

## ADS 481 - FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE (FML)

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**THIS CHAPTER SUPERSEDES SERIES 400 INTERIM UPDATE #16, ON DR-CD 12  
IN ITS ENTIRETY**

**Major Functional Series 400: PERSONNEL  
ADS Chapter 481 - FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE (FML)**

**481.1 Authority**

1. [PL 103-3](#), Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993, Section II provisions ([5 USC 6381-6387](#))
2. [Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, part 630, subpart L](#)

**481.2 Objective**

1. To provide guidance on unpaid [family and medical leave \(FML\)](#) to employees. (Paid leave may be substituted for unpaid leave under section 481.5.6).
2. This chapter applies to all full-time and part-time employees serving under permanent appointments who have completed at least 12 months of service, which does not have to be recent or consecutive. Up to six (6) months of leave without pay is creditable toward meeting the 12-month service requirement.
3. This chapter applies to employees serving under temporary or intermittent appointments who have at least 12 months of federal service, which does not have to be consecutive, including at least 1,250 hours of federal service during the 12-month period immediately preceding an event that would establish eligibility for the program.
4. Foreign Service National employees and temporary and intermittent employees serving overseas are not covered by the regulations in this chapter.

**481.3 Responsibility**

1. The supervisor is responsible for:

Providing information to the employee on rights and obligations under the FMLA.  
Approving employee's request for leave under FMLA ensuring that all procedural requirements have been met and appropriate medical certification provided.

2. The employee is responsible for:

Invoking entitlement to FMLA by providing all the necessary notifications and certifications for agency approval.

3. The Bureau for Management, Office of Human Resources (M/HR) is responsible for:

Informing employees and supervisors of their entitlements and responsibilities under the FMLA.

#### **481.4 Definitions (See [ADS GLOSSARY](#))**

ACCRUED LEAVE  
ACCUMULATED LEAVE  
ADMINISTRATIVE WORKWEEK  
ADOPTION  
ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS  
FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE  
FOSTER CARE  
HEALTH CARE PROVIDER  
INCAPACITY  
IN LOCO PARENTIS  
INTERMITTENT LEAVE  
LEAVE WITHOUT PAY (LWOP)  
PARENT  
REDUCED LEAVE SCHEDULE  
SERIOUS HEALTH CONDITION  
SON OR DAUGHTER  
SPOUSE

#### **481.5 POLICY**

The following are the official Agency policies and corresponding essential procedures:

##### **481.5.1 ENTITLEMENT TO LEAVE**

An employee is entitled to a total of 12 [administrative workweeks](#) of unpaid leave during any 12-month period for one or more of the following reasons:

- a) The birth of a [son or daughter](#) of the employee and the initial care of such son or daughter;
- b) The placement of a child with the employee for [adoption](#) or [foster care](#) and the initial care of such child;
- c) The care of a [spouse](#), son, daughter, or [parent](#) of the employee, if such family member has a [serious health condition](#); or
- d) A serious health condition of the employee that makes the employee unable to perform any one or more of the [essential functions](#) of the employee's position.

### **E481.5.1 Entitlement to Leave**

A total of 12 administrative workweeks of Family Medical Leave (FML) will begin prior to or on the actual date of birth or placement for adoption or foster care and shall expire 12 months after the date of birth or placement. Leave for a birth or placement must be concluded within 12 months after the date of birth or placement.

- a) A mother and father are each entitled to 12 administrative workweeks of unpaid leave for a birth, adoption, or foster care, or for the care of a son or daughter with a serious health condition.
- b) For FML purposes other than birth or adoption, the 12-month period begins on the date an employee first takes FML and continues for 12 months.
- c) Part-time employees are entitled to FML calculated on an hourly basis and will equal 12 times the average number of hours in the employee's regularly scheduled administrative workweek.
- d) An employee is not entitled to 12 additional workweeks of leave until the previous 12-month period ends and an event or situation occurs that entitles the employee to another period of FML. A continuation of a previous situation or circumstance may be included.

