

STANDARD
OPERATING
PROCEDURES
FOR T&A
PROCESSING

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Introduction

This document is the APHIS Standard Operating Procedures for the Processing of Time and Attendance (T&A's). This guide is not intended to be an all-inclusive T&A Handbook. It should be used in conjunction with the existing Time and Attendance manuals:

- A) Time and Attendance Instructions, Title 1, Chapter 7, Section 1
- B) Web Based System for Time and Attendance Reporting (STAR Web), Title 1, Chapter 7, Section 5

These manuals can be found on the NFC web site at www.nfc.usda.gov under Publications and Forms.

The Human Resources Desk Guide also provides guidance on leave use, payment for travel, and tours of duty. You can find it on the web at:

http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/hr_desk_guide/hr_desk_guide.html

Preparation of the T&A

The timekeeper records the presence or absence of all employees, with the exception of his or herself. The T&A for the timekeeper must be processed by another timekeeper (backup or primary). T&A's should be completed as soon as possible and transmitted to NFC no later than COB the Tuesday following the last day of the pay period. This allows NFC two days to get the T&A's through their edits before the T&A's are actually processed. The timekeeper is responsible for maintaining the certified T&A report and all appropriate supporting documentation for a period of six years.

Leave Updates

Leave Error Reports

There are two places where leave balances are stored. One is on the T&A system itself, the other is on the NFC mainframe. Each pay period, NFC compares the balances on the T&A system to the balances on the NFC mainframe. When these balances do not match, NFC sends the timekeeper a Leave Error Report. The timekeeper should complete a leave audit to see what the correct balances are. If the balances on the T&A system are wrong, the timekeeper can make an adjustment to those balances before he/she enters the T&A's for the current pay period. If the balances on the NFC mainframe are wrong, the timekeeper needs to fax or mail a copy of the leave audit to this address:

USDA APHIS M&RP-BS HRO
ATTN: LCT, Civilian Pay Technician for (Put Name of Program Here)
Butler Square 5th Floor
100 North 6th Street
Minneapolis, MN 55403
FAX: 612-336-3544

Leave audits must be signed by the timekeeper. If the leave audit is for the timekeeper, it needs to be signed by either the person who enters the timekeeper's T&A or by the timekeeper's supervisor. Once the Civilian Pay Technician receives a copy of the signed leave audit, he/she will correct the balances on the NFC mainframe. If changes to the T&A system are necessary, please make them before sending the leave audit. USDA requires that leave errors be corrected within 5 pay periods of the NFC notification, so it is important to submit leave audits as soon as the error has been confirmed.

Leave Earning Category Changes

There are three different ways leave earning categories can change. The most common is by meeting the service requirement for the next category (3 years for category 6 and 15 years for category 8). The NFC mainframe automatically adjusts the employee's annual leave category at the time year of service requirements are met. Because the timekeeper needs this information, NFC sends a report to the timekeeper two pay periods prior to the effective pay period. However, the timekeeper can also estimate the effective pay period by looking at the Leave SCD (block 31 of the SF-50B) of the employee. If the leave category change is effective other than the beginning of the pay period, the change becomes effective in the next pay period. If the T&A system doesn't automatically change the leave earning category, the timekeeper can change it before entering T&A's for the current pay period.

Another way the annual leave earning category can change is by verification of prior federal service. When an employee comes to APHIS from another federal agency, the Processing Team requests the OPF (Official Personnel Folder) from that agency. Upon receipt of the OPF, the Processing Associate recalculates the SCD for leave and changes the information in the NFC mainframe. He/she then send a notification to the timekeeper to change the leave earning category in the T&A database.

The third way the leave earning category can change is when the work schedule changes from FT to Intermittent and vice versa. Intermittent employees do not earn leave, so both the annual and sick leave earning categories have to be changed when a change in work schedule is from or to Intermittent. The Change in Work Schedule SF-52 will take care of the NFC mainframe change, but the timekeeper will have to make the change in the T&A system as well.

Transfer of Leave Balance from Previous Agency to APHIS

Leave can only be transferred from one agency to another via the SF-1150, Record of Leave Data. This is generated by the losing agency, and it is forwarded to the gaining agency along with the employee's OPF (Official Personnel Folder). In APHIS, the recipient of the SF-1150 is the Processing Associate assigned to service the program that the new employee transferred to. Upon receipt of the SF-1150, the Processing Associate will add the previous leave balances into the NFC mainframe. The Processing Associate will then send the information to the timekeeper, and, upon receipt of the information, the timekeeper will update the leave balances in the T&A system.

Corrected T&A's

A corrected T&A is used to report changes to information previously submitted and/or processed for a prior or current pay period. If the corrected T&A is for the current pay period, it can be sent anytime before COB on the Thursday of T&A week. If the corrected T&A is for a prior pay period, it should be sent between Tuesday and Friday of the non-T&A week.

Correcting Accounting Codes

Timekeepers cannot always do corrected T&A's to correct accounting codes. There are two different types of accounting code errors:

Invalid Accounting Code: One that has not been set up in FFIS accounting system, or possibly is set up incorrectly

Incorrect Accounting Code: One that is a valid set up code in FFIS accounting system, BUT the timekeeper did not want the T&A to be paid from that accounting code.

If the timekeeper used an **Invalid** accounting code, the Accounting Team in Minneapolis receives a report from NFC. The report has the employee name and SS#, T&A Contact Point number, the Invalid code that was used, the TC (Transaction Code), and how many hours went to that TC. Someone from the Accounting Team will email the timekeeper and ask them to provide the valid code, because ONLY NFC can change the invalid code to a valid code manually. If the timekeeper attempts to correct the T&A for this person, it will reject again, and not correct. Please note: If there is another error besides the accounting code, like number of hours was wrong, or the TC was wrong, the timekeeper can do a corrected T&A to this individual ONLY after NFC has processed the correction and it goes through the system.

