

Personnel Rule 7.4 – Sabbatical Leave

7.4.0 Authority

SMC 4.04.030 and subsequent revisions thereto, Definitions

SMC 4.04.040 and subsequent revisions thereto, Administration

SMC 4.04.050 and subsequent revisions thereto, Rule-Making Authority

SMC 4.20.060 and subsequent revisions thereto, Credit for Unpaid Absences

SMC 4.33 and subsequent revisions thereto, Sabbatical Leave

7.4.1 Definitions

- A. "Appointing authority" shall mean the head of an employing unit authorized by ordinance or City Charter to employ others on behalf of the City, or a designated management representative. The term includes and can be used interchangeably with department head, department director, superintendent, and chief.
- B. "Seattle Human Resources Director" shall mean the head of the Seattle Department of Human Resources or his or her designated management representative.
- C. "Probationary employee" shall mean an employee who has been appointed to a position within the classified service but who has not completed a 1-year period of probation.
- D. "Regularly appointed employee" shall mean an individual with a probationary, regular or exempt appointment to a position of City employment.
- E. "Sabbatical leave" shall mean an unpaid leave of absence not to exceed 12 months duration for which an employee may apply after completion of 7 years of continuous full-time service or the equivalent thereof.
- F. "Seniority" shall mean a regular employee's length of continuous service in his or her current classification and all higher classifications since original appointment to that classification, excluding any break in service occasioned by a quit, resignation, retirement or discharge.

7.4.2 Application of this Rule

- A. The provisions of this Rule apply to regularly appointed employees.
- B. For regularly appointed employees who are represented under the terms of a collective bargaining agreement, this Rule prevails except where it conflicts with the collective bargaining agreement, any memoranda of agreement or understanding signed pursuant to the collective bargaining agreement, or any recognized and established practice relative to the members of the bargaining unit.
- C. This Rule does not apply to individuals who are employed under the terms of a grant that includes sabbatical leave provisions that conflict with this Rule.

- D. This Rule does not apply to individuals hired by the City on a temporary, intermittent or seasonal basis, or for a work schedule of fewer than 20 hours per week, nor does it apply to individuals hired under contract to the City.
- E. Appointing authorities may establish written policies and procedures for the implementation and administration of this Rule to facilitate the management of the personnel system within their employing units, provided that such policies and procedures do not conflict with the provisions of this Rule.

7.4.3 Sabbatical Leave

- A. An employee may request, and the appointing authority may grant a sabbatical leave of absence not to exceed 12 consecutive months, to an employee who has completed the equivalent of 7 consecutive years of full-time regular City service. An employee who takes a sabbatical leave is entitled to return, at the conclusion of the leave, to the position from which he or she left, or a position in the same employing unit that is substantially similar in duties, responsibilities and compensation. The employee's right to return is no greater than if he or she had been actively working during the leave period.
- B. Upon commencing a sabbatical leave, an employee may opt to take a lump sum cash-out of any or all of his or her sick leave balance over 240 hours, at the rate of one hour's pay for every four hours of sick leave. The cashed-out sick leave is deleted from the employee's sick leave balance.
- C. Employees are not required to exhaust their paid leave balances prior to beginning a sabbatical leave.
- D. To the extent allowed by the City's agreements with health care providers or insurers, the employing unit will pay the employer's portion of an employee's health care benefits while the employee is on sabbatical leave, at the rate of 1 month of coverage for each full year of service.
- E. Following a sabbatical leave, an employee must complete an additional 7 years of full-time service, or the equivalent thereof, to be eligible for another sabbatical leave.
- F. An employee who fails to return to work from a sabbatical leave shall be treated as a voluntary quit. The appointing authority will provide the employee written notice via personal delivery or certified mail of this intended personnel action. If the employee fails to respond to the notice within five business days of the notice being sent, the personnel action will be final effective the date the sabbatical leave was scheduled to end.

7.4.4 Effect of Unpaid Leave on Service Credit

- A. An employee who takes unpaid leave of absence authorized under Personnel Rule 7.1, Family and Medical Leave; Personnel Rule 7.2, Pregnancy Disability Leave and Limited Duty Assignment; Personnel Rule 7.3, Leave of Absence; or Personnel Rule 7.4, Sabbatical Leave shall have any period(s) of unpaid leave deducted from his or her service credit for purposes of calculating seniority for layoff.

- B. A probationary employee who takes unpaid leave of absence authorized under Personnel Rule 7.1, Family and Medical Leave; Personnel Rule 7.2, Pregnancy Disability Leave and Limited Duty Assignment; Personnel Rule 7.3, Leave of Absence; or Personnel Rule 7.4, Sabbatical Leave, or who takes paid leave authorized under Personnel Rule 7.6, Vacation; Personnel Rule 7.8, Sick Leave and Sick Leave Transfer; or Personnel Rule 7.9, Bereavement Leave shall have his or her probationary period adjusted for any period(s) of absence in excess of 30 working days.
- C. An employee who takes unpaid leave of absence authorized under Personnel Rule 7.2, Pregnancy Disability Leave and Limited Duty Assignment; Personnel Rule 7.3, Leave of Absence; or Personnel Rule 7.4, Sabbatical Leave shall have any period(s) of absence deducted from his or her service credit for purposes of calculating retirement eligibility and benefit, if applicable.
- D. An employee who takes unpaid leave of absence authorized under Personnel Rule 7.1, Family and Medical Leave; Personnel Rule 7.2, Pregnancy Disability Leave and Limited Duty Assignment; Personnel Rule 7.3, Leave of Absence; or Personnel Rule 7.4, Sabbatical Leave shall have his or her next salary increment date adjusted for any period(s) of absence in excess of the equivalent of 240 regular pay hours.

7.4.5 Unpaid Leave Limitations

No period of unpaid leave or combination of unpaid leaves granted under Personnel Rule 7.1, Family and Medical Leave; Personnel Rule 7.2, Pregnancy Disability Leave and Limited Duty Assignment; Personnel Rule 7.3, Leave of Absence; or Personnel Rule 7.4, Sabbatical Leave shall exceed 12 months except with the prior approval of the appointing authority and the Seattle Human Resources Director.