

Subject:	Vacation and Discretionary Time off	
Effective:	4/1/2015	Procedure
Update:	9/26/2016, 11/28/2018, 8/1/2019, 8/20/2019	
Reference:		

PURPOSE

To describe the procedure to request vacation and other discretionary leave balances earned and accrued time off in the Dispatch Center. This procedure enhances but does not replace leave of absence policies found in Santa Barbara County Civil Service Rules and the Santa Barbara County DSA MOU.

PROCEDURE

1. Vacation and other discretionary leave balances earned and accrued may be requested in any desired increments at any time **subject to approval** under the following procedural restraints and the ability of the Dispatch Center to maintain an adequate level of service.
2. Requests must be submitted via email in order to identify the correct order requests have been received.
3. Follow the directions below to submit a request:
 - a. Check the Dispatch Scheduling Calendar located in Outlook under "public folders."
 - b. Send an email to the Dispatch Supervisor.
 - c. The subject of the email should include the last name of the employee placing the request and the pay period when the time off is requested (example: VAC Request Farley PP18-2019.)
 - d. The body of the email should include the dates requested off. The employee's days off should be included in the request. For example, if an employee works Tuesday through Friday but is requesting Monday-Sunday off, the Monday-Sunday dates should be included in the request.
 - e. A separate email request should be submitted for each pay period being requested off. For example, if two weeks are being requested off and they fall in two different pay periods, two emails should be sent.
4. Requesting time off or the request being added to the scheduling calendar **does not** constitute approval or confirmation of the requested time off. Time off is not approved until the Master Dispatch Schedule (found in the File Room) reflects the time off request.

5. The Communications Manager has final authority for granting the approval of the time off.
6. If an employee arranges their own coverage with an extra-help or part-time employee, the employee should include that information in the email.
7. If an employee is aware in advance they will need to use Sick or Personal Sick Leave (such as a doctor's appointment or surgery), the time off request should be submitted in the same manner as outlined in #3, above.
8. Discretionary time off should not be covered with excessive overtime, so only the first request per shift on any given day will most likely be granted off. The vacation calendar in Outlook should be reviewed before the employee submits a request. If there is already a request for that day (same shift), a shift trade can be requested of another dispatcher or an extra help employee can be asked to cover the shift (by the requestor). Requests are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.
9. Requests should be submitted as early as possible before the date requested. In order to ensure adequate center coverage, the minimum prior notice acceptable is two weeks.
 - a. The exception to the above are the following holidays: 4th of July, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. Requests will **NOT** be accepted for 4th of July until the first day of Pay Period 10 (usually in April). Requests will **NOT** be accepted for Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day until the first day of Pay Period 19 (usually in August). Requests will be honored on a first come, first serve basis unless two are submitted at the same time. In that case, priority will be given first to the person with the most seniority, unless that person was granted time off the previous year in the same time period. In that case, the seniority list will be followed to allow the next person in line the time off.
10. Requests submitted less than 14 days in advance will not be posted and it will be the **responsibility of the requestor** to arrange for adequate coverage. Approval to use overtime must be obtained from the Communications Manager.
11. Vacation requests in excess of 2 years in advance will not be accepted unless there are extenuating circumstances. Examples: deposit paid for a cruise, plane tickets already purchased, or the requestor's own wedding.
12. Any request for FMLA/CFRA leave must be submitted to the Communications Manager. The request will be forwarded to the Human Resources Bureau. Once approval for FMLA/CFRA has been granted, the Communications

Manager will send the information to the Dispatch Supervisors to be added to the scheduling calendar.

13. Vacation requests will be filled by available extra help dispatchers whenever possible. If extra help coverage is not available, shifts may be covered by full time dispatchers or other approved Department personnel using overtime.
 - a. If the first request on a given day is covered by extra help, the second request for the same time of day will be posted for coverage using overtime.
14. Shift trades mutually agreed upon between dispatchers are acceptable as long as:
 - a. The shift trade must be within a 40 hour work week, beginning on Monday and ending on the following Sunday.
 - b. There is adequate coverage* during the time period of the requested leave.
 - c. The trade is emailed to the Dispatch Supervisor group so the master schedule can be updated.

*Adequacy of coverage is generally based on the number and complementary skills of the personnel who will be on-duty for the days and time periods in question and consideration of the well-being of the replacement personnel in terms of number of days worked, number of hours worked, adequate rest periods, etc.

15. Available overtime will be regularly posted in the dispatch center.
 - a. Personnel may sign up for any portion of the shift.
 - b. Once an open shift has been signed up for and the person filling the shift has been deemed adequate*, that shift will be considered approved, the requesting dispatcher is off, and the person filling the shift is responsible for it.
 - c. This applies to all personnel, including full-time, part-time and extra help employees.
 - d. If the person who signed up for the overtime shift is unable to cover the shift, providing it is more than two weeks until the shift date, the shift may be re-posted for coverage. Otherwise, they are responsible for ensuring that the shift is covered.

*Adequacy of coverage is generally based on the number and complementary skills of the personnel who will be on-duty for the days and time periods in question and consideration of the well-being of the replacement personnel in terms of number of days worked, number of hours worked, adequate rest periods, etc.

16. Compensatory time-off requests are considered the same as vacation requests except for the minimum prior notice requirement. Compensatory time-off is simply a request to replace what would have been an overtime shift with **REG** and leaving the regular shift taken off blank on the timecard. This can only be done within a single work week, as each work week must total 40 hrs. The MOU requires submission of the request 96 hours in advance, however, this

may be waived at the discretion of the affected Dispatch Supervisor. Compensatory time off may be directed by a Dispatch Supervisor with 24-hour notice. Dispatch Supervisors will encourage or direct the use of compensatory time-off whenever staffing permits.