

a letter to this effect. If an employee on Administrative Leave fails to timely submit the total monthly health insurance premium, then the County shall remove the employee from the group health insurance roll and the employee's health insurance coverage shall cease.

An employee desiring to return to work from Administrative Leave must notify the Human Resources Department and the department head in writing at least ten (10) days prior to the employee's desired date of return. If the County finds that the employee is fit for duty, the County shall allow the employee to return to work.

If an employee on Administrative Leave does not return to work by the earlier of (a) the end of the specific period of Administrative Leave granted (including any extension) or (b) direction by the County to return prior to the expiration of the original Administrative Leave period due to a substantial change in circumstances, then the employee may be terminated from County employment by administrative separation. A termination under the circumstances described in this section will be listed as an administrative separation. An employee who has been administratively separated shall have the same opportunity as any other person to apply for County employment.

Sick Leave Bank

Purpose. A Sick Leave Bank shall be established to assist employees who have encountered a catastrophic illness or injury, and have exhausted their accrued leave time. This program provides salary and benefits continuation for eligible employees who have exhausted all paid leave due to a catastrophic illness or injury of the employee or an immediate family member. This is a voluntary program that allows employees to donate a portion of their unused sick leave into a sick leave bank that is available to assist employees who are eligible under the program.

Eligibility for enrollment and membership.

- An eligible employee must have a minimum of 75 hours of accumulated sick leave at the time of membership enrollment.
- Membership in the Sick Leave Bank begins upon the employee's original donation of at least two (2) days.
- Membership will continue until written notification is received cancelling membership.
- Once enrolled, an automatic reduction of one day annually will be taken from the employee's leave balance.

Eligibility for application. To receive leave from the Sick Leave Bank, an employee must:

- Be a member, as defined under membership guidelines, and
- Have exhausted all accumulated leave options, and
- Have a catastrophic illness or injury documented by a health care provider for oneself or immediate family member that it is necessary for the employee to provide care.

Procedures to apply for leave.

- An employee or his/her designee must request sick leave from the Bank by completing an application and submitting it to the Human Resources Department.
- All applications must be accompanied by a health care provider's statement which includes the beginning date of the condition and a description of the illness or injury. All applications must indicate the number of sick leave days being requested.
- A decision will be rendered to the employee within five (5) working days after receipt of the completed application.

Administration of the bank. The Human Resources Department will be responsible for administering and coordinating the annual donation period, processing requests, maintaining appropriate related records, and convening the Sick Leave Bank Committee. The County Administrator will appoint the Sick Leave Bank Committee. The Sick Leave Bank Committee is responsible for approving or declining use of the Sick Leave Bank. The Sick Leave Bank Committee consists of the Human Resources Director, Finance Director, and the Administrative Services Director. The Committee will be responsible for reporting usage and for reviewing the policies and operations of the Sick Leave Bank on an annual basis. The Committee may recommend changes or modifications to County Council as needed.

Appeals. There is no appeal procedure. The decision of the Sick Leave Bank Committee is final.

Definitions. A "catastrophic illness and/or injury" for this policy means an acute or prolonged illness or injury that is considered life-threatening or with the threat of serious residual disability which results in one's inability to work.

Exclusions. The following exclusions apply:

- Employees may not designate a particular employee to receive their donated time.
- Employees on Workers' Compensation, Short-term Disability or Supplemental Long-term disability leave are not eligible for the Sick Leave Bank benefits.
- Employees may not engage in secondary employment while using the Sick Leave Bank.
- Leave must be used in whole work day increments.
- An employee must not have a written record of disciplinary action for leave abuse or misuse of leave within the past (12) months.

Payment of leave.

- An employee may not receive more than 20 sick leave days in a (12) month period from the Bank. The (12) month period is defined as a rolling back period as of the date of award approval.
- The hours withdrawn from the Sick Leave Bank will be based on the employee's regular rate of pay. Existing payroll deductions including benefit premiums will continue to occur.
- Any balance of days approved but not required for the illness/injury will remain the property of the Sick Leave Bank.

Termination of Sick Leave Bank hours. Sick Leave Bank hours terminate:

- When the employee separates from the organization; or
- Upon the death of the employee; or
- When the health care provider releases the employee to return to work; or
- The maximum sick leave benefit has been exhausted for the (12) month period.

Retirement

Except where exempted by law, all regular County employees are members of the South Carolina Retirement System. Rules and regulations for eligible employees shall be set in accordance with the requirements of the South Carolina Retirement System. Application for Retirement System benefits must reach the South Carolina State office up to six (6) months in advance, or ninety (90) days after the retirement date. Applications must be obtained from the