

Family and Medical Leave for Exempt Employees

Fort Lewis College is committed to supporting exempt employees as they balance work with other aspects of their lives. Family and medical leave are available for exempt employees who need to take time off work due to

- The employee's own serious health condition
- The care of a sick family member
- Childbirth or adoption
- Deployment of a spouse to active military assignment

Such leave may be a combination of paid and unpaid leave but in all cases ensures qualified exempt employees with job protection and maintenance of group health benefits.

Family and Medical Leave Act

The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 states that employers must grant eligible employees up to 12 weeks of **unpaid** family and medical leave each year, with job protection and maintenance of group health benefits. Eligible employees are those who have been employed by the College for at least one year and worked at least 1,250 hours. To utilize the protections afforded by the Family and Medical Leave Act, an employee must be determined to be eligible and obtain proper medical certification.

Actual time away from work will be determined through the medical certification process. Leave may be taken in blocks or intermittently in accordance with the health care provider's recommendations.

Note: If more than one family member is employed by the College, federal law states that all family members requesting leave must share the 12 weeks of **unpaid** Family and Medical Leave. Family members themselves should decide how to divide the allotted 12 weeks of leave.

Paid Family and Medical Leave

Fort Lewis College allows employees to use accrued sick or annual leave to remain in paid status during their use of Family and Medical Leave. The use of accrued sick or annual leave occurs concurrently with the use of Family and Medical Leave.

Summary of Available Leave for an Employee's Own Serious Health Condition

All eligible exempt employees may take up to 12 weeks of **unpaid** Family and Medical Leave due to their own serious health condition with appropriate medical certification. Actual length of time allotted for Family and Medical Leave will be determined through the medical certification process.

Summary of Available Leave for the Care of a Sick Family Member

All eligible exempt employees may take up to 12 weeks of **unpaid** family leave for the care of a sick family member with appropriate medical certification. In order to use Family and Medical Leave for the care of a sick family member, the employee must be determined to be the sick family member's primary care giver.

Summary of Available Leave for Birth Mothers

Healthcare providers typically certify 6 to 8 weeks of medical leave for birth mothers. Medical leave for childbirth usually begins the day of birth. In some cases, if there is medical certification, it can begin prior to birth.

In addition, birth mothers may take additional time (up to the 12 weeks provided under the Act) for bonding with their newborn.

Summary of Available Leave for Birth Fathers and Adoptive Parents

All birth fathers and adoptive parents who have been employed by the College for at least one year and worked at least 1,250 hours are eligible for the same 12 weeks of **unpaid** family leave at any time during the first twelve months after the birth or adoption of a child.

Note: If both parents are employees of the College, federal law states that parents must share the 12 weeks of **unpaid** Family and Medical Leave. Parents themselves should decide how to divide the allotted 12 weeks of leave.

Summary of Available Leave for the Deployment of a Spouse for Active Military Assignment

All eligible exempt employees may take up to 6 weeks of **unpaid** Family and Medical Leave when their spouse is called into active military status.

Who Should Apply for Family and Medical Leave and When

Employees who anticipate an extended period of time away from work (typically, more than one work week) due to one of the eligible reasons should consider applying for the use of Family and Medical Leave.

Supervisors who learn that an employee will need an extended period of time away from work should recommend to that employee that they visit with Human Resources to start the application process.

Employees should apply as soon as they know they will need extended time away from work. This can be prior to the event, or, in the case of an emergency, the application can begin after the start of the event. In the case of an emergency, the medical certification should be completed as soon as possible and the start of the absence will be used as the start date of the event.

How to Request Family and Medical Leave

Exempt employees should schedule an appointment with Human Resources to discuss their unique situation and how College policies can accommodate their needs. Human Resources will provide the employee with necessary paperwork to obtain medical certification. After medical certification is completed and returned to Human Resources, the employee and supervisor will be notified of the final determination of eligibility.