the leave.

The leave may commence as soon as the individual receives the call-up notice. This type of leave would be counted toward the employee's 12-week maximum of FMLA leave in a 12-month period.

6) Military caregiver leave (also known as covered service member leave) to care for an ill or injured service member.

This leave may extend to up to 26 weeks in a single 12-month period for an employee to care for a spouse, non-minor child, parent or next of kin covered service member with a serious illness or injury incurred in the line of duty on active duty. Next of kin is defined as the closest blood relative of the injured or recovering service member.

D. Amount of Leave

An eligible employee can take up to 12 weeks for the FMLA circumstances (1) through (5) above under this policy during any 12-month period. The Town will measure the 12-month period as a rolling 12-month period measured backward from the date an employee uses any leave under this policy. Each time an employee takes leave, the Town will compute the amount of leave the employee has taken under this policy in the last 12 months and subtract it from the 12 weeks of available leave, and the balance remaining is the amount the employee is entitled to take at that time.

An eligible employee can take up to 26 weeks for the FMLA circumstance (6) above (military caregiver leave) during a single 12-month period. For this military caregiver leave, the Town will measure the 12-month period as a rolling 12-month period measured forward. FMLA leave already taken for other FMLA circumstances will be deducted from the total of 26 weeks available.

If a husband and wife both work for the Town and each wishes to take leave for the birth of a child, adoption or placement of a child in foster care, or to care for a parent (but not a parent "in-law") with a serious health condition, the husband and wife may only take a combined total of 12 weeks of leave. If a husband and wife both work for the Town and each wishes to take leave to care for a covered injured or ill service member, the husband and wife may only take a combined total of 26 weeks of leave.

E. Employee Status and Benefits during Leave

While an employee is on leave, the Town will continue the employee's health benefits during the leave period at the same level and under the same conditions as if the employee had continued to work.

If the employee chooses not to return to work for reasons other than a continued serious health condition of the employee or the employee's family member or a circumstance beyond the employee's control, the

Town will require the employee to reimburse the Town the amount it paid for the employee's health insurance premium during the leave period.

Under current Town policy, the employee pays a portion of the health care premium. While on paid leave, the employer will continue to make payroll deductions to collect the employee's share of the premium. While on unpaid leave, the employee must continue to make this payment, either in person or by mail. The payment must be received in the Human Resources department by a date agreed upon by the employee and the Human Resources department. If the payment is more than 30 days late, the employee's health care coverage may be dropped for the duration of the leave. The employer will provide 15 days' notification prior to the employee's loss of coverage.

If the employee contributes to a life insurance or disability plan, the employer will continue making payroll deductions while the employee is on paid leave. While the employee is on unpaid leave, the employee may request continuation of such benefits and pay his or her portion of the premiums, or the employer may elect to maintain such benefits during the leave and pay the employee's share of the premium payments. If the employee does not continue these payments, the employer may discontinue coverage during the leave. If the employer maintains coverage, the employer may recover the costs incurred for paying the employee's share of any premiums, whether or not the employee returns to work.

F. Employee Status after Leave

An employee who takes leave under this policy may be asked to provide a fitness for duty (FFD) clearance from the health care provider. This requirement will be included in the employer's response to the FMLA request. Generally, an employee who takes FMLA leave will be able to return to the same position or a position with equivalent status, pay, benefits and other employment terms. The Town may choose to exempt certain key employees from this requirement and not return them to the same or similar position.

G. Use of Paid and Unpaid Leave

An employee who is taking FMLA leave because of the employee's own serious health condition or the serious health condition of a family member must use all paid vacation and personal leave prior to being eligible for unpaid leave. Sick leave must be run concurrently with FMLA leave if the reason for the FMLA leave is covered by the established sick leave policy.

Disability leave for the birth of the child and for an employee's serious health condition, including workers' compensation leave (to the extent that it qualifies), will be designated as FMLA leave and will run concurrently with FMLA. For example, if an employer provides six weeks of pregnancy disability leave, the six weeks will be designated as FMLA leave and counted toward the employee's 12-week entitlement. The employee may then be required to substitute accrued (or earned) paid leave as appropriate before being eligible for unpaid leave for what remains of the 12-week entitlement. An employee who is taking leave for the adoption or foster care of a child must use all paid vacation, personal or family leave prior to being eligible for unpaid leave.

An employee who is using military FMLA leave for a qualifying exigency must use all paid vacation and personal leave prior to being eligible for unpaid leave. An employee using FMLA military caregiver leave must also use all paid vacation, personal leave or sick leave (as long as the reason for the absence is covered by the Town's sick leave policy) prior to being eligible for unpaid leave.

