

GAO

Personnel

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**Employee Leave**

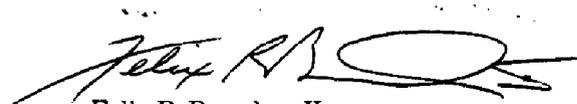
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**Personnel****TO: ALL GAO EMPLOYEES**

As part of our effort to provide you with easily accessible, clear and concise information, we have, based on customer needs, developed this brochure. It is intended as a quick reference to assist you in answering basic questions concerning leave. The brochure is divided by leave category and provides definitions, eligibility requirements, application procedures, and other information you may need to make decisions in the planning, use, and granting of leave.

If you need more detailed information about leave, please contact our Employee Relations Branch on (202) 512-3889.



Felix R. Brandon, II  
Director

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# Purpose

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This pamphlet briefly describes basic leave information related to full-time and part-time employees. If you need additional information about employee leave, consult GAO Order 2630.1, Leave Policies and Procedures. Or, for additional information about leave, please contact Personnel's Employee Relations Branch on (202) 512-3889.

**PLEASE NOTE:**

Intermittent employees do not earn or accumulate leave. (Intermittent employees are those employed on an irregular or occasional basis with no prearranged work schedule of hours or days per week.)

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# Annual Leave

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**Annual leave** is an absence with pay for vacation or time away from work for personal reasons or emergency purposes which is approved by the supervisor.

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## Eligibility

Full- and part-time employees appointed for 90 days or more earn annual leave.

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## Accrual Rate

Full-time employees with less than 3 years of service earn 4 hours per pay period; those with 3 to 15 years earn 6 hours; and those with more than 15 years earn 8 hours. Part-time employees with less than 3 years of service earn 1 hour for each 20 hours of work or paid leave; those with 3 to 15 years earn 1 hour for each 13 hours; and those with more than 15 years earn 1 hour for each 10 hours. Most employees may carry forward no more than 240 hours from one leave year to the next. Employees in the Senior Executive Service, however, are not subject to this limitation.

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## Applying for Leave

You should apply for leave in advance except in emergency situations. Use of leave is subject to approval by your supervisor. In emergencies, you must contact your supervisor no later than 2 hours after the start of your scheduled work hours (except in unusual circumstances). Depending on division/office procedures, you may request annual leave orally or in writing (on the Time and Attendance Report or by submitting an SF-71, Application for Leave).

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## Advanced Annual Leave

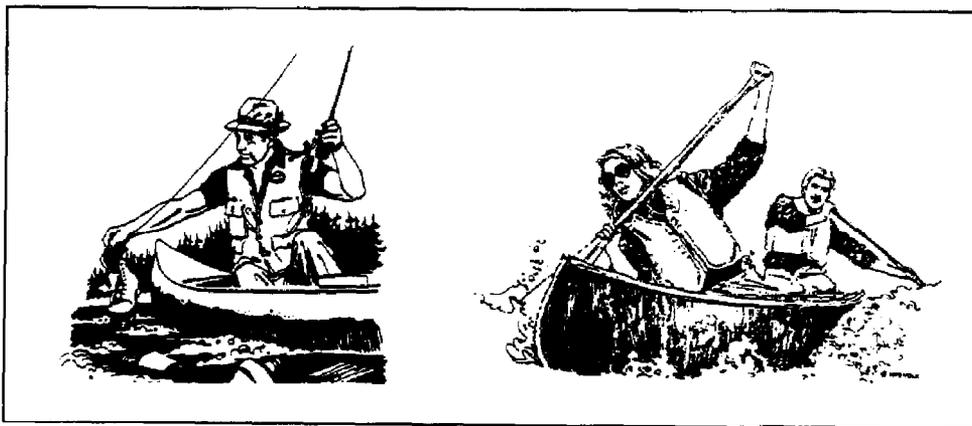
If you are a permanent employee, you may ask for an advance of annual leave up to the amount of leave you will earn during the remainder of the leave year. If you are a temporary employee, you may request an advance on the amount you will earn during the

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**Annual Leave**

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balance of your appointment or the end of the leave year, whichever comes first. You must submit your request, containing the reason for the request, in writing to your division or office head.



