



Meat Grading & Certification Branch

## LEAVE

### PURPOSE

This Instruction supplements Human Resources Desk Guide Subchapter 4630 "Absence and Leave," [http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/hr\\_desk\\_guide/4630/index.html](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/hr_desk_guide/4630/index.html) and Marketing and Regulatory Programs (MRP) Directive 4630.1, "Absence and Leave," <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/library/directives/pdf/MRP4630-1.pdf> and provides information on leave for Meat Grading and Certification (MGC) Branch supervisors and graders.

### POLICY

It is MGC Branch policy, if **workload permits**, to grant employee requests for annual leave. The ultimate decision on granting leave rests with the Customer Service Director and is based on applicants' needs. Except for emergency leave, all annual leave, leave without pay (LWOP), and sick leave for scheduled medical, dental or optical examinations or treatment, must be approved in advance by the employee's immediate supervisor and confirmed by e-mail. Family leave must be approved as outlined in Human Resources Desk Guide Subchapter 4630 "Absence and Leave," Section F "Family and Medical Leave," [http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/hr\\_desk\\_guide/4630/4630secf.html](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/hr_desk_guide/4630/4630secf.html) - desc. When scheduling leave the Customer Service Director will consider using relief graders, part-time, and cross-utilized personnel. Managers, supervisors and graders must ensure that leave is scheduled far enough in advance to avoid forfeiture at the end of the year.

### I. Pod Assignments

Pods are geographic areas where a group of graders are assigned to provide relief to other graders in the geographic area. Management will make every effort to schedule leave using MGC Branch Pod Assignments for relief.

### II. Requesting and Scheduling Annual Leave

- A. Planning and Scheduling Leave. Annual leave schedules will be determined by the number of graders needed to provide service. Other categories of leave (sick, military, jury, maternity, LWOP), though not predictable, will be considered when scheduling annual leave.

1. In November of each year, the Customer Service Director will remind all field employees to request annual leave for the next calendar year by completing the Annual Leave Request Form (Exhibit A) and submitting it to the Office of Field Operations (OFO) and their immediate supervisor by December 1.
  2. The Customer Service Director will maintain records of each employee's original request for leave and what was granted. In the event of conflicting requests for a specific time, first consideration will be given to the grader with the longest time since getting their first choice. Exhibit B contains an example of how to request annual leave.
  3. Separate leave requests into Category I and II, with first, second, and third choices for each category on the Annual Leave Request Form. Graders who are eligible on January 1 of the leave year to earn 26, 20, or 13 days of leave, may request 3, 2, or 1-week of Category I leave, respectively. All remaining annual leave will be requested as Category II.
  4. Employees may request from one week up to the maximum number of weeks accrued during the calendar year, plus any additional leave balance.
  5. If possible, graders will get one of their leave choices. If approved in advance by the Customer Service Director, employees may trade leave times. The Customer Service Director can grant requests for extended annual leave based on the employee's circumstances and staffing requirements.
  6. Employees will be given the leave schedules for the coming year by the beginning of the leave year for all bargaining unit members in their pod.
  7. Before going on leave graders, supervisors, and managers must give the Customer Service Director and immediate supervisor, as accurately as possible, the telephone number where they can be reached in an emergency. This may be done via e-mail.
- B. Rescheduling Annual Leave. It may be necessary to reschedule annual leave if the graders need to provide service or sick leave relief is greater than anticipated. Previously requested Category I leave will be canceled only when all alternatives to provide service are exhausted. Management will explain to the involved Union officials the reason for canceling Category I annual leave. Category II leave may be canceled and rescheduled as required.

### **III. Scheduling Other Types of Leave**

Changes to approved calendar year annual leave or requests for other types of leave must be submitted in advance by e-mail to the Customer Service Director for approval

using the Request for Leave or Approved Absence template (**Exhibit C**). When sick or emergency leave is requested and approved by phone, after reporting back to work, employees must confirm approval through e-mail.

#### **IV. Emergency Conditions**

Under emergency conditions (industry strikes, floods, fires, plant shutdowns, etc.) that prevent supervisors and graders from performing their duties at the worksite, employees will follow the guidelines set forth in Human Resources Desk Guide, Subchapter 4630 - Absence and Leave Section D - Excused Absence, Subsection b - Emergencies (Weather and Other), [http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/hr\\_desk\\_guide/4630/4630sdsb.html](http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/hr_desk_guide/4630/4630sdsb.html) and in the following paragraph:

During an emergency, employees must inform the Customer Service Director and their immediate supervisor where they can be contacted so they can report promptly for duty.

Supervisors will make every practical effort within good management practice to minimize excused absence time by:

1. Reassignment to other duties in the same or other locations,
2. Training,
3. Cross-utilization, or
4. Voluntary annual leave.

#### **V. Sick Leave, Military or Leave-Without-Pay**

Sick leave taken by employees that exceeds one week's duration and all requests for military leave or LWOP must be reported to the Assistant Chief through the Customer Service Director.

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## Exhibit A Annual Leave Request Form

Employee Name \_\_\_\_\_

Annual Leave for Leave Year \_\_\_\_\_

**Please complete this form, make a copy for your records, and return it to the OFO by e-mail by December 1.** Leave requests received after December 1 will not receive the same consideration as those received by December 1.

Accumulated leave at the end of pay period 26 of \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number of pay periods in \_\_\_\_\_  
 Hours of annual leave earned per pay period \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number of weeks of annual leave to schedule \_\_\_\_\_

I request consideration of the following leave periods in accordance with Instruction MGC 410.

Please provide **three distinct choices** for each leave category. Enter week(s) horizontally for first choice, then week(s) horizontally for second choice, and week(s) horizontally for third choice for each category.

CATEGORY I (Week Beginning)				CATEGORY II (Week Beginning)			
→ → →				→ → →			
First Choice				First Choice			
Second Choice				Second Choice			
Third Choice				Third Choice			

\*\*\*If you have a compelling need for a specific time, please indicate the reason.

Your annual leave for \_\_\_\_\_ is scheduled as follows:

CATEGORY I				CATEGORY II			
Week Beginning				Week Beginning			

**Note:** All employees are reminded that in accordance with Instruction MGC 410, they are expected to provide an itinerary of where they can be reached while on leave.



Exhibit C

Request for Leave or Approved Absence

Employee Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Requested Date and Time

Date		Time		Total Hours
From	To	From	To	

Type of Leave or Absence Requested

- Sick                       Annual                       Compensatory  
 Jury Duty                 Leave Without Pay         Other \_\_\_\_\_

I also invoke my entitlement to family and medical leave for:

- Birth/Adoption/  
Foster care                 Serious health  
condition of spouse,  
son, daughter, or  
parent                       Serious health condition  
of self

Remarks:

- Approved                 Disapproved

Supervisor Remarks:

Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_