

Office of Personnel Management

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diligent, good faith efforts, the employee must provide the medical certification within a reasonable period of time under the circumstances involved, but no later than 30 calendar days after the date the agency requests such medical certification.

(i) If, after the leave has commenced, the employee fails to provide the requested medical certification, the agency may—

(1) Charge the employee as absent without leave (AWOL); or

(2) Allow the employee to request that the provisional leave be charged as leave without pay or charged to the employee's annual and/or sick leave account, as appropriate.

(j) At its own expense, an agency may require subsequent medical recertification on a periodic basis, but not more than once every 30 calendar days, for leave taken for purposes relating to pregnancy, chronic conditions, or long-term conditions, as these terms are used in the definition of *serious health condition* in § 630.1202. For leave taken for all other serious health conditions and including leave taken on an intermittent or reduced leave schedule, if the health care provider has specified on the medical certification a minimum duration of the period of incapacity, the agency may not request recertification until that period has passed. An agency may require subsequent medical recertification more frequently than every 30 calendar days, or more frequently than the minimum duration of the period of incapacity specified on the medical certification, if the employee requests that the original leave period be extended, the circumstances described in the original medical certification have changed significantly, or the agency receives information that casts doubt upon the continuing validity of the medical certification.

(k) To ensure the security and confidentiality of any written medical certification under §§ 630.1207 or 630.1208(h) of this part, the medical certification shall be subject to the provisions for safeguarding information about indi-

viduals under subpart A or part 293 of this chapter.

[58 FR 39602, July 23, 1993, as amended at 61 FR 64453, Dec. 5, 1996; 65 FR 26487, May 8, 2000; 65 FR 38409, June 21, 2000]

§ 630.1208 Protection of employment and benefits.

(a) Any employee who takes leave under § 630.1203(a) of this part shall be entitled, upon return to the agency, to be returned to—

(1) The same position held by the employee when the leave commenced; or

(2) An equivalent position with equivalent benefits, pay, status, and other terms and conditions of employment.

(b) For the purpose of applying paragraph (a)(2) of this section, an equivalent position must be in the same commuting area and must carry or provide at a minimum—

(1) The same or substantially similar duties and responsibilities, which must entail substantially equivalent skill, effort, responsibility, and authority;

(2) An equivalent grade or pay level, including any applicable locality-based comparability payment under 5 U.S.C. 5304; special rate of pay for law enforcement officers or special pay adjustment for law enforcement officers under section 403 or 404 of the Federal Employees Pay Comparability Act of 1990 (Pub. L. 101-509), respectively; continued rate of pay under subpart G of part 531 of this chapter; or special salary rate under 5 U.S.C. 5305 or similar provision of law;

(3) The same type of appointment, work schedule, status, and tenure;

(4) The same employment benefits made available to the employee in his or her previous position (e.g., life insurance, health benefits, retirement coverage, and leave accrual);

(5) The same or equivalent opportunity for a within-grade increase, performance award, incentive award, or other similar discretionary and non-discretionary payments, consistent with applicable laws and regulations; however, the entitlement to be returned to an equivalent position does not extend to intangible or unmeasurable aspects of the job;

(6) The same or equivalent opportunity for premium pay consistent

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with applicable law and regulations under 5 CFR part 550, subpart A, or 5 CFR part 551, subpart E; and

(7) The same or equivalent opportunity for training or education benefits consistent with applicable laws and regulations, including any training that an employee may be required to complete to qualify for his or her previous position.

(c) As a result of taking leave under § 630.1203(a) of this part, an employee shall not suffer the loss of any employment benefit accrued prior to the date on which the leave commenced.

(d) Except as otherwise provided by or under law, a restored employee shall not be entitled to—

(1) The accrual of any employment benefits during any period of leave; or

(2) Any right, benefit, or position of employment other than any right, benefit, or position to which the employee would have been entitled had the employee not taken the leave.

(e) For the purpose of applying paragraph (d) of this section, the same entitlements and limitations in law and regulations that apply to the position, pay, benefits, status, and other terms and conditions of employment of an employee in a leave without pay status shall apply to any employee taking leave without pay under this part, except where different entitlements and limitations are specifically provided in this subpart.

(f) An employee is not entitled to be returned to the same or equivalent position under paragraph (a) of this section if the employee would not otherwise have been employed in that position at the time the employee returns from leave.

(g) An agency may not return an employee to an equivalent position where written notification has been provided that the equivalent position will be affected by a reduction in force if the employee's previous position is not affected by a reduction in force.

(h) As a condition to returning an employee who takes leave under § 630.1203(a)(4), an agency may establish a uniformly applied practice or policy that requires all similarly-situated employees (i.e., same occupation, same serious health condition) to obtain written medical certification from the

health care provider of the employee that the employee is able to perform the essential functions of his or her position. An agency may delay the return of an employee until the medical certification is provided. The same conditions for verifying the adequacy of a medical certification in § 630.1207(c) shall apply to the medical certification to return to work. No second or third opinion on the medical certification to return to work may be required. An agency may not require a medical certification to return to work during the period the employee takes leave intermittently or under a reduced leave schedule under § 630.1204.

(i) If an agency requires an employee to obtain written medical certification under paragraph (h) of this section before he or she returns to work, the agency shall notify the employee of this requirement before leave commences, or to the extent practicable in emergency medical situations, and pay the expenses for obtaining the written medical certification. An employee's refusal or failure to provide written medical certification under paragraph (h) of this section may be grounds for appropriate disciplinary or adverse action, as provided in part 752 of this chapter.

(j) An agency may require an employee to report periodically to the agency on his or her status and intention to return to work. An agency's policy requiring such reports must take into account all of the relevant facts and circumstances of the employee's situation.

(k) An employee's decision to invoke FMLA leave under § 630.1203(a) does not prohibit an agency from proceeding with appropriate actions under part 432 or part 752 of this chapter.

(l) An employee who does not comply with the notification requirements in § 630.1206 and does not provide medical certification signed by the health care provider that includes all of the information required in § 630.1207(b) is not entitled to family and medical leave.

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