



# SANTA ROSA COUNTY HUMAN RESOURCES

DEVANN COOK, Director  
CINDY WILLIAMS, HR Manager  
hr@santarosa.fl.gov

6495 Caroline Street, Suite H | Milton, Florida 32570

## Memorandum

**To:** Santa Rosa County Board of Commissioners

**From:** DeVann Cook, Director, Human Resources

**Through:** Tony Gomillion, County Administrator

**Re:** Sick Leave Pool Modification

**Date:** August 1, 2016

### RECOMMENDATION

Modify the Sick Leave Pool policy to allow an employee, injured within the first 12 months of employment, to draw from the pool for the one-third of their salary not paid by workers' compensation.

### BACKGROUND

When someone is first hired by Santa Rosa County, they are required to accumulate 80 hours of leave before they are eligible for the Sick Leave Pool. If they are injured on the job within the first few months of employment, they will not have enough leave to join the Pool or remain at full pay for very long. With many employees, only drawing two-thirds of their salary (workers' compensation pay rate) for an extended period of time will be a financial hardship. This modification will help bridge that gap between hiring and their eligibility to join the Sick Leave Pool.

# Santa Rosa County

## Employees' Sick Leave Pool

- A. Any full-time employee who has completed one continuous year of employment with Santa Rosa County and who has a minimum of eighty hours of accumulated sick or annual leave at the beginning of the fiscal year may participate in the Sick Leave Pool. However, an applicant must meet all requirements, as otherwise stated in this agreement, and must apply on an approved form. Participation in the Pool is voluntary.
- B. All participants in the Sick Leave Pool shall contribute eight hours of accrued sick leave to the Pool during the month of October. During the initial year, eligibility for participation shall be extended sixty days beyond the date this agreement is adopted.
- C. Any sick leave contributed to the Pool shall be deducted from the balance reflected on the employee's official sick leave record.
- D. Sick leave credit, up to 480 hours (annually), may be granted to a participating employee at the discretion and upon the authority of the Sick Leave Pool Committee after consideration by Human Resources of all outstanding eligible applications. Any sick leave awarded from the Sick Leave Pool to a participating employee shall be used for absence due to a verifiable health emergency, serious personal illness or serious injury of the employee and/or immediate family member, as defined in Section X. F. of the County's personnel policy (note - qualifying for FMLA does not automatically qualify someone for borrowing from the Sick Leave Pool). The allowance for the mother's maternity leave shall be 8 weeks, unless there is a verifiable health issue with the mother or baby.
- E. A participating employee may be eligible for sick leave from the Pool only after having met the following conditions:
1. Has used all of his/her accumulated sick leave, annual leave and compensatory time.
  - ~~2. Is not eligible for Workers' Compensation pay.~~
  - ~~3.~~ 2. Is not eligible for injury in line-of-duty pay as granted by rule of the County.
  - ~~4.~~ 3. There is a ten consecutive working day minimum period before the Pool coverage starts. If an employee does not have enough leave to cover this period, then the employee will be on leave without pay for the portion of time that they do not have leave.
  4. Has an application approved by the Human Resources.
  5. Is within the first 12 months of employment and injured in-the-line-of-duty (this only applies to the one-third of the injured employee's salary not covered by workers' compensation. Once the employee has been employed for 12 months, this option is no longer available, except for injuries sustained during that time period.
- F. Membership applications shall be submitted during October. The Committee shall act to approve or disapprove applications on basis of rules herein described. Employees become eligible for participation in the Pool ninety (90) calendar days after approval of membership applications.

- G. A participating employee shall not be required to pay back any sick leave awarded from the Pool except as otherwise provided for in this agreement.
- H. Each participating employee shall contribute, by way of deduction from his/her official sick leave record, eight hours of sick leave anytime the balance in the Pool falls below 1500 hours and providing the committee, by way of the chairperson, is notified and agrees in writing to such contribution by the employees. No employee shall be required to contribute more than sixteen hours in any one fiscal year.
- I. Any participating employee, who is unable to meet Sick Leave Pool renewal or assessment membership contribution at the time for contribution to be made, shall contribute the first 8 hours of sick leave earned.
- J. Each membership shall be on a continuing basis unless a letter requesting withdrawal from the Sick Leave Pool is received before October 1 of any fiscal year. Such letter, directed to the Committee chairperson, shall be acted on upon receipt, and the Committee shall be notified.
- K. Any employee who chooses to withdraw from participation in the Sick Leave Pool shall not be able to withdraw any sick leave days already contributed.
- L. Alleged abuse of any provision contained in this agreement by a participant shall be reviewed by the Sick Leave Pool Committee. A finding of violation of any provision of this agreement may, upon the action and the authority of the Committee, result in expulsion from further participation, and/or a requirement to repay all the sick leave drawn from the Pool, and be subject to other disciplinary action as determined by the County.
- M. The Sick Leave Pool Committee shall review the operation and rules of the Sick Leave Pool at the end of the 2016-2017 fiscal year, and annually thereafter, and issue a written report including any recommendations for changes, to the County.
- N. The sick leave balance of any employee resigning or retiring from County service shall be transferred into the Pool, after any applicable distribution or payout.

## **PROCEDURES**

1. Employees shall file membership application with the County's Human Resources Department by May 31, 2016, and during the month of October hereafter on the form titled "Sick Leave Pool - Application for Membership".
2. Santa Rosa County Human Resources shall determine eligibility.
  - A. Employees who apply and are NOT eligible will be notified in writing by the Committee.
  - B. Each eligible employee will have the appropriate deduction made from his/her sick leave and entered into the Pool by their Payroll or Human Resources Department.

3. Participating employees in need of drawing from the Pool will fill out the appropriate form and submit it to their Payroll or Human Resources Department.
4. Applications for leave may be submitted by an interested party if the member is unable to apply
5. The Santa Rosa County Human Resources Department will notify the employee of the approval
  - or disapproval of the employee's application, the number of hours awarded and deduct the number of hours from the Pool.
6. Any employee whose Sick Leave Pool request is denied by Human Resources, is eligible to appeal to the Sick Leave Pool Committee, if they meet the following requirements:
  - a. The appeal must be filed on the appropriate appeal form, within 5 days of their notice of denial.
  - b. The employee must sign a HIPPA release form, allowing the Human Resources office to provide the Sick Leave Pool Committee member the necessary medial information to review their appeal (names and personal information will be withheld whenever possible).
  - c. The employee must provide the most current medical documentation available on the condition which the appeal is based.
7. The chairperson will notify the Committee of meeting dates, times, and sites.
8. Santa Rosa County Human Resources Department will notify the Committee when the number of hours in the Pool has dropped below 1500 hours.
9. The Committee will be comprised of 7 employees, appointed by the Constitutional Officers, with at least one representative from each of the Departments listed below:
  - Board of County Commissioners (two representatives)
  - Sheriff's Office
  - Property Appraiser
  - Tax Collector
  - Clerks Office
  - Supervisor of Elections
10. The chairperson of the Committee will be elected by the Committee.
11. Committee membership shall be for two (2) years. (May continue if appointed again at the end of the two (2) years.)
12. Committee members not completing two (2) years will be replaced by the elected official or appointing authority of the group they represent.
13. All complaints to any Committee member should be reduced to writing, filed with the chairperson, and considered at the time of review of policy.