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# Sick Leave

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**Sick leave is an absence with pay related to illness, injury, or medical care. Sick leave is not to be used for other purposes simply because an employee has an insufficient amount of annual leave.**

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## Eligibility

Full- and part-time employees earn sick leave. Sick leave is only to be used (1) when you are incapacitated and cannot perform duties because of illness or injury; (2) for medical appointments (including dental, prenatal care, optical, etc.); or (3) when a member of your immediate family has contracted a contagious disease (a disease requiring isolation of the patient as prescribed by local health authorities such as chicken pox or measles) and you are required to care for the person or when, because of exposure to a contagious disease, your presence at work would jeopardize the health of other employees. If you use or attempt to use sick leave for any other purpose than mentioned above, you may be subject to disciplinary action.

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## Accrual Rate

Full-time employees accrue sick leave at the rate of 4 hours biweekly. Part-time employees earn sick leave at the rate of 1 hour for each 20 hours of duty or paid leave. The amount of sick leave that you may accumulate and carry forward from year to year is unrestricted.

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## Applying for Leave

Except in emergency situations, you should request sick leave due to medical appointments in advance. In cases of illness or injury, you can request sick leave by phone. However, it must be formally approved either on the Time and Attendance Report or by submitting a SF-71, Application for Leave, upon your return to duty. Each division and office will determine whether its employees are to use Time and Attendance Reports or SF-71s.

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**Notifying  
Supervisors**

You should report absences due to illness or injury to your supervisor no later than 2 hours after the start of your scheduled reporting time on the first day of the absence (except in emergency or unusual circumstances when you cannot meet this deadline).

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**Sick Leave**

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If you need sick leave for an extended period of time, you must keep your supervisor informed of the expected length of the absence and periodically submit applications for leave accompanied by physicians' certifications of incapacitation. This will prevent GAO from withholding your salary due to insufficient documentation.

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**Advanced Sick  
Leave**

If you are a permanent employee, you may request advances of sick leave of up to 240 hours in cases of serious incapacitation when you have exhausted your sick leave. If you are a temporary employee, you may request advances up to what you would earn during the balance of your appointment. You may request advanced sick leave by submitting GAO Form 282, Request for Advance Sick Leave, to your division or office head through your supervisor.

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# Court Leave

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**Court leave** is an authorized absence from work, without charge to leave or loss of pay, for jury duty or witness duty in an unofficial capacity when the U.S., the District of Columbia, or a state or local government is a party to the proceedings.

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## Eligibility

Permanent and temporary employees who work full- or part-time are eligible to receive court leave for jury duty or witness service.

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## Entitlement to Court Leave

You are entitled to court leave for a witness service only if (1) you are summoned by the court and (2) you are to be a witness when the U.S., District of Columbia, or a state or local government is a party to the proceedings. Therefore, if you are summoned for witness service in proceedings involving private parties, you must use either annual leave or leave without pay for the absence.

When entitled to court leave for jury duty, you are required to return to GAO for duty whenever excused for a day or a substantial part of the day (at least 4 hours), except when returning to duty would result in a hardship. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

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## Official Duty Status Versus Court Leave

You are on official duty status rather than on court leave and entitled to regular pay when summoned or assigned by GAO to (1) testify or produce official records on behalf of the U.S. government or the government of the District of Columbia or (2) testify in an official capacity or produce official records on behalf of a state or local government or private party.



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**Applying for Leave**

If you are requesting court leave, you should submit an SF-71, Application for Leave, in advance of the leave as well as the summons or comparable document. Upon returning to duty, you must submit a certificate of attendance to your supervisor.

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# Military Leave

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**Military leave** is an authorized absence from work without charge to leave or loss of pay for employees who belong to an Armed Forces reserve component while it is engaged in active military duty or field or coast defense training. Military leave is not to be confused with military furlough, which involves leave without pay for extended periods of active duty.

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## Eligibility

Military leave is limited to permanent employees, term employees, and temporary employees with appointments that exceed 1 year. Temporary employees with appointments of 1 year or less are not entitled to military leave. For active duty training, you may retain all monies received from the military in addition to your government salary.

