



Natural Resources Conservation Service
210 Walnut Street, Room 693
Des Moines, IA 50309-2180

May 30, 2012

IOWA INSTRUCTION 360-394 - REPORTING FOR WORK AND USING LEAVE

IA394.0 PURPOSE

This Iowa Instruction provides my expectations of employees when reporting for work and obtaining approval of any absence from duty.

IA394.1 SCOPE

These instructions will be followed by all NRCS employees.

IA394.2 FILING INSTRUCTIONS

This Iowa Instruction will be posted on the Iowa NRCS Employee Website, which can be accessed at <http://www.ia.nrcs.usda.gov/intranet/> under the Iowa NRCS eDirectives System section.

/s/ Richard Sims
State Conservationist

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(IA Instruction Title 360-394 First Edition – May 2012)

IOWA INSTRUCTION 360-394 - REPORTING FOR WORK AND USING LEAVE

1. PURPOSE:

This Iowa Instruction provides my expectations of employees when reporting for work and obtaining approval of any absence from duty.

2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

The General Manual (GM).250.404.D - Subpart D - Time and Attendance states:

404.32 Supervisor Responsibilities

A. It is the supervisor's responsibility to approve tours of duty in writing for his/her staff. The supervisor must review and certify the time and attendance information reported for each employee under his/her supervision. Each supervisor must rely on established systems of internal control to ensure accuracy and legal compliance of time and attendance documents he/she is certifying. The supervisor is accountable for work time and absences of his/her employees and must determine reasonableness of work output for the time spent. Each supervisor has the authority to revoke, for cause, any alternative work schedule of his/her employees and return the employees to a regular 8-hour work day.

B. Certification of time and attendance documents must be based on knowledge from one or more of the following: personal observation, timekeeper's attestation, checking with other independent sources, reliance on other internal controls, or a combination of these. Staff work time must be more closely monitored when an employee self-maintains their entries.

C. Supervisors approve tours of duty and requests for leave to ensure that an office is covered during customer service hours.

D. Supervisors certify that time and attendance exceptions are recorded in the time and attendance system. Ensure time and attendance records (including supporting documentation such as Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Form 71, Request for Leave or Approved Absence form) for each employee are properly prepared and submitted to the timekeeper each pay period.

404.33 Employee Responsibilities

A. Employees must keep the supervisor informed of time and attendance activity. Verify all time and attendance data entered each pay period by submitting the completed timesheet in WebTCAS.

B. Given that the time and attendance system is an electronic system, employees can maintain his or her time and attendance records and should enter time on a daily basis. If the employee will be on extended approved leave, then they may submit time and attendance records in advance of the close of the time period.

C. Employees should record the time worked and leave used in quarter hour increments. Clock hours must be shown for all premium time, leave used (if less than a full day), for all credit hours earned and for the tour of duty (if on a maxi flex tour and the employee deviates from the established tour of duty).

D. Employees may not verify or certify their own time and attendance records.

E. Employees must report "on time" as defined by the approved tour of duty.

F. Employees must request and have leave approved in advance by the supervisor as delegated per General Manual Title 360, Part 415, Leave.

The General Manual (GM) 360.415.A – Subpart A – Leave states:

415.1 Responsibilities

A. Supervisors

- (1) Managers and supervisors authorized to approve leave have the responsibility of scheduling employees' absences in order to:
 - (i) Maintain the workforce necessary for mission accomplishment.
 - (ii) Permit employees to make adjustments in their plans in order to meet work requirements.
 - (iii) Ensure that all absences from scheduled tours of duty are charged to the appropriate leave category.
 - (iv) Ensure that employees know the procedures for requesting and using leave.
- (2) Approval of leave is a discretionary matter reserved to the supervisor. The taking of leave is not an absolute right afforded an employee, but is conditioned on the needs of the Federal service. It is essential that managers and supervisors who approve leave and Time and Attendance (T&A) Input Records have a thorough understanding of leave provisions.
- (3) First-line supervisors have the authority to approve or deny all types of leave, i.e., annual, sick, advanced annual, advanced sick, credit, and Leave Without Pay (LWOP), based on the workload and work requirements to accomplish the Agency's mission. To the maximum extent possible, the leave schedule should allow an employee, upon request, at least one continuous period of 80 hours of annual leave per year.

