



Policy Number: 330 – Annual Vacation Leave Request

Effective Date: May 25, 2023

Revision Date: August 15, 2023

Approved By: Brandon Gatlin, Chief of Police

330.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy is intended to establish consistent annual vacation leave request guidelines to ensure a fair and equitable system that meets the needs of the department and the needs of officers designated as classified staff at Montana State University Billings.

330.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

Annual Leave – Leave time that has been granted and approved through a department supervisor. The terms “annual vacation leave” and “annual leave” are used throughout the policy to refer to paid time off.

303.2 POLICY

The University Police Department (Department) acknowledges the importance of work-life balance and recognizes that employees may require time off for annual leave. This policy aims to establish clear guidelines and procedures for submitting, reviewing, and approving annual vacation leave requests within the Department.

330.3 ANNUAL VACATION LEAVE REQUEST GUIDELINES

330.3.1 ELIGIBILITY

All regular full-time and part-time employees of the Department are eligible to request annual vacation leave time, subject to operational needs and supervisor’s approval. Temporary or probationary employees may also be eligible, but their requests will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

330.3.2 ANNUAL LEAVE ACCRUAL AND BALANCES:

Annual leave accrual rates will be in accordance with the collective bargaining agreement. Employees must maintain a positive annual leave balance in order to submit a request.

330.3.3 ANNUAL LEAVE REQUEST SUBMISSION:

1. Employees are required to submit an annual leave request in writing using the university Vacation/Request for Leave Form.
2. An annual leave request must be submitted at a minimum of eight weeks prior to the start of the employee’s first annual leave date. This allows supervisors sufficient time to review and plan for staffing requirements.
3. Multiple annual leave requests can be submitted at once, but each request will be evaluated individually.

330.3.4 SUPERVISOR APPROVAL:

1. The employee must receive approval from the Patrol Sergeant, or in his/her absence, approval shall be requested through the chain of command.
2. Supervisors will consider factors such as workload, team balance, operational needs, and the order in which requests are received.
3. Annual leave requests may be denied or modified if they conflict with departmental needs or if there are significant scheduling conflicts.

330.3.5 NOTICE OF APPROVAL OR DENIAL

1. An annual leave request may be approved only after the required and necessary staffing needs of the Department have been satisfied, based upon circumstances and events that may impact the Department's shift and event coverage.
2. This policy does not limit the employee from submitting additional leave time within the eight-week period that requests are required to be submitted.
 - a. If a requested annual leave period does not affect scheduling and/or event coverage, it may be approved within the eight-week period.
 - b. If a requested annual leave period impacts scheduling and/or event coverage, the request will be designated as volunteer overtime coverage, separate from the monthly bid process. Bidding for volunteer overtime will be based on seniority.
 - c. If no officer volunteers to cover the designated overtime, the request will be denied, and the requesting officer will be responsible for fulfilling the required coverage.
 - d. No officer will be made to work a volunteer overtime shift as a result of an annual leave request that was submitted after the eight-week deadline.
 - e. Annual leave requests submitted within 21 days of the initial vacation request date may be considered for approval, subject to meeting staffing requirements of the Department and not necessitating overtime coverage. Approval of such requests will be evaluated based on operational needs and resource availability.
3. Annual leave requests that have been granted and approved by a supervisor will under normal and routine circumstances exempt the employee from being called back to duty. However, employees should always be aware that in the event of an emergency they could be called back to duty, even from an approved annual leave.
4. Approved annual leave requests will specify the authorized dates, duration, and any conditions or limitations, if applicable.
5. If a request is denied, the reason for denial will be provided, and employees are encouraged to discuss alternative options with their supervisor.

330.3.6 SCHEDULING CONFLICTS AND PRIORITY:

1. In situations where multiple employees request the same annual leave period, requests will be approved in the order of requested annual leave submissions.
2. If two or more employees submit an annual leave request on the same calendar day, for the same time period, then the designated supervisor will consider the following factors when approving/denying annual leave requests; seniority of the employees, shift schedule, fairness, and operational needs.

3. Department administration reserves the right to adjust or modify approved annual leave requests to ensure adequate coverage and operational efficiency.

330.3.7 MODIFICATION OR CANCELLATION OF APPROVED ANNUAL LEAVE:

1. If circumstances arise that require a modification or cancellation of an approved annual leave, employees must notify their immediate supervisor as soon as possible.
2. The Department will make reasonable efforts to accommodate changes whenever feasible, considering operational needs and the impact on other employees.

330.3.8 RECORDKEEPING:

Employees can access their annual leave balance and history through the MSUB website.

330.3.9 ABUSE AND MISUSE:

1. The Department strictly prohibits the abuse or misuse of annual leave benefits.
2. Falsifying information, misrepresenting facts, or engaging in fraudulent activities related to annual leave requests may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.