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## Entitlement

Full-time employees accrue military leave at the rate of 15 calendar days per fiscal year. Part-time employees accrue military leave on a prorated basis. If the entire amount of leave is not used within the fiscal year, you may carry up to 15 days forward to the next fiscal year.

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## Scheduling

You should give your supervisor as much advance notice as possible of any contemplated military leave so that he or she can adjust assignments to prevent serious interference with work.

If you are a reservist, you sometimes may have no control over the dates of your annual military training. At other times, however, you have a choice of several periods in which to take military leave or may seek military training although you are not required to take it. If you have a choice, you should inform your supervisor of the periods available. He or she can then inform you which period is the best. If the training is entirely optional, you should discuss

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**Military Leave**

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training times with your supervisor before requesting the training.

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**Applying for Leave**

You should apply for military leave at least 2 weeks before departure. You must submit an SF-71, Application for Leave, with a copy of the military orders, to your supervisor. Within 10 days after returning from military duty, you must provide your supervisor with certification for the completion of military duty.



# Administrative Leave

**Excused absence without charge to leave, often referred to as administrative leave, is an authorized absence from duty with pay and without charge to leave that does not fall into one of the other leave categories.**

## Eligibility

Administrative leave is only available if you would have otherwise been in a duty status or on authorized leave with pay. Normally, your immediate supervisor is authorized to approve administrative leave. In some cases (e.g., group dismissals) authorization must come from a higher level.



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**Situations for  
Granting  
Administrative  
Leave**

The most common circumstances for granting administrative leave are (1) group dismissals due to hazardous weather or other emergency situations, (2) unavoidable absences of less than 1 hour, (3) registration and voting, (4) taking Certified Public Accountant examinations, (5) treatment at a federal health unit, (6) donation of blood in connection with GAO sponsored blood drives, (7) participation in federally recognized civil defense programs, and (8) permanent change of duty station. Some cases have certain conditions for granting the leave. These conditions appear in GAO Order 2630.1 along with other circumstances for granting administrative leave.

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# Leave Without Pay

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**LWOP is a temporary absence from duty in a nonpay status which is requested by an employee and approved by management. LWOP should not be used for disciplinary purposes. Except in unusual circumstances or when it serves the government's interest, applications for LWOP may cover a maximum of 52 calendar weeks.**

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## Eligibility

Full- and part-time employees can request LWOP.

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## Applying for LWOP

If you are requesting LWOP for 80 hours or less, you should submit an SF-71, Application for Leave, to your supervisor. If you are requesting LWOP in excess of 80 hours, you must submit an SF-71 and a memorandum explaining the request to your division or office head through your supervisor. Requests for extended LWOP for illness or other medical conditions must be supported by a medical certificate stating the period of recuperation.

You should submit your application before the requested period of absence. However, in cases of illness or emergency, your supervisor may approve LWOP after you return to duty. In such cases, you must provide an explanation of why prior approval was not possible.

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## Granting LWOP

Normally, authorization of LWOP is a matter of supervisory discretion. In some cases, LWOP will be approved as a matter of right. For example, if you (1) are injured on the job and entitled to worker's compensation, (2) have filed for disability retirement, (3) have a newborn infant, or (4) adopt a child, you are entitled to LWOP. In cases (3) and (4) mentioned above, up to 6 months of LWOP will be granted to both male and female employees for adjustment and child care purposes. Requests for LWOP exceeding 6 months are a matter of supervisory discretion. A

further discussion of situations where LWOP can be used appears in GAO Order 2630.1. However, be aware that, under recently-enacted legislation related to family leave, LWOP will also be a matter of right for certain types of emergencies.

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Using LWOP

You are not required to exhaust your annual and sick leave before requesting LWOP unless you have filed a claim for disability retirement.

In taking LWOP, you should be aware that, depending on the length of the absence, certain areas of your employment may be affected. For example, your waiting period for a within-grade increase (if you are not under a broad-banded pay-for-performance system) or service computation date may change. Also, if you are a full-time employee, at any time during a calendar year when you reach 80 hours or a multiple of 80 hours of LWOP, you do not accrue annual or sick leave for that pay period.

