

Taking a Leave to Care for a Family Member

What classified staff need to know about their family leave with the University of Pittsburgh

If your family member has a serious health condition that requires you to miss work, you may be eligible for a leave under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

FMLA is a federal law that provides up to 12 weeks (60 working days) of unpaid, job-protected leave to eligible staff members. You may be able to take time off of work to care for a spouse, registered domestic partner, dependent son or daughter, or parent who has a serious health condition. In order to qualify, you must have been employed by the University of Pittsburgh for at least 12 months, and you must have worked at least 1,250 hours at the University in the past 12 months.

Why should I apply for FMLA?

FMLA leave is meant to protect you and your job. Even if you have paid time off to cover your entire leave, you are still required to file a claim. University policy requires that you file an FMLA claim if you have missed more than three consecutive work days to care for an eligible family member. If you are normally off on a weekend and you are off work Thursday, Friday, and Monday, you must file an FMLA claim on Tuesday if you are still off from work.

How do I apply for FMLA?

- Contact your supervisor or department administrator to inform them of your intent to take a medical leave.
- Contact MetLife at 1-888-777-7418 to file your FMLA claims approximately 30 days prior to the start of the leave, or as soon as possible. MetLife will send you a packet of information and forms that you must review. You and your family member's attending physician must complete these forms, which must be returned directly to MetLife.

What is the effect of a University holiday during a leave?

A University holiday/recess day does not extend either a paid or unpaid leave. However, if you have sick or vacation days that you are applying toward the leave and these days fall before and after a University holiday/recess day, then you will receive pay for the holiday/recess day. You will not be paid for holidays that fall during the unpaid portion of your leave.

Do I have to use paid time off to cover the leave?

You are required to exhaust your sick time while on FMLA. You may use your vacation and personal time to cover the leave, but you are not required to.

Eligible employees who have less than 10 days of sick time at the start of their medical leave will have Voluntary Sick Time Donation Bank time added towards their leave automatically. The sick time added will get the employee to a total of 10 sick days to be utilized during their leave.

Part-time employees will have their Voluntary Sick Time Donation Bank time prorated by their percent of effort.

No more than 10 days of donated sick time can be used per approved medical leave.

Employees can only receive up to 20 days from the Voluntary Sick Time Donation Bank during their career.

Do I have to complete my Pitt Worx time card while I am on FMLA?

Yes, while you are on a paid leave, you will be required to document the sick, vacation, and/or personal time that you use to cover your leave. You will not be required to submit a time card while you are on an unpaid leave. Please work with your supervisor prior to your leave to determine if you are required to submit your own time cards or if your supervisor will submit them on your behalf while you are on an approved medical leave. If you are on an unpaid leave, you will not have access to your Pitt Worx time card until your department submits paperwork to document your return to work.

Do I accrue vacation and sick time during a leave?

No, you do not accrue sick or vacation time, regardless of whether your time off is paid or unpaid. If your leave begins or ends on any day other than the first of the month, Pitt Worx will calculate a partial accrual for those months based on the number of days worked.

Can I take a medical leave for my adult child?

You can take an FMLA for your dependent child under the age of 18. If your adult child is incapable of self-care without regard to illness, you may be eligible to take a medical leave. Please contact MetLife to determine if you are eligible for FMLA.

What if I do not meet the eligibility criteria for FMLA?

You may request a personal leave through your department if you are not eligible for FMLA. If approved, a leave of absence agreement outlining the details of the leave must be reviewed by the Employee Relations Department of Human Resources.

What happens to my benefits and other deductions while I am on FMLA?

If you use your paid time off to cover the leave, deductions will be taken in the following order: pretax deductions, taxes, involuntary deductions, then voluntary deductions.

If your paycheck is not enough to cover your deductions, you will be responsible for outstanding obligations. Depending on the length of time you will be on an unpaid status, you will either be directly billed for the cost of your health and welfare benefits by the Payroll Department, or the cost of the insurance will be deducted from your paycheck upon your return to work. It is your responsibility to ensure your premiums are paid.

Please contact the Benefits Department if you are currently using or planning to use educational benefits while on FMLA to ensure proper application of the benefit.

What is required when I return to work?

You must contact your department to inform them of your return to work date. The end date of your leave must be the same date your FMLA claim is approved through.

If you do not return to the University at the end of an approved leave and work for at least 30 calendar days, you may be required to repay to the University premiums that were paid on your behalf as a staff member. Recovery of premiums will be made consistent with FMLA.

I was a temporary employee prior to being hired as a staff employee. Does my time at a temporary status count towards FMLA eligibility?

Yes. Time as a University employee, including time worked as a temporary employee, counts toward FMLA eligibility.

What if I'm part of a collective bargaining unit?

Reference your collective bargaining agreement for your union's specific leave requirements and process.

Who do I call if I have questions?

MetLife	1-888-777-7418
Benefits Department.....	833-852-2210
Parking.....	412-624-4034
Payroll Department.....	412-624-8070
Credit Union	412-624-2249
Life Solutions.....	1-866-647-3432

The information presented in this brochure is intended to provide a general overview of the disability plans. Plan documents and additional details may also be found at hr.pitt.edu/benefits. If there is a conflict between the brochure and the plan/contracts, then the plan and contracts will control. Benefits may be modified from time to time as required by applicable laws, and benefits may be modified or terminated as deemed necessary or appropriate by the University. Any such modifications or terminations will be communicated in writing as appropriate. Staff covered under collective bargaining agreements are governed by the terms of those agreements. No one speaking on behalf of the plans or purporting to speak on behalf of the plans can modify the terms of the plans in any way. The terms of the plans control in all instances.