



City of Dallas Mental Health Leave



Overview

The City of Dallas is honored to offer Mental Health Leave for employees who are benefits eligible and accrue leave time. Mental Health Leave provides up to 40 hours of leave for most employees and 60 hours of leave for employees of the Emergency Response Bureau of Dallas Fire Rescue (DFR) who experience a traumatic event while at work and the need for leave is verified by a licensed psychiatrist or psychologist. The City of Dallas will also not reduce other paid balances for Mental Health Leave taken. See frequently asked questions below. For additional information, contact CODEmployeePaidLeave@dallas.gov.

The City of Dallas will keep requests for Mental Health Leave and any medical information related to Mental Health Leave confidential to the extent allowed by law.

Frequently Asked Questions

Eligibility

1. Who can take Mental Health Leave?

All City of Dallas employees are eligible to request Mental Health Leave if they meet all the below criteria:

- Are benefits eligible
- Accrue leave time
- Experience a traumatic event while at work and the need for leave is verified by a licensed psychiatrist or psychologist

2. Are temporary or seasonal employees eligible for Mental Health Leave?

No, temporary and seasonal City employees are not eligible.

3. Are part-time employees eligible for Mental Health Leave?

Yes, part-time employees are eligible for Mental Health Leave.

Definitions

4. How does the City define a traumatic event?

Traumatic Event at the City of Dallas means actual or threatened death, serious injury, or physical abuse, either of one's self or of another, during the employee's scope of employment that is outside the typical experiences of the employee's routine work environment and causes the employee to experience unusually strong emotional reactions or feelings that have the potential to cause lasting adverse effects on their functioning and mental, physical, social, or emotional well-being. A traumatic event does not include routine work-related events or incidents, personality conflicts, or disagreements between or among supervisors or co-workers.

5. What is considered a traumatic event while at work?

An experience is considered a traumatic event by the City of Dallas if it involves one or more of the following experiences during an employee's scope of employment outside of their routine work environment:

- An actual or threatened death
- Serious injury
- Physical abuse, either of one's self or of another

The experience must also cause the employee to experience unusually strong emotional reactions or feelings with the potential to cause lasting adverse effects on their functioning and mental, physical, social, or emotional well-being. A traumatic event does not include routine work-related events or incidents, personality conflicts, or disagreements between or among supervisors or co-workers.

Applying for Mental Health Leave

6. How do I apply for Mental Health Leave?

To request Mental Health Leave there are 2 forms which must be completed; one form is for the employee themselves to fill out and sign and the other form is for a psychologist or psychiatrist to fill out and sign on behalf of the employee. Both forms should be sent to CODEmployeePaidLeave@dallas.gov once completed.

The forms to request Mental Health Leave can be found here:

<https://dallascityhall.com/departments/humanresources/benefits/Pages/City%20of%20Dallas%20Approved%20Employee%20Leaves.aspx>

7. Who validates the need for leave due to a traumatic event that makes me eligible for Mental Health Leave?

The need for leave must be validated by a psychiatrist or psychologist. The leave approval process for Mental Health Leave goes to HR for approval via the CODEmployeePaidLeave@dallas.gov mailbox.

8. What if I experience a traumatic event at work and cannot get an appointment with a psychologist or psychiatrist?

With approval of your department's leadership, you can take your own leave time. You can then apply for Mental Health Leave and, if approved, the leave can be corrected retroactively. The City encourages employees to seek the services of a psychiatrist or psychologist as soon after the traumatic event as possible to support the mental health of the employee. Contact your Primary Care physician or employee assistance program for a referral to a psychiatrist or psychologist.

9. When should I apply for Mental Health Leave?

After experiencing a traumatic event at work if you feel that it will affect your overall mental health then you should apply as soon as possible for Mental Health Leave.

Process and Rules

10. Do the 40 or 60 hours of paid leave for Mental Health Leave need to be taken at one time?

No, leave can be taken in smaller increments for a total of 40 hours or 60 hours of the amount awarded within a 12-month period. Work with your supervisor about scheduling the time off.

11. Does Mental Health Leave expire?

Yes, the leave expires 12 months after receiving the approval. The City encourages all staff who qualify for Mental Health Leave to take the leave within 12 months of being awarded.

12. How many times can I receive Mental Health Leave?

You are eligible to receive Mental Health Leave one time in a 12-month period.

13. Can the psychologists and psychiatrists that work for the City of Dallas validate an employee's need for Mental Health Leave?

Yes, the psychiatrists and psychologists that are employed by the City of Dallas can validate the need for another employee's Mental Health Leave.

14. Do I earn AIL while on Mental Health Leave?

Mental Health Leave is considered time worked and is counted in the calculation for overtime pay and does not impact eligibility for Attendance Incentive Leave.

15. Will HR notify my supervisor of my need to take Mental Health Leave?

No, you will need to work with your department and supervisor to ensure they are aware you are taking the time off so that they can plan to cover for you.

16. Does Mental Health Leave carry over into the next year if I don't use all my awarded hours?

Unused Mental Health Leave will be forfeited at the end of the 12-month period after approval and is not granted based on calendar or fiscal year.

17. If I terminate my employment, do I receive a payout of any remaining Mental Health Leave hours?

No, Mental Health Leave is not paid out upon termination of employment with the City of Dallas.

18. Does Mental Health Leave cover experiencing a death in my family which is not associated with work?

No, the death of a family member would not be covered by Mental Health Leave.

19. My request for Mental Health Leave was denied, are there other resources available to me?

The City does provide additional benefits which may be helpful in the event you do not qualify for Mental Health Leave.

- Employee Assistance Program (EAP):
<https://dallascityhall.com/departments/humanresources/benefits/Pages/EAP.aspx>
- Short Term Disability: (877)-474-4250 or www.standard.com
- Long Term Disability: Page 32 -
<https://dallascityhall.com/departments/humanresources/DCH%20Documents/2022%20City%20of%20Dallas%20Active%20Benefits%20Guide.pdf>
- Fidelity Deferred Compensation: This may be a way to help cover expenses if you must take unpaid leave. Contact the City's Deferred Compensation office at 214-670-4861 or www.mysavingsatwork.com/atwork.htm
- Advanced Sick Leave: Contact your HR Partner and Personnel Rules 34-22.R
https://dallascityhall.com/departments/humanresources/DCH%20Documents/Personnel_Rules_2021.pdf.

Time Entry

20. Who will enter my Mental Health Leave time in Workday?

You may enter your MHL time yourself or your supervisor/department would be responsible for entering your Mental Health Leave time in Workday.

21. What pay code is used for Mental Health Leave?

At this time the pay code for Mental Health Leave is still being developed. Until the pay code is completed Regular hours should be used and a comment **must** be added to the time entry. If approved for Mental Health Leave you will be provided instructions for entering time.

22. I still have questions who do I contact?

For the quickest response please send questions to CODEmployeePaidLeave@dallas.gov.