If the timekeeper used an **Incorrect** Accounting Code, he/she will need to do a corrected T&A. No one at NFC or in Minneapolis would know that the code is incorrect; the Budget person (or someone who controls the funds) would be the most likely person to spot the error. Therefore, the Accounting Team does not need to know the correct accounting code when a timekeeper simply used the wrong valid (incorrect) accounting code.

Correcting Transaction Codes

There are three types of TC changes. The first is to correct the type of leave taken or to change hours of work to hours of leave (or vice versa). This type of corrected T&A does not change the pay of the employee. If the corrected T&A is for the current pay period, the leave balances will be updated by the T&A

in both the T&A system and the NFC mainframe. If the corrected T&A is for a prior pay period, even if the leave balances are updated in the T&A system, there is a good chance that they will not be updated in the NFC mainframe. Therefore, the timekeeper should complete a leave audit, and send it to the Civilian Pay Technician assigned to their program.

The second is to pay the employee for more hours than what the original T&A had. If the corrected T&A is for the current pay period (and is transmitted by before COB Thursday of T&A week), the employee will be paid with the information from the corrected T&A. If the corrected T&A is for a prior pay period, the employee will get paid for the difference between the original and corrected T&A along with the payment for the current pay period. There will not be a separate Leave and Earnings Statement generated for the corrected T&A.

The third type of TC change gives the employee fewer hours than what the original T&A had. If the corrected T&A is for the current pay period (and is transmitted before COB Thursday of T&A week), the employee will be paid with the information from the corrected T&A. If the corrected T&A is for a prior pay period, NFC will generate a bill for the difference between the original and corrected T&A. The timekeeper should inform the employee that he/she will receive a copy of the bill (Notice of Intent to Offset Salary) from NFC. The employee can send a check to NFC for the full amount of the bill, or NFC will offset the employee's salary (by no more than 15% of the disposable pay) until the bill is paid in full.

Split T&A

A split T&A is required in many situations (see Time and Attendance Instructions, Title 1, Chapter 7, Section 1), but there are two that occur frequently. The first is if the rate of pay of the employee changes in the middle of a pay period. The second is if an employee uses military leave during the last pay period of the fiscal year.

Fiscal and Year End T&A's

Fiscal Year End T&A's

Timekeepers who enter accounting codes on every TC line should submit a single T&A. For the following example, the new fiscal year started on the Wednesday of the second week of the pay period. The employee works Monday thru Friday. The employee worked 40 hours of TC 01 the first week, and 40 hours of TC 01 the second week. The employee also worked 4 hours of TC 21 on Wednesday of the first week and 4 hours of TC 21 on Wednesday of the second week. The T&A is for PP19 of 2004. This is how the T&A would look:

First Week			Second Week		
TC-01	40	4521234567	TC-01	16	4521234567
TC-01	0	5521234567	TC-01	24	5521234567
TC-21	4	4521234567	TC-21	0	4521234567
TC-21	0	5521234567	TC-21	4	5521234567

Timekeepers who use stored accounting should submit a single T&A. 100% of the premium pay is charged to the ensuing fiscal year. Using the same information as listed above, this is how the T&A would look:

First Week		Second Week	
TC-01	40	TC-01	16
TC-01	0	TC-01	24
TC-21	4	TC-21	4

NOTE: There is no need to do a split T&A unless the employee is on military leave for any day during this pay period. For the example above, the split would occur between the 10th and 11th days.

Calendar Year End T&A's

During the last **full** pay period of the calendar year (usually PP25), full-time employees in the six hour category will earn 10 hours of leave instead of six.

During the last pay period of the calendar year (usually PP26), a split T&A should be prepared for those employees who are on **Emergency** Military Leave or Nonpay Status.

Compensatory Time that was earned in the prior year (meaning from PP01 – PP26 of 2003 if the current year is 2004) should be paid out if it has not been used in the last pay period of the calendar year (usually PP26).

Compensatory Time

Use and Payment of Unused Compensatory Time

Compensatory time is time off in an amount that is equal to the number of irregular or occasional overtime hours worked. Compensatory time must be used before annual leave is used, unless this would result in forfeiture of annual leave. Compensatory time earned is TC 32. Compensatory time used is TC 64.

Employees must receive pay for any unused compensatory time at the end of the leave year following the leave year in which the compensatory time was earned (at the end of 2004 if it was earned in 2003), or before being transferred or separated from the agency in which the compensatory time was earned (or transferred to a position in which it cannot be used). The payment will be made at the overtime rate that was in effect when the compensatory time was earned. Timekeepers should maintain a leave audit of compensatory time earned and used to help determine whether or not compensatory time needs to be paid out at the end of the year.

Religious Compensatory Time

Employees may earn and use compensatory time to take time off without charge to annual leave when personal religious beliefs require their absence from work. Compensatory time may be earned for religious purposes under the following conditions:

- 1) The employee submits a written application to the approving official.
- 2) Compensatory time for religious purposes may not be earned more than 4 pay periods in advance of the time off.
- 3) For employees performing import/export activities, the compensatory time must be earned during periods of non-reimbursable overtime.

Compensatory time may be used for a religious observance before it is actually earned. The employee will pay back advance religious compensatory time by the end of the leave year in which it was granted by the approving official. Religious compensatory time earned is TC 32 with a prefix of 77. Religious compensatory time used is TC 60.