



WEST DES MOINES WATER WORKS BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING COMMUNICATION

DATE: July 21, 2021

ITEM:

5. Recommendations from Committees
 - a. Personnel and Compensation
 1. Motion – Approving Changes to Section 9 of the Employee Handbook Regarding Parental Leave and Change to Bereavement Leave

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Minor financial impacts. No additional staffing is needed to accommodate this new benefit.

SUMMARY:

This action will approve revisions to Section 9 of the Water Works Employee Handbook. These handbook revisions will add a parental leave policy granting up to 4 weeks of paid parental leave within six months of the birth or adoption of a child. This policy does not cover if a new spouse adopts the other spouse's children. The leave can be taken intermittently with the approval of the employee's supervisor. It runs concurrently with Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leave and is available to employees who have passed their probationary period.

The revisions also include an addition to the bereavement policy to add leave up to 40 hours for the loss of an unborn child.

BACKGROUND:

Over the last year the General Manager had started conversation about a parental leave policy. Many private companies and several municipalities have parental leave policies. Some policies have equal amounts for both the birth parent and their spouse. In May, the City of West Des Moines approved a parental leave policy. After review of other policies and the City of West Des Moines, it was decided to mirror the City of West Des Moines' policy as it has been written to be inclusive of all families. The Personnel and Compensation Committee is supportive of this approach.

For reference the following cities that have a parental leave policy:

West Des Moines, 4 weeks parental leave

Des Moines – 8 weeks to mother, 6 weeks to other parents

Cedar Rapids – 4 weeks

Dubuque – 12 weeks

Grimes – 3 weeks to mothers, 2 weeks to other parents

Polk City – 6 weeks paid, an additional 2 weeks at 70%

Providing a parental leave policy will help us be competitive in recruitments in the future and hopefully help with the recruitment of women in traditionally male dominated

drinking water professions.

This policy has been reviewed by our management team and reviewed by our union stewards.

RECOMMENDED ACTION BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

To concur with the recommendation of the Personnel and Compensation Committee and approve the Changes to Section 9 of the Employee Handbook Regarding Parental Leave and Change to Bereavement Leave.

Prepared by: Clte Murphy

Approved for Content by: Clte Murphy



Section 9 - CONTINUING EDUCATION, JURY DUTY, BEREAVEMENT LEAVE AND PARENTAL LEAVE

CONTINUING EDUCATION AND CONVENTIONS: If you desire to obtain a certificate to be eligible for promotion, if you are required to participate in continuing education, if you wish to take some form of continuing education or if you wish to attend a convention, conference or training of an organization of which you are a member or is directly related to your Water Works position, a written request must be made to the General Manager, through your supervisor, at least two weeks before the start of the event.

These guidelines apply to continuing education and conventions, conferences, and trainings:

1. The content of the event must be reasonably related to the work you do now or may do in the near future for the Water Works.
2. The content of the event must be different than an event you have attended in the recent past.
3. Water Works may, upon approval of the General Manager, pre-pay for registration for continuing education conferences, conventions, or other training opportunities. If the event consists of several sessions, you may be required to initially pay all registration costs associated with it. Reimbursement for registration costs will be reimbursed upon successful completion of the sessions.
4. The Water Works will reimburse you for the costs stated below, when you demonstrate successful completion.
5. If the event consists of one continuous session, you may request an advance payment of your estimated expenses associated with the event. Otherwise, the Water Works will reimburse you after presentation of receipts from the event.
6. The Water Works expects you to successfully complete the continuing education or attend the sessions, as appropriate. Failure to successfully complete the continuing education or attend the sessions may subject you to disciplinary action and repayment of any expense advance.
7. If time away from work is required, it will be granted only if your absence does not cause problems, excessive overtime for other employees or any undue hardship to the Water Works.
8. Costs eligible for reimbursement are all those reasonably associated with the

event, including registration fees or tuition, laboratory and materials fees, books, transportation, meals and lodging. Itemized receipts are required.

Permission to take continuing education or attend a convention within the State of Iowa may be granted by the General Manager. Requests to travel to continuing education or conventions outside the State of Iowa will be submitted to the Education Committee for approval. Each request will be considered on its own merit.

