

Paid Administrative Leave

Policy Number: 2023-0002
Issue Date: 5/19/2023

PURPOSE

To ensure the granting and use of Paid Administrative Leave is applied consistently countywide, departments and agencies shall manage their workforce in accordance with this policy. This policy shall supersede all prior and existing paid administrative leave policies.

POLICY APPLICABILITY

The County's Paid Administrative Leave Policy applies to all executive branch departments, offices, divisions, and agencies, including the Assessor's Office and King County Elections. Employees eligible to be granted Paid Administrative Leave include all career service, provisional, term-limited temporary, probationary, and appointed employees. Short-term temporary employees are not eligible for Paid Administrative Leave. In the event any provision of this policy conflicts with an applicable provision of a collective bargaining agreement or binding past practices, the latter shall prevail.

DEFINITIONS

"Paid Administrative Leave" (PAL) means temporarily relieving an employee of their normal job responsibilities and/or removing them from the workplace with pay. The employee is to remain out of the workplace and available during regular work hours but continues to receive regular pay and benefits until they are directed to return.

POLICY

PAL may be used in rare instances when the immediate removal of an employee from their assigned duties and/or the workplace is in the best interests of the county. PAL is not disciplinary and is not subject to appeal. Reasons for PAL may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- To investigate allegations of misconduct.
- For the safety of the employee placed on leave, or of other employees or customers.
- To secure particularly sensitive information or resources.
- To remove a disruptive employee from the workplace.
- To wait for pending test results as outlined in the drug and alcohol policy.

Duration and Approvals

An employee may be placed on PAL for up to 30 calendar days if a department director, or their designee, determines the immediate removal of an employee from their normal job duties and/or the workplace to be in the best interests of the county. Prior to placing an employee on PAL, the director should consider other alternatives, such as temporary reassignment, etc.

If the need for PAL exceeds 30 calendar days, the department director, or their designee, must receive prior approval from the Director of the Department of Human Resources (DHR), or their designee, to extend the PAL. All extension requests and approvals must occur in writing as soon as it is determined that the PAL will need to exceed 30 days. The Director of DHR, or their designee, may

grant an extension of up to 30 days, if warranted. Under exceptional circumstances, the Director of DHR, or their designee, may grant a second extension of PAL of up to 30 days. PAL will rarely exceed 90 calendar days.

Department Responsibilities

When placing an employee on PAL, the department is responsible for:

1. Notifying the employee in writing that they are being placed on PAL. The notification shall outline the employee's responsibilities while on PAL. One of the following templates should be used:
 - [Administrative Leave Notification – Active Investigation](#)
 - [Administrative Leave Notification – Non-Investigation](#)If it is anticipated that the PAL will exceed a week, the [DHR policy team](#) and the relevant labor negotiator (for represented employees) shall be copied.
2. Submitting an approval request to the [DHR policy team](#) prior to extending PAL beyond 30 calendar days as soon as it is determined that the PAL will need to exceed 30 calendar days.
3. Communicating to the employee, who they should submit leave request to and processing any leave requests by the employee.

Employee Responsibilities While on PAL

An employee on PAL is required to:

1. Not engage in any county duties or activities unless expressly directed to do so by a supervisor or human resources staff.
2. Not attempt to physically access their King County worksite unless directed to appear by a supervisor or human resources staff.
3. Not discuss the investigation with any potential witness to the events being investigated. Not contact any such persons at work or otherwise. This includes contact at a residence, place of work, or other venue via telephone, e-mail, third party, or indirectly through any means. The employee may discuss the investigation with their union representative.
 - Notwithstanding the above, nothing precludes the employee from disclosing or discussing with anyone conduct that the employee believes to be unlawful harassment, discrimination, or retaliation, wage and hour violations, sexual assault, conduct that is otherwise illegal under law, or conduct that is recognized as against public policy.
4. Remain available for contact during their regular work hours, except for regular meal and rest breaks, and provide a telephone number and e-mail address where they will be available to respond during the employee's regular work hours.
5. Be ready, willing, and able to be called back to work or to provide information at any time during the employee's regular work hours.
6. Notify the department, as directed, if the employee will be absent and unavailable for contact. Pre-approval must be obtained for leave.
7. Failure to comply with any of the above responsibilities may subject the employee to discipline.

QUESTIONS

Refer questions or comments to your department's [Human Resources Manager](#) or the Department of Human Resources.