### **481.5.2 DURATION OF FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE**

An employee shall take only the amount of family and medical leave (FML) that is necessary to manage the circumstances that prompted the need for the leave.

### **E481.5.2 Duration of Family and Medical Leave**

### **481.5.3 FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE IN ADDITION TO OTHER AVAILABLE LEAVE**

An employee is entitled to unpaid leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act in addition to any annual leave, sick leave, advanced annual or sick leave, other leave without pay, or compensatory time off available to an employee. An employee has the option to take FML in combination with any other available leave; however, an employee must obtain approval and/or meet statutory and regulatory requirements to take additional leave or other periods of paid time off.

### **E481.5.3 Family and Medical Leave in Addition to Other Available Leave**

### **481.5.4 NOTICE OF INTENT TO INVOKE ENTITLEMENT TO FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE**

An employee who chooses to take leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act must invoke the entitlement to Family and Medical Leave (FML), subject to the notification and certification requirements set forth in E481.5.4 as well as sections 481.5.7 and 481.5.8 (**See Mandatory References [5 CFR 630.1206](#) and [5 CFR 630.1207](#)**) An employee who meets the criteria for FML and has complied with the requirements and obligations under this issuance shall not be denied FML. When an employee requests FML, the supervisor must provide information concerning an employee's rights and obligations under FMLA.

#### **E481.5.4 Notice of Intent to Invoke Entitlement to Family and Medical Leave**

- a) An employee must complete a Family and Medical Leave Application Request, Form AID 400-4 (2/97), to invoke entitlement to family and medical leave and submit it to the immediate supervisor.
- b) The approved application form, medical certificate, and other related documents shall be retained with the employee's time and attendance records. A copy of all documents shall be forwarded through the appropriate administrative management office to M/HR/POD or M/HR/EM for processing and retention in a central file for reporting purposes. For IG employees, IG/RM is the receiving office for family and medical leave (FML) requests. M/HR/POD or M/HR/EM will issue an SF-50, Notification of Personnel Action, when an employee invoking FML takes leave without pay for 30 calendar days or more.
- c) If the need for family and medical leave (FML) is foreseeable based on an expected birth, placement for adoption or foster care, or planned medical treatment, the employee shall provide not less than 30 days notice, before the date the leave is to begin, of the employee's intention to take FML. If the date of birth or placement or planned medical treatment requires leave to begin within 30 days, the employee shall provide such notice as soon as is practicable.
- d) If the need for leave is foreseeable, and the employee fails to give 30 days notice with no reasonable excuse for the delay of notification, the Agency has the right to delay the taking of family and medical leave (FML) until at least 30 days after the date the employee provides official notice of intent to take FML.
- e) If the need for family and medical leave is not foreseeable for such reasons as a medical emergency or the unexpected availability of a child for adoption or foster care, and the employee cannot provide 30 days advance notification, the employee or personal representative (e.g., a family member) shall provide notice within a reasonable period of time appropriate to the circumstances involved.

#### **481.5.5 INTERMITTENT LEAVE OR REDUCED LEAVE SCHEDULE**

An employee has the entitlement to take family and medical leave (FML) on an intermittent basis or on a [reduced leave schedule](#) as follows:

- a) An employee must obtain approval from the supervisor to take FML on an intermittent basis or on a reduced leave schedule for the birth of a child or placement for adoption or foster care.
- b) An employee has the option to take FML intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule, when medically necessary, for the care of eligible family members with a serious health condition or for the employee's own serious health condition. The employee must consult with the supervisor and make a reasonable effort to schedule treatment so as not to unduly disrupt the operations of the workplace, subject to the approval of the [health care provider](#).
- c) If an employee takes leave intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule for planned medical treatment or recovery, the supervisor has the option to place the employee temporarily in an available alternative position for which the employee is qualified and which can better accommodate recurring periods of leave. An alternative position is not required to have duties that are equivalent to those of the employee's original position. Upon returning to duty, the employee shall be returned to the employee's permanent position or an equivalent position, as provided in section 481.5.9, Protection of Employment and Benefits.

