

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

DEPARTMENTAL PERSONNEL MANUAL SYSTEM

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SUBJECT: Time Off as an Incentive Award

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The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has issued final regulations (57 Fed. Reg. 14637, April 22, 1992, to be codified at 5 CFR 451) to implement provisions of the Federal Employees Pay Comparability Act of 1990, which authorized time off as an incentive award. Attached is a copy of the Department's final directive on its Time Off as an Incentive Award policy. If you have questions concerning the policy please call Jan Karicher of my staff on 366-9450.


Director of Personnel

Attachment

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

SECTION 1 - PURPOSE

This directive establishes the Department of Transportation (DOT) policy on granting time off from duty as an incentive award. It is designed to implement provisions of the Federal Employees Pay Comparability Act of 1990, and the governing regulations contained in Subpart C, Part 451 of Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations. Time off awards are intended to increase employees' productivity and creativity by rewarding their contributions to the quality, efficiency, or economy of departmental operations.

SECTION 2 - AUTHORITY TO APPROVE

The authority to approve awards, in accordance with the provisions of this directive, is held by Departmental Officers and Heads of Operating Administrations, and may be redelegated. However, time off awards for members of the Senior Executive Service occupying positions at the Executive Director, Assistant Administrator, Deputy Assistant Administrator, Associate Administrator or Deputy Associate Administrator levels must be presented to the Departmental Director of Personnel (M-10) for consideration by the Executive Resources Review Committee.

CHAPTER 2

PROCEDURES FOR GRANTING TIME OFF FROM DUTY AS AN INCENTIVE AWARD

SECTION 1 - COVERAGE

1. The provisions of this directive apply to employees paid under:
 - a. the General Schedule, including the Performance Management and Recognition System;
 - b. the Senior Level pay system;
 - c. the Senior Executive Service;
 - d. the Federal Wage System (FWS);
 - e. non-appropriated funds with the U.S. Coast Guard, except a position at a Coast Guard exchange, or a facility responsible for the comfort, pleasure, contentment, and mental and physical improvement of active duty Coast Guard personnel; or
 - f. an administratively determined (AD) pay system.
2. The provisions of this directive do not apply to an employee:
 - a. working on an intermittent basis with no regularly scheduled tour of duty; or
 - b. covered by the Executive Schedule.

SECTION 2 - GRANTING TIME OFF AWARDS

1. Authorized amounts. Time off from duty as an incentive award may be authorized, in installments of up to 40 hours at a time, but no more than 80 hours in a given leave year to a full-time employee. A part-time employee may be granted no more than the average number of hours worked during a biweekly pay period during a given leave year, and a single award may be no greater than one-half the total hours allowed during a given leave year. For example, an employee with a part-time tour of 32 hours a week may receive 64 hours in a leave year, with a single award maximum of 32 hours.

2. **Basis.** A time off award may be granted, without loss of pay or charge to leave, in recognition of superior accomplishment or other personal effort that contributes to the quality, efficiency, or economy of the Department's operations. The types of employee contribution that may be recognized with a time off award are:
 - a. making a high quality contribution involving a difficult or important project or assignment;
 - b. displaying special initiative and skill in completing an assignment or project before the deadline;
 - c. using initiative and creativity in making improvements in a product, activity, program, or service through action or an employee suggestion; or
 - d. ensuring the mission of the unit is accomplished during a difficult period by successfully completing additional work on a project assignment while maintaining the employee's own workload.
3. **Additional criteria.** Each Operating Administration may develop additional written criteria that may be more specific or unique to its function.
4. **Relationship to other awards.** A time off award may be granted in combination with a cash award in recognition of the same accomplishment.

SECTION 3 - SCHEDULING AND USE OF TIME OFF AWARDS

Time off granted must be used within one year after the award is made and does not convert to cash under any circumstances. When physical incapacitation for duty occurs during the time off award period, sick leave may be granted for the period of incapacitation. However, any time off not taken during the one year period will be forfeited.

SECTION 4 - DOCUMENTING TIME OFF AWARDS

1. **Justification.** A time off award must be recommended and justified in writing. The written determination must:
 - a. state the name and position of the employee;
 - b. describe how the employee met the required criteria;
 - c. justify and state the number of hours of time off granted by describing the benefits realized by the Department from the employee's contribution; and

4. indicate whether the employee previously received a time off award during the same leave year and, if so, the date of the award and how many hours were granted.
2. Records. A copy of the written justification should be retained by the approving official and the original document sent to the appropriate operating personnel office. Copies of the written justifications shall be provided to the Office of the Secretary upon request.
3. Processing. For each time off award approved, the amount of time off granted shall be recorded on a Standard Form 52, Request for Personnel Action and submitted to the appropriate personnel office. The nature of action code to be used is 872/Time Off Award, and the authority is V3E/5 U.S.C. 4501(e). In addition, time off shall be documented on Time and Attendance Reports by entering code 22, in the Hours Not Worked column.
4. Relationship to other personnel actions. Due weight shall be given to approved time off awards when rating and ranking an employee for promotion.

DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this directive:

"Time off award" means an excused absence granted to an employee without charge to leave or loss of pay. A time off award is not a category of leave, and is not subject to any of the laws or regulations governing leave.

"Department" means the Department of Transportation or any of its Operating Administrations.