

Category: 300
Number: 361

Subject: **DISABILITY LEAVE**

1. **PURPOSE:** It is the purpose of this policy to establish a system of uniform and appropriate rules and regulations regarding employees who are unable to work due to non-work related reasons.
2. **AUTHORITY:** The Saginaw County Board of Commissioners.
3. **APPLICATION:** The rules and regulations herein set forth apply to all employees paid by Saginaw County, pursuant to Policy #301.
4. **RESPONSIBILITY:** The Controller's Office shall be responsible for the implementation and administration of this policy.
5. **DEFINITIONS:** For purpose of this policy, regular full-time employees may hold probationary status and qualify for leave.
6. **POLICY:**
 - 6.1 **Coverage.** A regular full-time employee who is unable to work for reasons due to injury, illness or mental illness of a non-work related nature is eligible to apply for disability leave (described in 6.2) the first day of the month following the completion of thirty (30) days of service. Upon approval, the disability plan works in concert with the Paid Time Off process described in the Paid Time Off Policy (Policy # 341). The plan requires an unpaid 14 calendar day waiting period during the disability before the disability compensation program begins, however, the employee must use his/her Paid Time Off bank during the 14 calendar day period, if such PTO time is available. Prior to beginning a Disability Leave, an employee may choose to retain up to forty (40) PTO hours of banked time by opting for unpaid time once his/her PTO bank reaches forty (40) hours, (or the desired amount of banked time up to forty [40] hours), by indicating so on his/her disability application. If the disability continues beyond the 14 calendar days, the employee shall receive 60% of his/her pay up to one year or the employee's seniority, whichever is less. The employee may also choose to supplement disability pay with PTO, so long as total pay is no more than 100% of the employee's pay.

Disability leave may be allowed in cases of sickness or injury occurring during a Paid Time Off (vacation) period. Evidence of such incapacity from the first (1st) day must however be provided to the satisfaction of the employer.

If a subsequent disability occurs, solely resulting from the same illness, injury or mental illness, the original fourteen day waiting period described above shall be considered the waiting period required for the subsequent disability except however, no more than one year of disability pay shall be paid for the same illness, injury or mental illness.

PTO shall only accrue for the first ninety (90) days of the disability. All payroll deductions in effect prior to disability will be deducted from disability payments. The disability plan will also provide for health, optical and dental coverage to continue during the entire period of disability (up to one year or length of seniority) with the same employee co-pay or percentage of premium contribution. Basic life insurance coverage will also continue without cost during the disability. Voluntary additional coverage will be maintained based on continuous employee premium payments.

6.2 Eligibility. Under no circumstances will an employee be eligible for benefits described in Section 6.1 except by County approved medical or mental disability. Requests are submitted and processed through the Controller's Office. Benefits will not be paid unless the employee submits the attending physician's certificate of disability stating the nature of illness or injury and for mental illness the attending psychiatrist's or psychologist's certificate of disability and anticipated period of disability. In all cases of alleged disability, the County retains the right to verify said certificate(s) and may refer the employee to a physician, psychiatrist or psychologist of its choice whenever it deems necessary, which will be paid for by the County.

6.2.1 An eligible employee requesting disability leave who may also be eligible under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) requirements shall have the time used counted towards the annual (FMLA) entitlement of twelve (12) total weeks (See Policy #364).

6.3 Final Determination. The Controller's Office will exclusively make the final determination to grant a disability claim and notification will be provided to the affected Department Head along with any work restrictions.

6.4 Termination. Disability payments shall terminate when the employee is able to return to regular work or restricted work if directed by medical authority, psychiatrist or psychologist and can be accommodated by the County or when the treating physician's, psychiatrist's or psychologist's statement of disability expires and an extension is not provided; when the employee retires as a result of disability or normal service retirement; upon layoff, death, discharge, or resignation or after twelve months pursuant to section 6.1 above. If disability benefits are exhausted and the employee cannot return to work, with or without reasonable accommodation, the employee's employment with the County of

Saginaw shall be terminated. If an employee is terminated because of exhausting disability leave, all insurance and other employment benefits will also terminate.

6.5 Social Security Offset. Disability payment described herein shall be offset by any Social Security disability payment or insurance settlement relating to such disability (subject to language contained in a collective bargaining agreement) due or received by the employee. An employee determined to be disabled for an indefinite period shall be obligated to apply for benefits from the Social Security Administration and in such case any disability payments received by the employee from the County for any period paid by Social Security shall be repaid by the employee to the County.

6.6 Returning to Work. The employer will ensure that employees are able to return to the workplace as quickly and safely as possible. All employees will be evaluated for possible accommodations in accordance with the County's Americans' with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy.

7. ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES: NONE

8. CONTROLLER/CAO LEGAL COUNSEL REVIEW: The Controller/CAO has determined that this policy as submitted to the Board of Commissioners contains the necessary substance in order to carry out the purpose of the policy. County Civil Counsel has determined that this policy as submitted contains content that appears to be legal activities of the Saginaw County Board of Commissioners.

Approved as to Substance:
Saginaw County Controller/CAO

Approved as to Legal Content:
Saginaw County Civil Counsel

ADOPTED: November 23, 1999

AMENDED: April 23, 2002; August 12, 2008; September 22, 2020; January 19, 2021;
November 22, 2022