



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Washington, DC 20415

The Director

Thursday, January 29, 1998

CPM 98-01

MEMORANDUM FOR: Human Resources Directors

FROM: Donald J. Winstead Associate Director

Subject: SF-71, Request for Leave or Approved Absence

The Office of Personnel Management is pleased to announce the issuance of a revised SF-71, Request for Leave or Approved Absence. This new version of SF-71 replaces the older one. Supplies of the paper copy of the new SF-71 will not be available from the General Services Administration for several months. Agencies wishing to use the new SF-71 immediately may reproduce their own copies from the electronic version of the form available on this website.

In 1995, we established an interagency task force made up of volunteers from eight agencies to work with us to recommend changes in the SF-71 to accommodate the various new leave policies that have been established during the past few years. This effort, in conjunction with comments solicited from agency leave contacts, led to the revised SF-71, Request for Leave or Approved Absence.

We thank all who were involved in this effort for their assistance and cooperation. Over the past 2 years, we have developed many versions of the SF-71 and received many comments, ranging from those who said the form needed more detail to those who said the form needed very little detail. This final version incorporates many of the excellent comments we received and meets our goal of developing a short, simple form with enough detail to accommodate most agencies' needs.

Some commenters suggested that a separate space be provided on the form to request the use of sick leave for family care or bereavement purposes under regulations issued in late 1994. Sick leave used for these purposes does not constitute a separate category of leave. However, block #4 of the revised SF-71 clearly indicates that "Care of family member/bereavement . . ." is one of the purposes for which sick leave may be requested. Employees should be informed that the regulations limit the amount of sick leave that may be used for this purpose (5 CFR 630.401(b)-(e)), and agencies must continue to track the amount used by each employee in order to ensure that these limits are not exceeded.

Some commenters questioned the need to separately identify leave requested under the [Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 \(FMLA\)](#). (See block #5.) The law and regulations require that an employee invoke his or her entitlement to use leave without pay, annual leave, or sick leave under the FMLA prior to using such leave. By checking block #5 at the time leave is requested, an employee provides affirmative evidence that he or she has invoked this entitlement. Failure to

check block #5 at the time leave is requested on this form constitutes evidence that an employee has not invoked this entitlement. It should also be noted that the FMLA provides an entitlement to leave for family care purposes only when such leave is used to care for a spouse, son, daughter, or parent of the employee who has a serious health condition.

Finally, many commenters requested that space for requesting additional types of leave or approved absence be provided on this form. Many additional types of paid leave or approved absence are authorized by law, including adjustment of work schedules for religious observances (5 U.S.C. 5550a), credit hours under flexible work schedules (5 U.S.C. 6126), home leave (5 U.S.C. 6305(a)), shore leave (5 U.S.C. 6305(c)), absences in connection with funerals (5 U.S.C. 6321, 6326, and 6327), court leave (5 U.S.C. 6322), military leave (5 U.S.C. 6323), absence of certain police and firemen (5 U.S.C. 6324), absence resulting from hostile action abroad (5 U.S.C. 6325), and leave for bone-marrow or organ donation (5 U.S.C. 6327). Clearly, it is not possible to design a short, simple form that provides separate space for requesting or approving each of these types of leave or approved absence. Therefore, we encourage agencies to tailor the SF-71 to meet their own needs. For example, agencies may establish their own coding system for use of the "Remarks" section of the form (block #6) so that specific types of leave or approved absence requested in the space for "Other Paid Absence" (under block #4) may be readily identified and tracked, if necessary.

For further information, please contact the Pay and Leave Administration Division at (202) 606-2858 or email payleave@opm.gov.

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