#### **E481.5.5 Intermittent Leave or Reduced Leave Schedule**

#### **481.5.6 SUBSTITUTION OF PAID LEAVE**

For time and attendance purposes, unpaid leave taken under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) 12-week entitlement shall be carried as [leave without pay \(LWOP\)](#). However, an employee has the right to elect to substitute the following paid leave for any or all of the FML taken:

- a) Accrued or accumulated annual or sick leave consistent with current law or regulations for granting and using annual or sick leave;
- b) Advanced annual or sick leave approved under the provisions of ADS Chapter 480; and
- c) Donated annual leave made available to an employee in accordance with the Agency Voluntary Leave Transfer Program ([ADS Chapter 482](#)).

A supervisor shall not deny an employee's right to substitute the aforementioned paid leave for any or all of the period of leave taken under the 12-week entitlement. A supervisor shall not require an employee to substitute paid leave for any or all of the unpaid FMLA leave.

#### **E481.5.6d Substitution of Paid Leave**

An employee must notify the supervisor of the intent to substitute paid leave for unpaid Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leave prior to the date such paid leave commences. An employee who has invoked entitlement to FML shall not retroactively substitute paid leave for any leave without pay previously taken under the FMLA.

#### **481.5.7 CERTIFICATION FOR BIRTH, ADOPTION, OR FOSTER CARE**

An employee must provide a certificate or other administratively acceptable evidence in support of a request to take family and medical leave for the birth of a child or placement of a child for adoption or foster care.

#### **E481.5.7 Certification for Birth, Adoption, or Foster Care**

#### **481.5.8 MEDICAL CERTIFICATION**

A request for family and medical leave for an employee's serious health condition, or for care of an eligible family member with a serious health condition, must be supported by written medical certification issued by the health care provider of the employee or the health care provider of the eligible family member, as appropriate.

#### **E481.5.8 Medical Certification**

- a) US Department of Labor, Form WH-380, Certification of Health Care Provider, shall be used as written medical certification. The employee shall provide medical certification to the supervisor in a timely manner.
- b) For family and medical leave for an employee with a serious health condition, a statement is required from the health care provider that the employee is unable to perform the essential functions of the employee's position. The essential functions of the employee's position are based on written information provided by the supervisor or, if not provided, discussion with the employee.
- c) For family and medical leave for the care of an eligible family member with a serious health condition, the following is also required:
  1. A statement from the health care provider that the eligible family member requires psychological comfort and/or physical care; needs



assistance for basic medical, hygienic, nutritional, safety, or transportation needs or in making arrangements to meet such needs; and would benefit from the employee's care or presence; and

2. A statement from the employee on the care the employee will provide and an estimate of the amount of time needed to care for the eligible family member.

d) Medical certification for [intermittent leave](#) or leave on a reduced leave schedule to care for a family member or to receive medical care must include the dates on which such treatment is expected to be given and the duration such treatment is required.

e) All medical information must be protected under the provisions of the Privacy Act and released only to those who have a need to know.

#### **481.5.8a SECOND OPINION**

A supervisor has the right to request that the employee obtain an opinion of a second health care provider, subject to approval by the Agency, in cases where the validity of the original medical certification concerning the employee or a family member is questioned or doubted. The Agency will reimburse an employee, upon submittal of written proof of payment, for the cost of obtaining a second opinion.

#### **E481.5.8a Second Opinion**

#### **481.5.8b THIRD OPINION**

If the opinion of the second health care provider differs from the original certification, the supervisor has the right to require, at Agency expense, that the employee obtain the opinion of a third health care provider designated or approved jointly by the Agency and the employee. The opinion of the third health care provider shall be binding on the Agency and the employee.