B. Employees

- (1) Observe designated duty hours and be punctual in reporting for work and returning from lunch.
- (2) Obtain advanced authorization for absence from duty from their supervisor.
- (3) Correctly report all leave taken.

415.2 Policy

A. General Provisions

- (1) All leave will be charged in increments of 15 minutes. Any type of leave used in excess of three (3) consecutive workdays must be requested on OPM Form 71, Request for Leave or Approved Absence form.
- (2) Employees must observe designated duty hours and be punctual in reporting for work and returning from lunch periods. Employees must obtain advanced authorization for absence from duty when possible. Where absence from duty results from illness or an emergency, employees, if capable, are required to notify their supervisor or other appropriate official with delegated authority to approve leave as soon as possible. When possible, the employee must notify their supervisor or other appropriate person prior to the core hours beginning. If the employee is incapacitated, another individual may notify the appropriate supervisor. When an employee fails to properly notify his or her supervisor, the absence may be charged as unauthorized Absence Without Leave (AWOL), which may also result in disciplinary action.

The General Manual (GM) 360.427.B - Subpart B - Work Schedules

427.11 Establishment of Work Schedules

(3) Flexible Work Schedules

Flexitour Schedule:

- Employees select a starting time each day; however, they are allowed to occasionally vary their starting and ending times up to 30 minutes; however, when an employee varies their starting time up to 30 minutes after their designated starting time, the employee must make up this time at the end of the day or take approved leave. Employees must complete their scheduled number of hours by 6:00 p.m.
- Employees must be present during the core hours of 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. (unless their tour of duty has been changed on a temporary basis) or must be approved for leave during the portion of the core hours they are absent;
- Employees are eligible to earn credit hours up to 2 hours per day between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. with supervisory concurrence;

3. PROCESS:

Any type of leave request is to be emailed to the employee's supervisor that includes the date and hours and type of leave the employee is requesting. Advanced notice should be given as far in advance as possible, and at least as far ahead as the requested time off. For example: To take an hour of leave, the request should be made at least an hour before you leave; a day off would require at least one day's notice, one week off would be at least one weeks' notice. Employees may not assume that the absence is approved until they have received written or verbal approval from the supervisor or the Acting. Supervisors will use these emails when certifying timesheets.

Any leave approved in advance must be recorded in employees' Outlook Calendar.

Any type of leave used in excess of three (3) consecutive workdays must be requested on OPM Form 71, Request for Leave or Approved Absence form.

Where absence from duty results from illness or an emergency, employees, if capable, are required to notify their supervisor or the Acting to approve leave as soon as possible. When possible, the employee must notify their supervisor or other appropriate person prior to the core hours beginning. If the employee is incapacitated, another individual may notify the appropriate supervisor.

Employees are not to earn or use credit leave without prior supervisor approval.

For those employees serving on a Flexitour work schedule, will not be able to report to work within 30 minutes of the tour of duty, and have not received prior approval for the absence, they must, contact the supervisor or the Acting. The request for approval for the absence must be made no later than the starting time of the tour of duty, on the same day that the employee will be absent or late.

If employees serving on a 5/4/9 work schedule, will not be able to report to work by the set starting time and have not received prior approval for the absence, they must contact the supervisor or the Acting. The request for approval for the absence must be made no later than the set starting time, on the same day that the employee will be absent or late.

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Example #1 – Flexitour schedule

An employee has an approved Flexitour work schedule with a tour of duty from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. If an employee is not able to report by 8:00 a.m. and has not received prior approval for the absence, the employee must contact his/her supervisor. The employee must contact the supervisor to request leave no later than 7:30 a.m., on the same day he/she will be absent or late.

Example #2 – 5/4/9 schedule

An employee has an approved 5/4/9 work schedule with a tour of duty from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. If an employee is not able to report by 7:30 a.m. and has not received prior approval for the absence, the employee must contact his/her supervisor. The employee must contact the supervisor to request leave no later than 7:30 a.m., on the same day he/she will be absent or late.

Advanced planning and careful consideration will be given to scheduling leave to ensure the necessary workforce is available, particularly during peak workload periods, to accomplish the work and prevent loss of any leave due to employees at the end of the leave year.

Approved By:

Date: **05/31/2012**

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