

Ashe County

Staff Report

1/12/2021

RE: Emergency Paid Sick Leave

Summary:

At the end of the year (2020) both the County's Emergency Bonus Leave as well as the Federal Emergency Sick Leave expired. Despite this, the COVID-19 pandemic continues, and we are still dealing with the fallout. Employees have contracted COVID or have been exposed to COVID in some fashion, which has required them to be out of work.

The attached policy is almost identical to the Federal Sick Leave that was in effect last year and grants time to an employee who has contracted COVID or been exposed to COVID. The policy grants 80 hours or two weeks of additional sick leave only to be used for COVID-related absences.

The time granted last year has been instrumental in helping us keep our offices open to the public since April. We hope with this six-month policy, we can continue to keep our offices open to the public as our numbers continue to stay high and as we ease into the vaccination stage of the pandemic.

Attachments:

1. Emergency Paid Sick Leave



Ashe County Administration
150 Government Cir, Suite 2500
Jefferson, NC 28640

**Ashe County
Emergency Paid Sick Leave**

Purpose:

Because of the ongoing public health crisis, the County is granting 80 hours of emergency paid sick leave.

Eligibility:

This policy applies to all Ashe County full-time and permanent part-time employees with benefits. Part-time employees shall receive a pro-rata amount of the (80) hours.

Employees on administrative leave, leave without pay, workers' compensation and military leave shall be credited with the emergency bonus leave upon their return to employment, if their return occurs within the 6 month eligibility.

Employees hired during the 6 month period in which this time is made available, are also eligible for emergency bonus leave.

Emergency paid sick leave can be used under the following circumstances:

➤ Employees who have been advised by a health care provider or county manager to self-isolate or self-quarantine, are seeking a diagnosis of COVID-19 symptoms, or are caring for an individual under isolation or quarantine, or for children whose normal caregivers are unavailable due to COVID-19.
➤ Encourage employees to observe the terms of an isolation or quarantine order by removing the fear of lost income, to keep employers from firing those who must stay home because of COVID-19 circumstances, and to keep money flowing to households for food and housing needs.
➤ Employee will qualify for a maximum of 80 hours emergency paid sick leave if one of the following apply:
• 1. The employee is subject to a federal, state or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19;
• 2. The employee has been advised by their healthcare provider or the county manager to self-quarantine because they are infected with or have been exposed or potentially exposed to COVID-19 or because they are at high risk of complications from COVID-19;
• 3. The employee is showing symptoms of COVID-19 and is seeking but has not yet received a medical diagnosis;

- Emergency paid sick leave shall be taken only upon appropriate authorization by human resources and approved by the County Manager.
- Employees who exhaust all emergency paid sick leave prior to the end of the six month period, and with no other leave balances, shall be placed in a leave without pay (LWOP) status.
- Emergency paid sick leave is authorized until June 30, 2021.
- Emergency paid sick leave shall be charged in units of time consistent with regular annual leave.

- Emergency sick leave cannot be used to resolve negative leave balance liabilities that were the result of leave that occurred prior to the effective date of this policy.

Accounting for Leave:

- Documentation of test results (positive and/or negative) may be required as documentation for approval of this time.
- Emergency paid sick leave shall be accounted for separately from all other accrued leave.
- Emergency paid sick leave shall not be subject to conversion to sick leave.
- Any balance of emergency paid sick leave shall be transferred with the employee who transfers to another County department into a position appointment that meets the eligibility requirements.
- Emergency paid sick leave shall not be paid out upon separation of employment.