H. Intermittent Leave or a Reduced Work Schedule

The employee may take FMLA leave in 12 consecutive weeks, or may use the leave intermittently (take a day periodically when needed over the year) or, under certain circumstances, may use the leave to reduce the workweek or workday, resulting in a reduced hour schedule. In all cases, the leave may not exceed a total of 12 workweeks (or 26 workweeks to care for an injured or ill service member over a 12-month period).

The Town may temporarily transfer an employee to an available alternative position with equivalent pay and benefits if the alternative position would better accommodate the intermittent or reduced schedule, in instances of when leave for the employee or employee's family member is foreseeable and for planned medical treatment, including recovery from a serious health condition or to care for a child after birth, or placement for adoption or foster care.

For the birth, adoption or foster care of a child, the Town and the employee must mutually agree to the schedule before the employee may take the leave intermittently or work a reduced hour schedule. Leave for birth, adoption or foster care of a child must be taken within one year of the birth or placement of the child.

If the employee is taking leave for a serious health condition or because of the serious health condition of a family member, the employee should try to reach agreement with the Town before taking intermittent leave or working a reduced our schedule. If this is not possible, then the employee must prove that the use of the leave is medically necessary.

I. Certification for the Employee's or Family Member's Serious Health Condition

The Town will require certification for the employee's or family member's serious health condition. The employee must respond to such a request within 15 days of the request or provide a reasonable explanation for the delay. Failure to provide certification may result in a denial of continuation of leave.

The Town may directly contact the employee's or family member's health care provider for verification or clarification purposes using a health care professional or the HR director. The Town will not use the employee's direct supervisor for this contact. Before the Town makes this direct contact with the health care provider, the employee will be a given an opportunity to resolve any deficiencies in the medical certification. In compliance with HIPAA Medical Privacy Rules, the Town will obtain the employee's or family member's permission for clarification of individually identifiable health information.

The Town has the right to ask for a second opinion if it has reason to doubt the certification. The Town will pay for the employee or family member to get a certification from a second doctor, which the Town will select. The Town may deny FMLA leave to an employee who refuses to release relevant medical records to the health care provider designated to provide a second or third opinion. If necessary to resolve a conflict between the original certification and the second opinion, the Town will require the opinion of a third doctor. The Town and the employee will mutually select the third doctor, and the Town will pay for the opinion. This third opinion will be considered final. The employee will be provisionally entitled to leave and benefits under the FMLA pending the second and/or third opinion.

K. Certification of Qualifying Exigency for Military Family Leave

The Town will require certification of the qualifying exigency for military family leave. The employee must respond to such a request within 15 days of the request or provide a reasonable explanation for the delay. Failure to provide certification may result in a denial of continuation of leave.

L. Certification for Serious Injury or Illness of Covered Service member for Military Family Leave

The Town will require certification for the serious injury or illness of the covered service member. The employee must respond to such a request within 15 days of the request or provide a reasonable explanation for the delay. Failure to provide certification may result in a denial of continuation of leave.

M. Recertification

The Town may request recertification for the serious health condition of the employee or the employee's family member no more frequently than every 30 days and only when circumstances have changed significantly, or if the employer receives information casting doubt on the reason given for the absence, or if the employee seeks an extension of his or her leave. Otherwise, the Town may request recertification for the serious health condition of the employee or the employee's family member every six months in connection with an FMLA absence. The Town may provide the employee's health care provider with the employee's attendance records and ask whether need for leave is consistent with the employee's serious health condition.

N. Procedure for Requesting FMLA Leave

All employees requesting FMLA leave must provide verbal or written notice of the need for the leave to the HR manager. Within five business days after the employee has provided this notice, the HR manager will complete and provide the employee with a Notice of Eligibility and Rights. When the need for the leave is foreseeable, the employee must provide the employer with at least 30 days' notice. When an employee becomes aware of a need for FMLA leave less than 30 days in advance, the employee must provide notice of the need for the leave either the same day or the next business day. When the need for FMLA leave is not foreseeable, the employee must comply with the Town's usual and customary notice and procedural requirements for requesting leave, absent unusual circumstances.

O. Designation of FMLA Leave

Within five business days after the employee has submitted the appropriate certification form, the HR manager will complete and provide the employee with a written response to the employee's request for FMLA. On a basis that does not discriminate against employees on FMLA leave; the Town may require an employee on FMLA leave to report periodically on the employee's status and intent to return to work