POLICY

Requests for scheduled leave (annual, sick or family) must be approved by the Team Leader in advance of the leave date. It is the responsibility of the employee requesting leave to ensure adequate coverage of his/her responsibilities during the absence prior to requesting leave and to communicate this to the Branch/home team and Team Leader.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this standard operating procedure is to describe the policies and procedures for requesting and granting Annual Leave/ Scheduled Sick or Family Leave/Unscheduled Sick Leave to ensure continuity and efficient conduct of clinical research while meeting the needs of the individual and the research team.

RESOURCES

- NIH Office of Human Resources: Family Leave Policies and Programs (Manual Chapter 2300-630-5)
- NIH Office of Human Resources: NIH Leave Guide for Civilian Employees
- U.S. Office of Personnel Management: Sick Leave (General Information)
- Commissioned Officers Handbook

PROCEDURES

Step 1: Requesting Annual Leave, Scheduled Sick Leave or Family Leave

- Prior to requesting leave through the Team Lead, the Research Nurse must discuss the leave request with the home team (Branch Chief, PI, investigators and research nurses) and determine assignment of research nurse coverage during the period of absence. If Research Nurse cannot secure adequate coverage, he/she should discuss with their Team Leader.
- All requests for annual leave, scheduled sick leave (including medical, dental, or optical examination or treatment, or pregnancy) or family leave must be submitted to the Team Lead and approved in writing via email in advance of the leave date. Included in the request is the plan for coverage with their home team. If the Research Nurse cannot secure adequate coverage he/she should discuss with their Team Lead.
• The Team Lead will send an email to the Research Nurse noting approval of leave.
• The Research Nurse then enters the leave request into ITAS at least one week prior to the approved leave date.
• Prior to departing on leave, the Research Nurse must communicate clearly and completely all information necessary to ensure that his/her responsibilities can be completed efficiently, and without interruption. This must be communicated to the home team, Team Lead and the person covering.
• PHS Officers: Use PHS Form 1345 (hard copy for all requests). Officer completes all boxes in Section 1 and must include contact information while on any type of leave. In an emergency, a Team Lead must be able to contact the officer and have a reasonable idea of the time needed to return to duty station if out of the local area. The Team Lead completes Section 2 and keeps a copy of provided leave slip. After leave is taken, the Officer completes first line of Section 4 and any change in days initially requested should be noted here. The Team Lead verifies days taken and signs off on the second line of Section 4. Both the Officer and the Team Lead maintain a copy of all completed leave slips. The leave slip is then forwarded to the ORN timekeeper.
• Contractors: Will coordinate coverage for leave with their home teams and notify their Team Lead of their request and plan for coverage.

Step 2: Unscheduled Sick/Emergency Leave
• If a Research Nurse is incapacitated and unable to perform his/her duties, the Research Nurse must notify the home team (PI or Branch Chief and colleague) and the Team Lead as soon as possible, preferably not later than one hour prior to the scheduled work time OR one hour prior to the start of Clinic (on clinic days) whichever is earlier, of the absence due to illness or emergency. Notification must be in the form of email or direct telephone communication. The request should indicate the reason for the absence and anticipated return date.
• The Research Nurse must submit the used sick leave in ITAS (PHS officers use the Form 1345 and submits form to Team Lead) upon return to the duty station.
• For absences in excess of 3 consecutive work days, or for lesser periods as determined by the leave approving official, a medical certificate or other administratively acceptable evidence to support the use of sick leave may be required.