LEAVE

1.0 Purpose

1.1 This Instruction supplements the Human Resources Desk Guide Subchapter 4630, Absence and Leave; the Marketing and Regulatory Programs (MRP) Directive 4630.1, Absence and Leave; and provides information on leave for Grading and Verification Division employees.

2.0 Policy

2.1 It is Grading and Verification Division (GVD) policy to grant employee requests for leave contingent on the workload. The ultimate decision on granting leave rests with GVD management and is based on staff availability in relation to requests for GVD services. Except for emergency situations, all annual leave must be approved in advance. To the extent possible, other categories of leave (military, jury, maternity, leave without pay (LWOP), etc.) and sick leave for scheduled medical, dental or optical examinations or treatment, must also be approved in advance. All requests and approvals for leave will be recorded in the WebTA payroll system. Family leave must be approved as outlined in the Human Resources Desk Guide Subchapter 4630, Absence and Leave, Section F, Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

2.2 Each employee is responsible for managing their annual leave and sick leave balances. Employees must ensure that annual leave is scheduled far enough in advance to avoid forfeiture at the end of the year.

3.0 Pod Assignments

3.1 Pods are geographic areas where a group of GVD employees are assigned to provide service to grading and certification applicants. GVD Management attempts to staff pods with sufficient graders so that each pod can provide their own annual leave relief, thereby reducing travel and travel expenses. Management will make every effort to schedule leave using GVD Pod Assignments (Exhibit A) for annual leave relief purposes.

3.2 Employees within the same Pod are encouraged to communicate with each other when planning annual leave requests so that there are not more requests for a specific week than can be granted.

4.0 Annual Leave

4.1 Each year the Grading and Verification Division office will remind all field employees, via email, to request annual leave for the next calendar year by completing the Annual Leave Request and Volunteer TDY (Exhibit B) form and submitting it to the GVD office. In addition to requesting annual leave, this form will also be used by graders to declare whether or not they wish to volunteer for

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Temporary Duty (TDY) assignments during the year to cover the leave requests of graders in other duty stations.

4.2 Employees will follow the instructions on the Annual Leave Request and Volunteer TDY (Exhibit B) form when making annual leave requests.

4.2.1 Employees earning 8 hours annual leave per pay period may request a maximum of 5 weeks annual leave.

4.2.2 Employees earning 6 hours annual leave per pay period may request a maximum of 4 weeks annual leave.

4.2.3 Employees earning 4 hours annual leave per pay period may request a maximum of 2 weeks of annual leave.

4.2.4 Employees may request to schedule additional weeks of annual leave above their calendar year accruals, however these weeks will be scheduled after all other leave has been scheduled nationwide.

4.2.5 It is not the policy of the GVD to schedule annual leave when it would require another grader to be on TDY away from home during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. Employees wishing to be considered for these weeks will make their desire known on the Annual Leave Request and Volunteer TDY form. Annual Leave will only be granted for the weeks of Thanksgiving and Christmas in locations where in-house relief is available. This will not preclude graders from volunteering to be on TDY during these holidays.

4.2.6 Leave will only be canceled by GVD management when all other alternatives of providing service have been exhausted. Management will inform the National Meat Graders' Council of the American Federation of Government Employees AFL-CIO (Union) of the reasons for canceling annual leave.

4.2.7 When submitting the Annual Leave Request and Volunteer TDY (Exhibit B) form, graders must declare whether or not they wish to volunteer for TDY assignments during the year to cover the leave taken by employees in other areas of the country. This declaration remains in effect for the entire calendar year. A local list of volunteer TDY graders will be maintained at each duty station. TDY assignments will be made on a rotating, equitable basis from the list of volunteer graders at each duty station. If there are no volunteer graders from a specific duty station, assignment to TDY will be made in accordance with the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

4.3 Each year GVD management will develop the Nationwide Annual Leave Schedule for the upcoming calendar year. Records will be maintained of each employee's original request for annual leave and what was subsequently scheduled.

4.3.1 In the event that more than one grader in a duty station requests annual leave for the same week(s), the grader with the most seniority will be granted the week(s) in conflict. For annual leave and volunteer TDY purposes, local duty station seniority is based on the employee's current appointment with the GVD, in accordance with the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

4.3.2 The nationwide annual leave schedule, once finalized, will be provided to all graders and supervisors. Graders may request to trade annual leave weeks with other graders. Trades require prior approval from the GVD office and written agreement from the affected graders.

4.4 Employees must request sufficient annual leave to avoid forfeiture at the end of the calendar year (leave in excess of the maximum carryover of 240 hours).

4.4.1 In the event that an employee does not make a sufficient request for annual leave to prevent a use-or-lose situation, the employee will be assigned annual leave after all other sufficient requests are filled. The employee understands that when requests are made with the same weeks repeating, the employee's scheduled leave may result in an assignment of leave.

4.5 GVD management may grant requests for additional annual leave during the year based on the employee's circumstances, leave balances, and staffing requirements. Such leave will be termed "add-on annual leave" and may, or may not, be approved pending workload.

4.5.1 Additional requests for leave will be scheduled after all other leave has been scheduled.

4.6 Before going on annual leave, all employees must provide the GVD office and their immediate supervisor, as accurately as possible, the telephone number where they can be reached in an emergency. This information may be furnished via e-mail.

5.0 Rescheduling Annual Leave.

5.1 Graders may request to reschedule their annual leave during the year based on changes in their personal circumstances. Likewise, GVD management may ask employees to reschedule leave if the number of graders needed to provide service is greater than previously anticipated. This occasionally occurs due to unexpected sick leave, retirements, new service requests, etc. Every attempt will be made to reschedule leave for weeks mutually acceptable for both employees and management.

