



# Changes to Use of Sick Leave for Family Care or Bereavement Purposes

A Mandatory Reference for ADS Chapter 480

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The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has issued final regulations in the Federal Register on the use of sick leave to provide care for a family member or to make arrangements for or attend the funeral of a family member. The sick leave regulations were effective on September 18, 2006, and are applicable at the beginning of Pay Period 20, which is October 1, 2006.

OPM issued these regulations as part of an effort to standardize and simplify leave programs and policies to support consolidating human resources and payroll systems on a Government-wide basis and to provide guidance on leave programs available to assist employees in the event of a pandemic health crisis.

The final regulations remove the requirement for an employee to maintain a minimum sick leave balance of 80 hours in order to use the maximum amount of sick leave available for family care and bereavement (up to 13 days for general medical care of a family member or bereavement, or up to 12 weeks for a serious health condition of a family member).

Previously, an employee must have maintained a balance of 80 hours of sick leave to be entitled to use up to 104 hours (13 workdays) of sick leave for general family care or bereavement purposes, and up to 480 hours (12 workweeks) of sick leave to care for a family member with a serious health condition.

In addition, the final regulations clarify that a supervisor may advance an employee up to 30 days of sick leave for a serious disability or illness of the employee or a family member, or for purposes related to the adoption of a child.

The regulations also establish a Government-wide policy on the time limit for the receipt of medical documentation supporting an employee's need for sick leave. Under the rule, employees have a standardized time period of 15 calendar days within which to provide administratively acceptable evidence as to the reason for their use of sick leave. If it is not possible to provide the requested documentation, despite the employee's diligent good faith efforts, the employee must provide it within a reasonable period of time, but no later than 30 calendar days.

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