



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, D.C. 20240

PERSONNEL BULLETIN NO. 02-8 (630)

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SUBJECT: Excused Absence for Preventive Health Services and Screenings

Last year a Presidential memorandum directed agencies to review their policies and make maximum use of existing work schedule and leave flexibilities to allow Federal employees to take full advantage of health screening programs and other effective preventive health activities.


Agencies were directed to provide flexibilities including promoting alternative work schedules (flexible and compressed work schedules), granting leave under the sick and annual leave programs, and granting excused absence to employees to participate in agency-sponsored preventive health screenings and preventive health activities. Examples of preventive health screenings are: screenings for prostate, cervical, colorectal, and breast cancer; screening for sickle cell anemia, blood lead level, blood cholesterol level, and screening for immunity system disorders such as HIV and blood sugar level testing for diabetes. Examples of preventive health activities include smoking cessation programs, programs on nutrition education, health promotion activities, and annual health fairs.

Agencies were also directed to establish a policy that provides up to 4 hours of excused absence each leave year for employees with fewer than 80 hours (2 weeks) of accrued sick leave to participate in preventive health screenings. Therefore, effective immediately, an employee of the Department of the Interior (DOI) with fewer than 80 hours (2 weeks) of accrued sick leave may be granted up to 4 hours of excused absence during a leave year to participate in preventive health screenings. Portions of the 4 hours may be used over more than 1 day during the leave year, and the days on which excused absence is used do not have to be consecutive.

Eligible employees can participate in preventive health screenings and preventive health activities at other federal agencies near their worksite if there is not a DOI location near their worksite that provides health prevention services. With the approval of the office head, eligible employees in small remote offices can participate in preventive health screenings and preventive health activities at a local health care provider.

Supervisors should grant excused absences for preventive health screenings and preventive health activities to the greatest extent practicable if granting the excused absence would not adversely affect the operations of the bureau. Supervisors may ask an employee to schedule the screening or activity on another day if the request for excused absence would adversely affect the operations of the organization.

The Labor and Employee Relations Division in the Office of Personnel Policy is responsible for this bulletin, and the point of contact is Jackie Johnston, telephone number (202) 208-0144, Mail Stop 5221 MIB.


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