



## Administration and Regulatory Affairs Department Policy

# Absence

Effective Date:

Upon Approval

### 1. POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of the Administration and Regulatory Affairs Department (ARA) for all employees to work their assigned schedule and to report to work on time unless the employee is out on approved leave or has an unforeseen circumstance requiring an unscheduled absence or tardy. Compliance with the policy will help ensure the Administration and Regulatory Affairs Department is meeting the goals and objectives of the City of Houston.

### 2. POLICY PURPOSE

To define and clarify the types of absences; describe the cases in which certain leave times may be used; specify the responsibilities of employees and supervisors; and ensure the department is in compliance with *AP 3-11 Absence*.

### 3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all Administration and Regulatory Affairs Department employees.

### 4. DEFINITIONS

**Absence:** Any time an employee is not present at the assigned work location during scheduled work hours.

**Discretionary Time Off:** Term used herein to include vacation leave, personal hours, and compensatory time. The term excludes sick, wellness leave, funeral leave, jury duty leave, floating holidays, and any other leave type not specified.

**Flex Time:** The use of flexible scheduling, including arriving early, leaving late, or working through the lunch break, to make up for Absences, whether Scheduled or Unscheduled, and Tardies.

**Scheduled Absence:** An absence that has been preapproved by the employee's supervisor or management, which may be paid or unpaid.

**Unscheduled Absence:** An absence that has not been preapproved by the employee's supervisor, which may be paid or unpaid.

**Tardiness/Tardy:** A type of Unscheduled Absence wherein an employee fails to report to the assigned work location by the start of the scheduled shift.

### 5. POLICY DETAILS

5.1. Divisions within ARA may establish their own policy that provides more detail to the provisions herein according to their divisional needs.

5.2. Scheduled Absences

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- 5.2.1. Scheduled Absences up to 4 hours may be made up at the discretion of the supervisor, exclusive of those participating in compressed work schedules. Any make-up time must be completed within the workweek.
- 5.2.2. Employees requesting Scheduled Absences without sufficient leave accrual may be approved at the supervisor's discretion. Non-exempt employees shall be docked for partial day leave based on actual scheduled hours missed. Exempt employees shall be docked in whole day increments.
- 5.2.3. Previous approval of Scheduled Absences may be rescinded at any time prior to or during the approved absence based on the operational needs of the department.

### 5.3. Unscheduled Absences

- 5.3.1. Employees may use Sick, Vacation, Personal Hours, or Comp Time leave accruals to account for Unscheduled Absences in accordance with City ordinance and policy.
- 5.3.2. Unscheduled Absences up to 4 hours may be made up at the discretion of the supervisor, exclusive of those participating in compressed work schedules. Any make-up time must be completed within the workweek.
- 5.3.3. Patterns of Unscheduled Absences shall be the basis of progressive disciplinary action, up to and including indefinite suspension. The use of leave accrual or Flex Time to account for Unscheduled Absences does not insulate the employee from progressive discipline for exhibiting patterns of Unscheduled Absences.

### 5.4. Flex Time

- 5.4.1. The use of Flex Time to make up for Absences or Tardies is not guaranteed.
- 5.4.2. The use of Flex Time to make up Absences or Tardies, whether scheduled or unscheduled, shall be limited to no more than four (4) hours during a work week.
- 5.4.3. Approval authority for the use of Flex Time is vested solely in the supervisor and his or her management and shall be wholly dependent on the operational needs of the department.

### 5.5. Voting

- 5.5.1. Approval authority for time off for voting is vested solely in the supervisor and his or her management and shall be wholly dependent on the operational needs of the department.

## 6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### 6.1. Employees

#### 6.1.1. Tardiness/Tardy

- 6.1.1.1. Employees must report instances of tardiness to the appropriate supervisor or another manager in the chain of command as soon as possible prior to the start of a scheduled work period by calling, emailing, texting, or leaving a message with an authorized person.

6.1.1.2. Upon arriving to the work location, the Tardy employee shall report their arrival to the supervisor. When the supervisor is not immediately available, the employee must leave a note indicating the time of arrival.

6.1.1.3. Upon arrival to the work location, the Tardy employee shall submit their request for their preferred method for accounting for the time missed (use of accrued leave, flex-time, dock).

#### 6.1.2. Discretionary Time Off

6.1.2.1. Employees shall submit leave requests as early as possible.

6.1.2.2. Employees requesting time off for which the employee has insufficient leave accrual may do so if the employee is willing to be docked for the Absence.

6.1.2.2.1. Approval of Scheduled Absences without sufficient leave accrual shall be limited to 14 consecutive calendar days. Any employee wishing to request more than 14 consecutive calendar days of unpaid leave must request a formal Leave of Absence, which requires preapproval of the Civil Service Commission.

6.1.2.2.2. Non-Exempt employees may request partial day leave without sufficient leave accrual and will be docked only for the scheduled hours missed.

6.1.2.2.3. Exempt employee may only request whole workday increments without sufficient leave accrual and will be docked for the entire work shift.

#### 6.1.3. Wellness

6.1.3.1. Employees shall submit wellness leave requests in advance of taking leave.

6.1.3.2. Employees shall request wellness leave only for physical examinations and other preventive medical appointments as defined by the City's Human Resources Department.

6.1.3.3. Employees shall submit documentation from their health provider to their supervisor upon request from the supervisor. Failure to do so may result in revocation of the approved wellness leave, requiring the employee to use a different leave type.

6.1.3.4. Wellness leave shall only be used as a benefit for the employee.

#### 6.1.4. Funeral Leave

6.1.4.1. Employees shall request funeral leave as early as reasonably possible.

6.1.4.2. Employee shall provide documentation supporting the use of funeral leave upon return from leave. In the absence of any available documentation (e.g., obituary, ceremony program), employee shall, at a minimum, provide the contact information for the funeral home or other such facility that can independently verify the timing of the funeral ceremony. Failure to provide documentation may result in the employee being required to use Discretionary Time Off to account for the Absence.

#### 6.1.5. Jury Duty

6.1.5.1. Please refer to departmental policy *Court Related Absences* for directives regarding the use of jury duty leave.

6.1.6. Floating Holiday must be taken in whole day increments.

## 6.2. Supervisors

6.2.1. Supervisors shall approve or deny all leave requests as soon as reasonably possible.

6.2.2. Supervisors shall, first and foremost, consider the operational needs of the department when approving or denying leave requests.

6.2.3. Supervisors shall ensure that all employee absences are properly documented in the Kronos time and attendance system in accordance with AP 2-4 *Electronic Timekeeping Policy*.

6.2.4. Supervisors shall maintain all leave documentation (wellness, jury duty, funeral leave) in accordance with AP 2-4 *Electronic Timekeeping Policy*.

6.2.5. Under no circumstances shall a supervisor approve an unpaid leave of absence greater than 14 consecutive calendar days.

6.2.6. Authority is delegated to executive-level managers to determine the appropriateness of funeral leave usage in those instances outside the definition of 'Immediate Family' in AP 3-11 *Absence*.

## 7. CONFLICT AND REPEAL

7.1. This departmental policy supersedes all other previous department policies, procedures and directives, specifically rescinding DP 4-11 Vacation Leave, FA-601.00-R Funeral Leave, and FA-604.00R1 Attendance and Punctuality.