



# FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE COMMISSIONED CORPS CONCEPTS



## COMMISSIONED CORPS LEAVE

### 1. How is leave for Public Health Service (PHS) Commissioned Corps officers different from civilian employees?

- Officers are on duty 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and must be on some type of leave when absent from their duty station.
- The only type of leave an officer **earns** is annual leave; the rest are granted as-needed.
- Officers earn annual leave at the same rate their whole career.
- Officers are charged annual leave in full day increments, not by the hour.
- Officers are charged annual leave for weekends and holidays if these days are contained within periods of annual leave.
- Officers don't earn sick leave. It is granted to them, in full day increments, as they need it.
- Officers can be granted station leave if they must be away from work for less than a full day.
- Officers are never eligible for overtime or compensatory time, since they are on duty 24/7.
- Officers are not included in the provisions of the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993.

### 2. Who can approve an officer's leave?

- The leave-granting authority approves or disapproves all types of leave.
- The officer's program designates who the leave-granting authority will be.
- If the supervisor is not the leave-granting authority, the supervisor recommends for or against leave and forwards the request to the leave-granting authority.
- The supervisor will take into consideration the likely impact of the officer's absence and can defer annual leave or shorten the requested period until a project is completed or a busy period has passed.

### 3. What kinds of leave do PHS officers have?

#### Annual leave

- Annual leave is any period of one full workday or more that an officer is relieved from work (and officer is not on sick, administrative, station, or court leave).
- Annual leave is earned at a rate of 2.5 days per month (total 30 days each calendar year).
- An officer can carry forward no more than 60 days on January 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **Sick leave**

- Sick leave may be granted when an **officer** (not a family member) is in need of medical services or is incapacitated by sickness, injury, or pregnancy and recovery after delivery.
- Sick leave is taken in full day increments.
- The supervisor can request a statement from the officer's doctor that certifies the need for sick leave.

### **Administrative leave**

- Administrative leave may be granted to an officer for such activities as attendance at professional meetings and taking professional examinations (maximum of five days per year).
- Administrative leave may be granted to an officer when leaving a duty location to prepare for moving (maximum of three days), and/or to establish a household at the new duty station (maximum of three days).
- Officers don't earn administrative leave; it is granted to them by the leave-granting authority.

### **Court leave**

- Court leave may be granted for jury duty; to serve as a witness for the U.S. or D.C. Government, a State or local government; to serve as a witness on behalf of a private party in an official capacity; or to serve as a witness on behalf of a private party when the U.S., District of Columbia, or State Government is a party in the suit.
- For all other cases, the officer must use annual leave.

### **Station leave**

- Station leave may be granted for an absence from the duty station for less than a whole workday.
- Station leave may be used during the employee's scheduled work week for activities that would be difficult or impossible to do during non-work hours (e.g., parent-teacher conferences, car repairs, brief continuing education seminars, closing on a house, an officer's medical appointment (if less than a full day), taking a family member for health care).
- Officers don't earn station leave and do not have a right or entitlement to station leave.

### **Leave without pay**

- Whenever an officer is absent from work during scheduled work hours, and is not in one of the types of leave described above, the officer is Absent Without Authorized Leave (AWOL).
- When an officer is AWOL, s/he is placed into leave without pay status.
- Leave without pay may not be granted for personal reasons, to participate in training, or for the personal convenience of the officer.

#### **4. Who maintains leave records for PHS officers?**

- The supervisor will appoint a leave maintenance clerk (LMC) for the officer. Officers may not handle their own leave records.
- The accuracy, completeness and maintenance of leave records are the LMC's responsibility.
- The LMC will keep a written record ("Officer's Leave Record, Form PHS-31) of the amount of annual leave earned and charged, showing the available leave balance.
- The LMC will maintain a file with the PHS-31 forms and all leave requests.
- The LMC will maintain a duplicate leave record in the electronic Commissioned Officer Leave Tracking System (COLTS).
- On September 30 of each year, the leave maintenance clerk completes Form PHS-3842, "Report of Commissioned Officer Annual Leave," and forwards the form to the officer. This form allows the officer an opportunity to verify his or her leave balance and plan for utilization of leave before the end of the leave year (December 31).

#### **5. What is the procedure for having leave approved?**

- The officer completes Part 1 of Form PHS-1345, "Request and Authority for Leave of Absence" and gives the form to his/her supervisor or leave-granting authority.
- If the supervisor is not the leave-granting authority, s/he makes a recommendation in Part 2.
- The leave-granting authority approves or disapproves the request in Part 3.
- If leave is approved, the leave-granting authority returns the original leave request and one copy to the officer, and gives one copy to the LMC.
- Upon return, the officer signs Part 4 verifying the type and amount of leave actually taken, and gives the original Form PHS-1345 and attached copy to the leaving-granting authority.
- The leave-granting authority reviews and signs Part 4. S/he gives the original Form PHS-1345 and attached copy to the LMC, who makes appropriate entries into the officer's leave record card (Form PHS-31) and COLTS.
- The LMC provides a copy of the completed leave slip to the officer. For all but sick leave, the original leave slip is filed by the LMC.
- For sick leave only, the original (top sheet) of Form PHS-1345 must be sent to PHS (address on reverse of leave slip) for inclusion in the officer's medical folder. This copy must be sent even if the officer has only been out for a day or two and did not need to consult a physician. The LMC should keep a copy of the sick leave slip in the officer's record, but should not count this against his/her annual leave balance.

## **6. How can I check on my officer's leave balance?**

- The LMC can provide the officer's current leave balance by using the PHS-31 and COLTS system.
- The PHS Commissioned Corps Program Manager can also provide this information (see *Human Resources*).

## **7. Where can I go for more information?**

### **Human Resources:**

FSIS' PHS Commissioned Corps Program Manager, CAPT Cindy Pond: 202-720-7208  
[Cindy.Pond@fsis.usda.gov](mailto:Cindy.Pond@fsis.usda.gov)