



RUSSELLVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT  
POLICY MANUAL

Policy Number:  
Section:  
Original Date:  
Revised Date:

## PURPOSE

This policy provides guidelines for members in scheduling vacation and other authorized leave. A systematic scheduling process is necessary to reduce the occurrence of denied requests and overtime expenditure to maintain minimum staffing levels.

It is the responsibility of all personnel to be familiar with this policy.

## POLICY

### Vacation Scheduling

Vacation scheduling is the responsibility of the individual member. The member is responsible for managing their vacation hours and maintaining awareness of hours available and scheduled. Hours taken in excess of what is available will result in no compensation and has the potential for disciplinary action. Each year, the minimum amount of vacation required to use for the year shall be scheduled along with Priority Vacation by December 15 of the preceding year.

### Priority Vacation

Priority Vacation is a seniority-based vacation schedule. Priority Vacation for the following year will be scheduled by the Battalion Chief, with a deadline for requesting priority leave of December 15 of the current year. After priority vacation is approved, all other vacation will be posted by seniority that has been turned in prior to December 15. Priority Vacation must be scheduled in 48 hours blocks. It is required that all personnel on shift submit the minimum amount of vacation that must be used each year during this time.

### Requests for Priority Vacation require:

1. A Vacation Request will be filled out in ESO Scheduling Software. If the vacation request is priority, the word PRIORITY will be typed in the notes section of the request. Failure to complete correctly will directly result in denial of the request.
2. The Battalion Chief will approve or deny the request in ESO Scheduling Software.

### High-Priority Vacation Days

It is recognized that certain dates throughout the year are highly sought after as vacation days. These days are primarily located around the major holidays. The days that will be treated as high-priority days will include the holidays that are recognized by the City of Russellville: New Year's Day, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr's Birthday, Presidents Day, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and the days that immediately precede and follow these days.

In order to ensure fairness in distributing vacation time on these high-priority days, the following system will be used when these dates become available during the year. When a member removes a high-priority day that was scheduled during priority vacation, the Battalion Chief will offer the day to members based on seniority until the day has been filled. If all members decline to take it as vacation, the day will be left open.

Approved

Fire Chief



### **Additional Vacation Scheduling**

Members can also schedule vacation days not scheduled during Priority Vacation. These requests are subject to availability with consideration for training requests and other non-seniority vacation days that have been scheduled. These days are first come, first serve. These requests are due no later than 96 hours prior to the requested day. These requests can be made in 12 hour blocks (07:30-19:30 or 19:30 to 07:30 only). The RFD may utilize these slots for training or department business as approved by the Fire Chief.

### **Compensatory time**

Requesting comp time will require the same procedure as requesting vacation. All requests for comp time should be in twelve hour or 24 hour blocks. Requests for comp time of less than twelve hours are approved at the Battalion Chief's discretion and should only be used in conjunction with designated Birthday Leave.

Any member who has more than 24 hours of comp time may be required to use comp time instead of any other leave at the Battalion Chiefs discretion when time off is requested.

Any leave should be requested and approved no later than 96 hours before the date of leave. Requests for leave that are not approved 96 hours in advance are approved on a case by case basis at the Battalion Chief's discretion.

### **Use of Leave Slots for Worker's Compensation and Family Medical Leave Act Requests**

Available leave slots may be utilized for Worker's Compensation (WC) and Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) requests. The blocking of available leave slots for these unplanned absences should occur at the time of paperwork processing. Vacation and other leave already scheduled on the calendars maintained by the Battalion Chiefs shall not be removed for WC and FMLA. However, any available slots may be blocked to prevent unnecessary overtime expenditures

### **Vacation Scheduling - Day Staff**

Members assigned to day staff may utilize vacation as desired up to their available accrual. Because these positions are not minimally staffed, they only require approval of the immediate supervisor. Vacation requests should use ESO Scheduling and routed to the appropriate personnel.

### **Military Leave**

Any member serving as a member of any military reserve or National Guard unit for the United States will be granted 120 hours (or (15) 8 hours days as identified in the City Handbook) of leave each year, plus travel time, to participate in annual training exercises or other duties performed in an official duty status. Members should submit the anticipated duty dates via time off requests via ESO Scheduling along with copies of written orders associated with the dates requested to their Battalion Chief/Division supervisor as early as possible to allow for management of staffing. Each employee who requests military leave shall furnish a copy of his orders for his personnel file.

Available leave slots may be utilized for Military Leave requests. The blocking of available leave slots should occur at the time that the Military Leave request is received.

Approved

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Available leave slots may be utilized for Military Leave requests. The blocking of available leave slots should occur at the time that the Military Leave request is received.

Unless otherwise requested by the member, the 120 hours of Military Leave time will be applied to all official military duty until exhausted and the remaining military time off during the year shall be counted as No-Pay time. However, if there is a leave slot available,, the member may utilize accrued vacation time to attend any military duty by following the normal vacation requesting procedure. Additionally, the member may utilize No-Pay time prior to exhaustion of Military Leave by notifying the administrative assistant responsible for payroll in writing prior to the occurrence.

In times of war or national emergency, full-time employees shall be granted leave with pay not to exceed 30 working days, after which leave without pay will be granted. This leave shall be granted in addition to all other leave the employee shall be entitled to A.C.A. 21-4-202(d) & 21-4-212(a). Certain rights to re-employment after service in the uniformed services, as well as provisions relating to pensions and health benefits are established in the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994, 38 U.S.C. It is the City's policy to honor and comply with the provisions of those statues.

### Determining Vacation Criteria

The criteria used to approve or deny a request for leave centers around how the operations of the Department will be impacted. As a general guideline, the following criteria shall apply:

- The calendar can accommodate approximately three leave slots before falling below minimum staffing. The first two slots are used for conventional leave (Vacation, Training) with the third slot generally earmarked for department leave (WC, FMLA, Military).
- A maximum of three members are allowed to be released per shift, with two leave positions designated as vacation for members under all circumstances.
- High-Priority Vacation Days are eligible for three members to utilize vacation. This is the only circumstance in which the third slot is earmarked for conventional vacation leave.
- After all requests are completed and approved for Priority/High-Priority days, it is based on first come first serve, not priority.
- Training, vacation, military leave, and city business carry equal weight in scheduling. One will not be canceled to allow for another.

### Accrual Guidelines

Vacation accrual rates shall apply as indicated in the City of Russellville Policy and Procedures Manual.

After completion of four (4) months of service all members are eligible to utilize their accrued vacation time in accordance with this policy.

### Cancellations

Cancellation of Vacation shall require 96 hours of notification prior to the vacation day. This requires notification of the assigned Battalion Chief and removal from ESO Scheduling.

Due to manpower situations the Fire Chief reserves the right to cancel an individual's vacation or limit the number of personnel on vacation at any time.

Approved

Fire Chief