While attending the continuing education or convention, you will be paid for the Water Works' approved educational portion of the event, or your regular working hours, whichever is greater. All authorized travel time spent driving an automobile (as the driver, not the passenger) is treated as "hours worked" regardless of whether the travel takes place within normal work hours or outside of normal work hours. Travel as a passenger in an automobile is not automatically treated as "hours worked". Travel as a passenger in an automobile is counted as "hours worked" when such travel occurs during regular working hours, however, travel as a passenger in an automobile will not be considered for payment when such travel occurs outside of regular work hours. If you are eligible for Overtime, the provisions of Section 3 - Compensation apply to the time associated with a continuing education event or a convention, conference, or other training. Employees are responsible for accurately tracking, calculating and reporting travel time on their time sheets in accordance with this policy.

When multiple employees are traveling to the same event, consideration must be given to reducing the number of vehicles used through carpooling. Employees must receive advance authorization from a supervisor if a non-Water Works vehicle is used for travel to an event.

Lodging must be limited to the minimum number of nights to attend the function. Overnight stays prior to a function are limited to when travel is over 100 miles away from the employee's departure point (assumed the employee's typical work location) and the employee cannot depart at the beginning of his/her regular work day and arrive prior to the first session of the function. Reimbursements for lodging plus local transportation (car rental and/or taxi fares, if required) are not to exceed \$150 per night plus taxes. Costs above this limitation are deemed to be the responsibility of the employee. Additional costs can be considered on a case-by-case basis by the General Manager (e.g., the hotel hosting a convention exceeds the cost of \$150 per night).

Meal reimbursement shall only be allowed for actual expenses incurred, including reasonable gratuities, when noted. The cost of a meal will not be reimbursed if a meal is provided as part of a meeting or conference registration, or if provided as part of lodging (i.e. breakfast).

Those traveling for Water Works business must use discretion in keeping meal costs to reasonable levels. It is expected that the employee's meal expense will not exceed \$50 per day for three meals (breakfast \$10.00, lunch \$14.00, dinner \$26.00) excluding tips. Additional reimbursement will be made for tip amounts up to 18% of the total meal bill

upon submission of itemized receipt including amount of tip. If the traveler is only eligible for reimbursement for two meals in a day, it is expected that the meal expense claimed for reimbursement will not exceed the sum of the abovementioned meal allocations, regardless of the distribution of cost between the two meals.

The following guidelines apply to meal reimbursement:

- Original, itemized receipts are required.
- Reimbursement for alcoholic beverages is prohibited.
- Snacks and incidental beverages are not reimbursable unless they are expensed as a substitute for the regular meals of breakfast, lunch or dinner.
- If an employee opts to purchase meals at a grocery store he/she must specify on the itemized receipt the meals and dates for which the food items are being purchased. The cost per meal must be reasonable and not result in the employee exceeding the maximum daily meal expense for applicable days.

Opportunities for continuing education not described in this Handbook may occur from time to time. We encourage you to consider these opportunities and to apply for them. Each request will be considered on its own merit, the value of the continuing education to the Water Works and the funds available and required.

JURY DUTY: If you are called for jury duty, you will be granted leave to serve. For any time you lose from work because of jury duty, you will be paid your full wage or salary less the amount paid to you by the court as shown on the pay slips furnished by the clerk of court. You may keep any payments received for mileage or other direct expenses.

If you are dismissed from jury duty before the end of your scheduled work day, you will need to report back to work, provided at least two hours remain in the scheduled work day. If your work is scheduled for a late evening shift, the Water Works will adjust your return to work schedule to allow for sleep time.

When, in obedience to a subpoena or direction by proper authority, an employee appears as a witness in a court proceeding, the time spent shall be considered as a leave of absence with pay provided that the employee is not a party to the proceedings. The employee shall remit witness fees to the Water Works.

BEREAVEMENT LEAVE: Leave of absence without loss of pay and not charged to sick leave or vacation will be granted to you for work time lost due to death in your family on the following basis:

1. Because of a death in your immediate family **or for the unplanned loss of an unborn child:** up to forty hours. "Immediate family" includes your spouse, child,

parent, sibling, and in-law parents. Step relationships as listed above are included within this list. Bereavement leave will be granted in these situations upon your notification to your supervisor; no approval is required.

2. Because of a death of a grandparent or grandchild: up to twenty-four hours. Bereavement leave will be granted in these situations upon your notification to your supervisor; no approval is required.
3. Because of a death of an aunt, uncle, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, nephew, niece, or any step or in-law relationship not listed in paragraph one and your absence is approved by your supervisor: up to eight hours.

If you wish to attend the funeral service of a current or former City of West Des Moines or West Des Moines Water Works employee or an elected or appointed official of the City of West Des Moines or West Des Moines Water Works, and your absence is approved by your supervisor: Up to four hours bereavement leave may be allowed.