#### **E481.5.8b Third Opinion**

#### **481.5.8c GRANTING FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ON A PROVISIONAL BASIS PENDING MEDICAL CERTIFICATION**

A supervisor will permit an employee to take family and medical leave (FML) on a provisional basis pending receipt of written medical certification.

a) If an employee is unable to provide the required medical certification before leave begins, or if the Agency questions the validity of the original certification provided by the employee and the medical treatment requires

the leave to begin, a supervisor will grant FML on a provisional basis pending final written medical certification.

b) If, after the leave has commenced, the employee fails to provide the requested medical certification, the supervisor has the option to:

1. Charge the employee as absent without leave (AWOL); or
2. Allow the employee to request that the provisional leave be charged as leave without pay or charged to the employee's annual and/or sick leave account, as appropriate.

**E481.5.8c Granting Family and Medical Leave on a Provisional Basis Pending Medical Certification**

**481.5.8d MEDICAL RECERTIFICATION**

While an employee is on family and medical leave, a supervisor has the right to obtain from the employee subsequent medical recertification on a periodic basis, not more often than every 30 days. However, a supervisor has the right to require more frequent medical recertification if the employee requests that the original leave period be extended, the circumstances described in the original medical certification have changed significantly, or if the Agency receives information that casts doubt upon the continuing validity of the medical certification. The Agency will reimburse an employee, upon submittal of written proof of payment, for the cost of the medical recertification.

**E481.5.8d Medical Recertification**

**481.5.8e MEDICAL CERTIFICATION TO RETURN TO WORK**

If an employee subject to a medical evaluation program (Foreign Service employees) is approved for leave because of a serious health condition that renders the employee unable to perform the essential functions of the employee's position, that employee will be required to provide written medical certification from the health care provider that the employee is able to perform these functions prior to return to duty. Employees shall be informed of this requirement before FML commences, or to the extent practicable in emergency medical situations. The Agency will reimburse an employee, upon submittal of written proof of payment, for the cost of the required medical certification.

**E481.5.8e Medical Certification to Return to Work**

**481.5.9 PROTECTION OF EMPLOYMENT AND BENEFITS**

Any employee who takes leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act

shall be entitled, upon return to the Agency, to be restored to:

- a) The same position held by the employee when the leave commenced;  
or
- b) An equivalent position with equivalent benefits, pay, status, and other terms and conditions of employment.

#### **E481.5.9 Protection of Employment and Benefits**

#### **481.5.10 CONTINUATION OF HEALTH BENEFITS**

An employee enrolled in a health benefits plan under the Federal Employee's Health Benefits Program (FEHB) who is placed in a leave without pay status under the Family and Medical Leave Act shall have the option to continue health benefits enrollment as follows:

- a) An employee who is placed in a leave without pay status for a period that does not exceed 365 days has the option to pay the appropriate employee contributions during the time of unpaid leave or upon returning to duty.
- b) An employee who is placed in a leave without pay status for a period which will exceed 365 days must pay the employee contributions for FEHB directly to the employing office on a current basis to retain coverage.

#### **E481.5.10 Continuation of Health Benefits**

When applying for family and medical leave, the employee must indicate on the application form whether or not health benefits enrollment will be continued while in a leave without pay status.

#### **481.5.11 RECORDS AND REPORTS**

The Office of Human Resources (M/HR) shall maintain records on the use of leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act to comply with reporting requirements from the U.S. Office of Personnel Management.

#### **E481.5.11 Records and Reports**

- a) The following information will be collected on each employee who uses family and medical leave:
  - 1. The employee's rate of basic pay;

2. The occupational series for the employee's position;
3. The number of hours of leave taken; and
4. The specific reason for which FML was taken:

\* Family leave (for a birth, adoption/foster care, or the care of an eligible family member with a serious health condition);

\* Medical leave (for the employee's serious health condition).

b) When an employee transfers outside the Agency, information shall be provided to the gaining agency on family and medical leave (FML) taken by the employee during the 12-month period prior to the date of transfer. The following information shall be provided along with the form SF-1150, Record of Leave Data:

1. The beginning and ending dates of the employee's 12-month period during which the employee is/was entitled to FML; and
2. The number of hours of FML taken during the employee's 12-month period during which the employee is/was entitled to FML.

#### **481.6        Supplementary Reference**

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