



Re: Handling Administrative Leave Requests Due to Emergency Situations

Requests for administrative leave generally occur during the winter season due to inclement weather; such as snow storms or hurricanes in our area. It is essential that Postmasters/Managers make every effort to ensure that the course of action followed for granting or disapproving a request for administrative leave is consistent with service needs and due consideration given for employee's safety, Postal rules and regulations and local bargaining agreements. When a request for administrative leave is denied, you can usually expect a grievance. The following information is offered to assist local management in responding to those grievances and making a consistent, well-reasoned and supportable determination.

I. References

- A. Section 519 of the Employee and Labor Relations Manual¹ sets forth the definition, criteria and other particulars involving administrative leave.
- B. Section 380 and 582 of Handbook F-21² outline the pay procedures for administrative leave requests.
- C. Section 665.4 of the Employee and Labor Relations Manual outlines the attendance requirements of all Postal employees.
- D. Section 511.4 of the Employee and Labor Relations Manual outlines the definition and management/employee responsibilities for unscheduled absences.

II. Authority

Postmasters and other installation heads have authority to grant Administrative Leave up to one day for Acts of God. District Managers and PCES plant managers have authority to grant Administrative Leave beyond one day but not more than 3 days. District Managers and Senior Plant Managers may also authorize Administrative Leave for periods beyond three days. [ELM 519.212]

¹ ELM 17.4, September 4, 2003 edition.

² Handbook F-21,

III. Criteria for Granting Administrative Leave

Each request for Administrative Leave must be evaluated on a case by case basis. There is an initial three part criterion to be satisfied prior to the granting of Administrative Leave for Acts of God, as follows:

1. an Act of God must involve a community disaster;
2. the disaster must be general rather than personal in scope and impact; and
3. the disaster must prevent groups of employees from working or reporting to work. [ELM 519.211]

IV. Determining the Cause of Absence

Postmasters and other appropriate Postal Service officials make the determination of whether an absence from duty allegedly due to an "Act of God" was, in fact due to such cause or whether the employee or employees in question could, **with reasonable diligence**, have reported for duty. [ELM 519.213]

V. General Principles

Arbitral history demonstrates that the outcome of a grievance will be determined by the well-documented and individual facts of a particular case. The mere fact that a "state of emergency" has been declared, or a large amount of snow or rain has fallen, or the curtailment of mail delivery or operations will not always be the determinative factors of whether administrative leave should be granted or not. Consider the following questions when deciding to grant or deny administrative leave.

- A. Does the "Act of God" rise to the level of a community disaster?
- B. If so, is the disaster general rather than personal in scope?
 - ✓ Were roads passable?
 - ✓ What geographic areas were affected? Which were not?
 - ✓ What transportation options were available?
 - ✓ What was reported on the news or in the newspapers regarding the disaster?
 - ✓ Was a state of emergency called by state officials?
- C. Was the employee requesting administrative leave on pre-approved leave?

- ✓ Employees on pre-approved leave, regardless of the reason, must not be considered or approved for Administrative Leave.

D. Were groups of employees prevented from working or reporting to work?

- ✓ How many employees were scheduled to work? By tour?
- ✓ How many employees actually reported to work?
- ✓ Where do the employees reside (geographical area) who reported to work, as compared to those who did not report to work?

E. Was the failure to report to work related to the disaster to such an extent that an employee exercising reasonable diligence would have been unable to report?

- ✓ What diligent effort did the non-reporting employee make to report for duty? (Ask the employee)
- ✓ What documentation did the employee submit to support that effort?
- ✓ How does the employee usually travel to work? How long does it usually take?
- ✓ Were alternative travel options attempted?
- ✓ Was liberal Annual Leave afforded to those employees who did not report? Who reported late?

IV. Conclusion

While it is clear that the burden of proof will be on the employee to establish his/her diligent efforts to report to work, the Postal Service will be called upon to justify its determination. No matter how valid our position may be in denying requests for administrative leave, the Postal Service cannot expect to prevail if it does not have the substantiation to back up its position. Keep in mind that each and every case will be judged on its own merits. It is essential that certain key information be collected at the time of the decision-making. For this purpose, attached is a questionnaire that should be filled out for any employee who requests administrative leave based on an Act of God. Such information should be retained by the appropriate official in the event that a grievance is filed. Also attached is a general type questionnaire that can be used for all crafts.

Should you have any questions regarding the foregoing, please feel free to contact, your District Labor Relations Office.

**REQUEST FOR ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE
WORKSHEET**

Date of Call/Request _____ Time of Call/Request: _____

Employee's Name: _____ SSN or EID: _____

Title: _____ Pay Loc: _____ Tour: _____ Hours of Work: _____

Facility: _____

Employee's Home Address: _____

Distance from Employee's Home to Work: _____

Usual Means of Travel: _____

Reason Given for Not Reporting to Work: _____

What effort, if any did the employee make to report to work?: _____

What evidence did the employee submit to support a request for Administrative Leave?: _____

Was your facility open for business?: _____

How many employees on Tour/at Facility?: _____

How many employees reported to work?: _____

Of those employees who reported, how many were late?: _____

Do any who reported to work live near the employee requesting Administrative Leave?: _____

If yes, who?: _____

Of those who reported, what locations did they travel from?: _____

Were major roads open and passable?: _____

Was public transportation available?: If so, what? _____

If applicable, what was the weather condition at time of request?: _____

Attachment _____

