



Leave Entitlements Procedure

Information Sheet: Absence from Work on Account of ‘Catastrophic’ or ‘Extreme’ Fire Danger Days

Purpose

The purpose of this Information Sheet is to provide Human Resources Branch staff with support in the provision of HR advice to University staff who are absent from work on account of ‘Catastrophic’ or ‘Extreme’ fire danger days.

Q1 What is a ‘Catastrophic’ or ‘Extreme’ Fire Danger day?

The Country Fire Service (CFS) uses a Fire Danger Rating system to help inform the public of the level of bushfire risk and recommended action that should be taken for each risk category. The Fire Danger Rating is not a predictor of how likely a bushfire is to occur, but how dangerous it could be if it did occur.

At the top tier of the rating system is the rating of ‘Catastrophic’ and ‘Extreme’ fire days.

It is essential that staff members in bushfire-prone areas regularly check the CFS website for how this might impact on them and their family.

Q2 What if I am required to leave work on account of a school closure or some other reason related to the Fire Danger Rating system?

The University of Adelaide Enterprise Agreement (as amended) does not provide for a form of paid or unpaid leave specific to the fire danger of a given day.

Other forms of leave entitlements may apply to these circumstances and are detailed in this fact sheet.

If a staff member needs to be absent from work they should provide their supervisor with notice of their absence and indicate, where possible, the estimated duration of the absence, as soon as practicable.

Q3 What forms of leave might be available to a Staff Member?

Paid Leave

Personal Leave—A staff member (excluding casuals) is entitled to personal leave to provide care or support to a member of their family or household where that person requires care or support because of an unexpected emergency. Staff members accrue 15 working days (on a pro rata basis for part time workers) of personal leave per year.

Annual Leave—A staff member can apply to use their accrued annual leave for fire danger days.

Special Leave—In the event of absences from work caused by an emergency circumstance, members of staff (other than casuals) have an entitlement to take up to three (3) paid days of special paid leave per calendar year. Fixed term and continuing staff who are within the first year of their employment may access special paid leave provided that they have an annual leave credit equal to the amount of leave to be taken.

It is important to note that an emergency circumstance will be assessed on a case by case basis depending on the circumstances of how a fire, or fire danger rated day impacts upon the staff member. For this reason it is important that a staff member notifies their supervisor of such an absence at the first opportunity.

(continued)

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Q3 What forms of leave might be available to a Staff Member? (continued)

Unpaid Leave

Unpaid Carer's Leave—Staff members who cannot take paid personal leave are entitled to two days of unpaid carer's leave for each 'permissible' occasion when a member of their family or household requires care or support because of an unexpected emergency.

Leave Without Pay—In the event that a staff member (other than casuals) does not have an entitlement to a form of paid leave, they may apply to their Area Manager for leave without pay. Leave without pay may be approved at the discretion of the Area Manager.

Q4 What additional leave is available to volunteers who respond to an emergency?

A volunteer of a recognised emergency management body (e.g. South Australian Country Fire Service, State Emergency Service and Country Fire Authority) employed on a casual basis can apply for **unpaid** voluntary emergency management leave.

A volunteer of a recognised emergency management body employed on a fixed term or continuing basis is entitled to take up to five (5) days paid leave per calendar year to undertake 'voluntary emergency management activities' and up to one (1) day of paid leave per emergency as recovery.

Any staff member seeking to take this leave (paid or unpaid) must give their supervisor notice as soon as reasonably practicable of the period or expected period of their absence. On request, the staff member must provide their supervisor with evidence that their absence is for engaging in activities arising out of their membership to the emergency management body and/ or documentary evidence of their membership, training requirements and call-outs attended.

Further Information

Supervisors and staff need to be mindful that fire danger can pose a real threat to life and personal property. Staff are encouraged to act reasonably during such circumstances.

If staff have questions about their entitlements during these periods they should contact the HR Service Centre at: hrrservicecentre@adelaide.edu.au or 8313 1111.

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