If you are enrolled in the Federal Employees Health Benefits program, you must pay your share of the premium for each pay period you are in a nonpay status. The agency will pay its share. If you are enrolled in the Federal Employees Group Life Insurance program, GAO will cover the entire premium for up to 365 days you are in a nonpay status.

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# Maternity and Related Leave

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Absence for **maternity and related reasons** is not a separate leave category. Employees who need leave due to pregnancy, confinement, newborn infant care, adoption, and other reasons related to the birth or adoption of a child can request sick leave, annual leave, or leave without pay, as appropriate.

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## Eligibility

Permanent and temporary employees who work full- or part-time can request leave for maternity/paternity reasons.

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## Leave to Be Used for Maternity and Related Reasons

### Sick Leave

Female employees may use sick leave for absences due to pregnancy, confinement and prenatal examinations.

### Advanced Sick Leave

Female employees may also request advances of sick leave to cover medically certified periods of recuperation due to pregnancy and confinement.

### Annual Leave

Female and male employees with newborn infants or newly adopted children may use annual leave to cover the adjustment period after the birth or adoption, to provide infant or child care, or to make child care arrangements.

### Leave Without Pay

Female and male employees with newborn infants or newly adopted children are entitled, upon request, to up to 6 months of LWOP for an adjustment period after the birth or adoption of a child, time to provide infant or child care, or to make child care arrangements. This LWOP must be consecutive except when GAO requests that the employee work a limited schedule.



### Applying for Leave

The regular policies and procedures for requesting and granting sick and annual leave apply to leave for maternity and related reasons, as do the regular procedures for requesting LWOP.

You should request leave for maternity reasons as soon as the anticipated delivery date or confinement period is determined by submitting a memorandum stating your current leave balances, number of hours of each type of leave to be taken, approximate delivery date, and total duration of the absence, accompanied by a written statement from the attending physician or clinic reflecting the expected delivery date and period of confinement; completed SF-71(s), Application for Leave; and, if advance sick leave is needed, a completed GAO Form 282, Request for Advance Sick Leave. You must submit these items through your immediate supervisor to your division or office head for approval. If you plan to return to work, you are entitled to continued employment in the same or a comparable position upon return to duty. If you are not returning to work, you should submit your resignation.

Modification of Duties

If you are pregnant and experiencing problems caused by the nature of your job, you should consider requesting a modification of your duties or a temporary reassignment. (For example, if your job requires frequent walking or standing and if, because of your pregnancy, walking or standing causes pain or swelling, you should explain the situation to your immediate supervisor and discuss possible temporary modifications of your duties or assignment of less strenuous tasks.) Management may require that you support such a request with a letter of explanation and recommendation from your attending physician. This may be a way to reduce leave usage or avoid changing to a part-time tour of duty.



**Important Note:** If your health insurance is self-only prior to maternity leave or your spouse is expecting a child that you intend to carry on your insurance, you only have **60 days after the birth of the child** to change your health insurance to family coverage in

order to have your child covered under your health insurance. To effect the change you need to complete and submit a revised Standard Form 2809, Health Benefits Registration Form, to Personnel's Automated Systems and Records Group (ASRG) within the above mentioned timeframe. If you already have family coverage, no change is needed. Also, if you are already enrolled for Basic Life Insurance and want to change your coverage to Option C-Family after the birth of a child, you only have **60 days from the child's date of birth** to change coverage. To effect the change, you need to complete and submit a Standard Form 2817 to ASRG within the allotted timeframe.

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# Funeral Leave

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Frequently, employees ask if GAO allows time off to attend or make arrangements for the funeral or memorial services of an immediate family member. The answer to this question is "no" unless your immediate relative died as a result of wounds, disease or injury that occurred while the relative was a member of the Armed Forces in a combat zone. If this is the case you will be granted not more than 3 days of **funeral leave**. Funeral leave is to be charged to administrative leave and not to annual leave. In other circumstances not mentioned above you may use annual leave or request leave without pay.