If you need additional time away from work because of a death in your family, you may supplement the bereavement leave time allowed above with vacation or unpaid leave of absence. While you must request approval to take vacation or unpaid leave of absence, the rules pertaining to advance notice are suspended when the request is associated with a death in your family.

Compensation for bereavement leave will be based on the length of your regularly scheduled work day (or less if a partial day is lost and exclusive of overtime, holidays, or other hours or days for which you are otherwise compensated) up to the maximum provided above.

When unusual circumstances exist that do not come under any of the foregoing, the General Manager may approve unpaid excused absences for funeral leave.

PARENTAL LEAVE: West Des Moines Water Works will provide up to four (4) weeks (160 hours) of paid parental leave to employees following the birth of an employee's child or the placement of a child with an employee in connection with adoption or foster to adopt care. The purpose of paid parental leave is to enable the employee to care for and bond with a newborn or newly adopted or newly placed to adopt child. This policy will run concurrently with Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leave, as applicable.

Eligible employees must meet the following criteria:

- a. Have been employed with the West Des Moines Water Works and have successfully completed their probationary period (6 months).
- b. Be a regular full-time employee.
- c. Regular three-quarter and half part-time employees will be eligible for a pro-rated leave.
- d. Temporary or seasonal employees and interns are not eligible for this benefit.

In addition, employees must meet one of the following criteria:

- a. Have given birth to a child (which includes surrogacy*)
- b. Be a spouse of a person who has given birth to a child.
- c. Have adopted a child, been placed with a foster-to-adopt child (in either case, the child must be age 17 or younger). The adoption of a new spouse's child is excluded from this policy.

*Surrogate individuals are not eligible for parental leave but may be eligible for other medical leave benefits. Please see medical leave policy for benefits provided to surrogates.

Amount, Time Frame, and Duration of Paid Parental Leave:

Eligible employees will receive a maximum of four (4) weeks (160 hours) of paid parental leave per birth, adoption, or placement of child/children. The fact that a multiple birth, adoption, or placement occurs (e.g., the birth of twins or adoption of siblings) does not increase the up to four (4) weeks (160 hours) total amount of paid parental leave granted for that event. In addition, in no case will an employee receive more than four (4) weeks (160 hours) of paid parental leave in a rolling 12-month period, regardless of whether more than one birth, adoption, or foster-to-adopt care placement event occurs within that 12-month time frame.

Each week of paid parental leave is compensated at 100 percent of the employee's regular, straight-time weekly pay. Paid parental leave will be paid on a biweekly basis on regularly scheduled pay dates. A four-week equivalent will be calculated based on the regular schedule of the employee.

Approved paid parental leave may be taken at any time during the 6-month period immediately following the birth, adoption, or placement of a child with the employee. Paid parental leave may not be used or extended beyond this 6-month time frame.

Employees may take paid parental leave in one continuous period of leave or intermittently with their supervisor's approval and must use all paid parental leave during 6-month time frame indicated above. Any unused paid parental leave will be forfeited at the end of the 6-month time frame.

Upon termination of the individual's employment with the Water Works, the employee will not be paid for any unused paid parental leave for which they were eligible.

Coordination with Other Policies:

Paid parental leave taken under this policy will run concurrently with leave under the FMLA; thus, any leave taken under this policy that falls under the definition of circumstances qualifying for leave due to the birth of placement of a child due to adoption or foster to adopt, the leave will be counted toward the 12 weeks of available FMLA leave per a 12-month period. All other requirements and provisions under the FMLA will apply. In no case will the total amount of leave – whether paid or unpaid –

granted to the employee under the FMLA exceed 12 weeks during the 12-month FMLA period. Please refer to the Family and Medical Leave Policy for further guidance on the FMLA.

Upon exhaustion of accrued sick, vacation, personal time and parental leave, any remaining leave will be unpaid leave. Please refer to the Family and Medical Leave Policy for further guidance on the FMLA.

The Water Works will maintain all benefits for the employee during the paid parental leave period just as if they were taking any other Water Works paid leave such as paid vacation leave or paid sick leave.

If a Water Works holiday occurs while the employee is on paid parental leave, such day will be charged to holiday pay; however, such holiday pay will not extend the total paid parental leave entitlement.

Requests for Paid Parental Leave:

The employee will provide their supervisor and the General Manager with notice of the request for leave at least 30 days prior to the proposed date of the leave (or if the leave was not foreseeable, as soon as possible). The employee must complete the necessary forms and provide all documentation as required by Water Works to substantiate the request.

As is the case with all water works policies, the organization has the exclusive right to interpret this policy.