
456 – Authorized Unpaid Leave

1.0 Policy

Under Washington law all employees of the William Shore Metropolitan Park District (District) are entitled to up to two unpaid holidays per calendar year for "a reason of faith or conscience or an organized activity conducted under the auspices of a religious denomination, church, or religious holiday."

Note that a partial day off will count as a full day toward your yearly allotment of two days.

Note also that the law provides for unpaid leave, and there is no provision for substituting paid time off. If you wish to be compensated for the time off, please follow the policies for using accrued vacation leave or compensatory time or other paid time off.

If you seek to take a day off or partial day off under this law, you must submit a written request to the Aquatics Manager, at least two weeks in advance. Untimely requests will only be considered if you can demonstrate that timely notice was not possible under the circumstances.

2.0 Submission of Request

The request should include the following information:

- Name
- The day(s) or partial day(s) requesting off
- A sufficient description of the reason for the leave so that the Aquatics Manager or Executive Director can determine if it is properly granted
- If the request is untimely, the reason why it was not possible to submit the request in a timely manner. You will normally receive a response within 5 days of receipt of your request.

The request may be denied if:

- It was not submitted in a timely fashion, or
- The reason for the requested leave is not appropriate under the law, or
- You have already exhausted your allotment of days off under the law, or
- You are in a public safety position, such as police, fire, or dispatch, and granting the leave would result in the shift falling below necessary staffing levels, or
- Granting the request would cause an undue hardship

What should the written notice contain?

The written notice should include the name of the employee, the date that the employee seeks to take unpaid leave, the amount of unpaid leave (whole shift or partial shift), and a sufficient description of the reason for the leave to assess whether such leave is appropriately taken under the law.

What will be the process for granting or denying the leave?

The Executive Director and/or the Aquatics Manager will be responsible for granting or denying the leave request.

What is the basis for denying a leave request?

The following are the grounds for denying a leave request:

1. If the employee does not follow the policy for requesting leave, either because the request is

untimely or the employee does not provide sufficient information to assess whether the request

should be granted. If the denial is for insufficient information, the employer should not act until it has first requested additional information or clarification.

2. If the employee has already exhausted his allotment of days off under the law.
3. If the employee's leave request does not qualify for leave under the terms of the law.
4. If granting the request would impose an "undue hardship." It is unclear how "undue hardship" will be defined in this context, though the term generally invokes a high standard. It is likely to be interpreted as requiring some form of significant damage to operations if the employee would be absent that day. This is not likely to be a legitimate basis for denying the request in most circumstances. It is prudent to develop policies requiring written advance notice so that any potential hardships caused by the employee's absence can be dealt with in a timely manner.