Section 4.13 Paid Parental Leave

Effective Date: December 14, 2021
Revised: XXXX, 2023 (proposed)

General Information~~Section 1:~~

The County will provide up to six (6) weeks of paid parental leave to employees following the birth of an employee's child or the initial placement of a child with an employee in connection with adoption, legal guardianship, or foster care. The adoption of a new spouse's child is exempt~~ed~~ from this policy.

Paid Parental Leave and FMLA Coverage

The purpose of paid parental leave is to enable the employee to care for and bond with a newborn or a newly placed child. Paid Parental Leave will be required to run concurrently with Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leave~~,~~ when applicable. If an employee is eligible and has FMLA coverage at the time they request parental leave but has utilized some or all the allotted twelve (12) weeks of FMLA coverage, the employee will nevertheless be entitled to parental leave pursuant to all other provisions of this policy and provided that the employee submits an FMLA certification form to support the request for parental leave. Please refer to Policy 4.8 - Leaves of Absence for further guidance on the FMLA.

Each week of paid parental leave is compensated at 100 percent of the employee's regular, straight time hourly rate (non-exempt) or weekly rate (exempt).

Paid Parental Leave will be in effect for ~~FMLA leaves related to~~ births, adoptions, legal guardianships, or initial placements of foster children occurring on or after the effective date of this policy. ~~The adoption of a new spouse's child is exempted from this policy.~~

Eligibility~~Procedure:~~

To be eligible for this paid leave, ~~the leave must run concurrent with an approved FMLA leave pertaining to this policy.~~an employee must have been employed with Lake County for 6 months. County employees with less than 6 months tenure may still be eligible for unpaid parental leave pursuant to state or federal law and should contact Human Resources.

Eligible employees will receive a maximum of six (6) weeks of paid parental leave per birth, or placement of a child/children. The fact that a multiple birth or placement occurs (e.g., the birth of twins or adoption of siblings) does not increase the total amount of paid parental leave granted for that event. ~~In addition, in no case will an employee receive more than twelve (12) weeks of paid parental leave in a rolling twelve (12) month period, of~~

~~Each week of paid parental leave is compensated at 100 percent of the employee's regular, straight time hourly rate (non-exempt) or weekly rate (exempt).~~

Procedure for Requesting Parental Leave:

To apply for paid parental leave, an employee must:

   a) Inform their supervisor of the request in writing utilizing the Parental Leave Request Form at least thirty (30) days before the expected date of delivery, adoption, or placement, and

   b) Submit a copy of the Parental Leave Request Form to Human Resources at least thirty (30) days prior to the expected date of delivery, adoption, or placement, along with all documentation required by HR to support the leave, and

   c) Submit a completed application for FMLA coverage to FMLASource at least thirty (30) days before the expected date of delivery, adoption, or placement.

To the extent that thirty (30) days' notice is not possible, the employee must comply with (a), (b), and (c) as soon as practicable.

~~The employee will provide Human Resources (HR) 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 within such 30-day period, as soon as practical after such leave is foreseeable). The employee must complete the necessary Human Resources forms and provide all documentation as required by the Human Resources Department to substantiate the request.~~
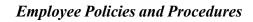
Leave Process:

The six (6) weeks of Paid Parental Leave will begin on the day of birth, adoption, or placement. Once an employee commences their paid parental leave for any birth or placement event, they must take the leave in one continuous six (6)-week period. Any unused paid parental leave will be forfeited. ~~The six (6) weeks of Paid Leave will begin at the beginning of the leave, effective the date of the FMLA approved event.~~ ~~Exceptions to this are at the discretion of the Human Resources Director.~~

Paid parental leave taken under this policy will typically ~~must~~ run concurrently with leave under the FMLA; thus, any leave for a birth or placement taken under this policy will be counted toward the twelve (12) weeks of available FMLA leave. 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 twelve (12) weeks ~~(two paid parental leaves)~~ during the rolling 12-month FMLA period. ~~Please refer to Policy 4.8 - Leaves of Absence for further guidance on the FMLA.~~

The County will maintain all benefits for employees during the paid parental leave period. Employee payroll deductions for all group health and other voluntary benefit programs will continue during this leave.

An employee who takes paid parental leave that does not qualify for FMLA leave will be afforded the same level of job protection for the period of time that the employee is on paid parental leave as if the employee was on FMLA-qualifying leave.

If a County 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 Human Resources (HR) 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 within such 30-day period, as soon as practical after such leave is foreseeable). The employee must complete the necessary Human Resources forms and provide all documentation as required by the Human Resources Department to substantiate the request.~~