5.2 In the event that an employee cancels leave for any reason and is in a use-or-lose situation, the employee will have the following options:

5.2.1 The employee may request to "add-on" to another week and that week will be granted on a first come, first serve basis to the fullest extent practicable and based on customer needs.

5.2.2 The employee may donate the leave that is use-or-lose.

5.2.3 Forfeit the leave.

6.0 Advanced Sick Leave

6.1 Sick leave will not be advanced merely because an employee has exhausted his/her sick leave. The conditions for granting advanced sick leave are contained in the Marketing and Regulatory Programs (MRP) Directive 4630.1, Absence and Leave. Only the GVD Director or Assistant Director may approve advanced sick leave. Requests for advanced sick leave must be submitted in writing to the Director, through the employee's immediate supervisor or other designated management official, and contain justification for the request.

7.0 Other Types of Leave (Sick, Military, LWOP, etc.)

7.1 When possible, requests for other types of leave including "add-on annual leave" must be submitted in advance by e-mail to the designated GVD management official and the immediate supervisor. If approved, the request must also be submitted in WebTA.

7.2 When sick or emergency leave is requested and approved by phone, employees must follow up the request via email and WebTA as soon as they return to work.

7.3 Employees on approved sick leave for 3 or more consecutive days must submit medical documentation justifying the sick leave. In individual cases, if there is sufficient reason to believe the employee may be abusing sick leave privileges, the employee shall first be orally advised that a medical certificate may be required for each subsequent absence due to sick leave. At the next occurrence of questionable sick leave usage the employee will be advised in writing that all future requests for sick leave must be supported by an acceptable medical certificate.

7.4 All other approved leave (military, maternity, jury duty, LWOP, etc.) that exceeds one week's duration must be reported to the Assistant Director through the GVD office.

8.0 Emergency Conditions

8.1 Under emergency conditions (hazardous weather, industry strikes, floods, fires, plant shutdowns, etc.) that prevent supervisors and graders from performing their duties at the worksite, employees will follow supervisory or other management guidelines in accordance with the Human Resources Desk Guide Subchapter 4630, Absence and Leave, Section D, Excused Absence and in the following paragraph:

8.2 During an emergency, employees must inform the GVD office and their immediate supervisor where they can be contacted so they can report promptly for duty when the emergency is over. Supervisors will make every effort to minimize excused absence time by:

8.2.1 Reassignment to other duties in the same or other locations,

8.2.2 Training,

8.2.3 Cross-utilization, or

8.2.4 Voluntary annual leave.

Exhibit A

Grading and Verification Division Pods
Updated 12/01/11

POD #	State	Location	Number of Graders	POD #	State	Location	Number of Graders
1	CA	Pico Rivera	7	6	NE	Lexington	6
		Brawley	3			Grand Island	9
		Fresno	1			Hastings	1
		Dixon	1				
		Selma	1				
		Hanford	1	7	NE	Omaha	7
	AZ	Tolleson	3			Dakota City	6
						Schuyler	7
					IA	Dennison	3
2	WA	Toppenish	2			Nevada	1
		Wallula	3		MN	Windom	1
	ID	Boise	1		MO	St. Louis	1
	UT	Hyrum	3				
				8	WI	Green Bay	6
3	CO	Fort Morgan	5			Milwaukee	1
		Greeley	11			Cottage Grove	1
		Denver	1		IL	Chicago	3
						Rantoul	1
						Joslin	5
4	TX	Amarillo	9		IA	Postville	1
		Dumas	9				
		Plainview	5				
		Friona	7	9	OH	West Chester	7
		Dallas	2			Creston	1
		Corpus Christi	3		MI	Detroit	1
						Plainwell	3
					PA	Franconia	5
5	KS	Liberal	9			Wyalusing	1
		Garden City	7			Dunmore	1
		Dodge City	17		NC	Forest City	1
		Harper	1		GA	Augusta	1
		Ark City	1				
		Hutchinson	1				
	OK	Enid	2				

Exhibit B

Annual Leave Request and Volunteer TDY
For Calendar Year 2012

Employee Name _____ Supervisor _____

Duty Station _____ Date _____

Please complete this form, make a copy for your records, and email it to the GVD Office as directed. Leave requests received after the specified due date **will not** receive the same consideration as those received on time.

Accumulated leave at the end of pay period 26 of 2011 is _____ hours

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 GVD Instruction 410, Leave.

Enter the week beginning dates below for your preferred and alternate choices of annual leave. Complete ALL blocks using different week beginning dates.

	Preferred	Alternate
1st Choice		
2nd Choice		
3rd Choice		
4th Choice		
5th Choice		
6th Choice		
7th Choice		
8th Choice		
9th Choice		

☐ I wish to be considered for annual leave for the Thanksgiving holiday week

☐ I wish to be considered for annual leave for the Christmas holiday week

Comments/Narrative

240 Hour Carryover and Other Alternate Weeks

Your annual leave for calendar year 2012 has been scheduled as follows:

Week Beginning					

In accordance with the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the GVD and the National Meat Graders' Council, I elect the following for Temporary Duty (TDY) assignments during this calendar year.

☐ I have read and understand Article 4.7 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. For this calendar year, I **wish to volunteer** for TDY assignments that may occur from my duty station. I understand that this declaration will remain in effect for the entire calendar year in accordance with Article 4.7e 1 of the Agreement.

☐ I have read and understand Article 4.7 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. For this calendar year, I **do not want to volunteer** for TDY assignments that may occur from my duty station. I understand that even though my preference is not to perform TDY duties, I am still subject to such TDY assignments in accordance with all other provisions of Article 4.7 (i.e. there are no volunteer TDY graders).