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# Absence Without Leave

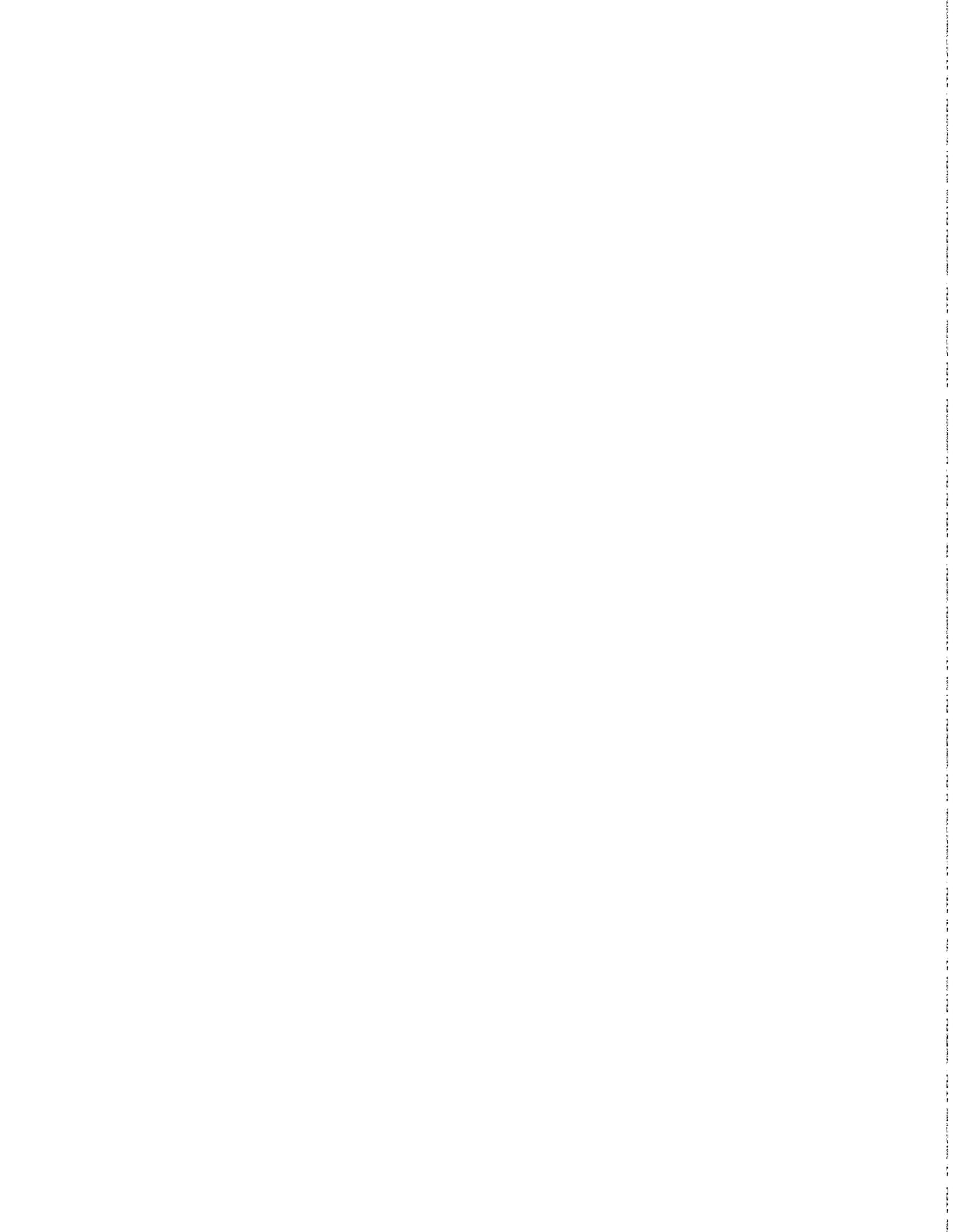
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**AWOL is an absence that has not been authorized or approved or for which a leave request was denied. The employee's pay is withheld for the period of unauthorized absence. AWOL can also be the basis for initiating disciplinary action against an employee.**

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## Management Procedure

If you do not report for duty or are absent from your work area and do not inform your supervisor of your whereabouts, your supervisor can charge you as being AWOL. If your supervisor later determines that the absence was because of an emergency situation or an explained circumstance for which prior approval was not possible, the AWOL charges can be changed to the appropriate leave category.



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