



Rensselaer

Human Resources Policy Guidelines (revised January 1, 2011)

1500.3 Liberal Leave Policy

Purpose As an academic research university, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute requires campus services to be available at all times. Due to our resident student community, Rensselaer operates seven days a week on a twenty-four hour basis. To provide these services, Rensselaer will make every effort to remain open at all scheduled times. However, during inclement weather or emergency situations, it may be deemed necessary to allow “liberal leave.”

Policy This Liberal Leave policy provides all staff the option of utilizing Paid Time Off (PTO) or leave without pay, without the leave being previously scheduled and approved in advance by their immediate supervisor. Also, this policy provides non-essential staff with a two-hour grace period to report to work or a two hour grace period to leave work (within two hours of the normal end time of their shift) without being charged PTO leave when Liberal Leave is in effect.

If Liberal Leave is invoked before or during the scheduled work shift, staff may elect to use PTO leave. If an employee chooses not to report work, but does not have PTO available, he/she will not be paid for the time away from work. The use of PTO leave and/or an unpaid leave of absence applies to both exempt and non-exempt employees. PTO leave will be charged in accordance with the PTO Program Policy guidelines. (See Human Resources Policy # 1300.1, *Paid Time Off Program*.)

When the Liberal Leave Policy is invoked, it means that all staff who have been designated as essential must report to and/or remain at work. All other staff not designated as “Essential Staff” are permitted to arrive up to two hours after their normal scheduled start time or may choose not to report to work. Employees not reporting to work should follow department procedures to report an absence. Time will be charged to PTO leave, if available, otherwise as an unpaid leave of absence. Staff who report to work within two hours of the normal start time will not experience a loss of pay or have time charged to PTO leave. If Liberal Leave is invoked during the work shift, non-essential staff may elect to leave work. Staff who leave work within two hours of the normal end time of their shift will not experience a loss of pay or have time charged to PTO leave. Staff who arrive more than two hours after their normal start time or who leave more than two hours before the normal end time must use PTO leave. If PTO leave is not available, the employee will not be paid for the time away from work.

From time-to-time, it may be deemed necessary to modify the operating

Procedure schedule. Altered schedules have resulted from events such as weather emergencies, interruption of utilities and local conditions, or other emergencies. Altered schedules may, therefore, pertain to the Institute, a campus, a school or a department.

When conditions warrant, the President, in consultation with the Provost, Vice President for Administration and the Vice President for Human Resources, will decide whether and when to alter/curtail operations. It is recognized, however, that conditions may be local.

Announcement:

When there is an alteration or curtailment of Rensselaer's operating schedule, an official announcement approved by the President or designee, will be made on the Public Safety Closing/Delay Information Line, through designated radio stations, through RenServe communication announcements, RPI Alert, or by the designated Vice President/portfolio owner. Since conditions may vary in the geographic areas where Rensselaer has campuses, there may be times when Liberal Leave Policy is invoked for some locations and not others. In addition, conditions may be different on campus than they are in the area where an employee lives. Although every effort will be made to ensure consistency across media, the official operating schedule will be the one reported on the Public Safety system.

Essential Staff:

When the Liberal Leave Policy is invoked, it means that all "Essential Staff" must report to work and/or remain at work.

Essential Staff is defined as an employee who has been designated by the Vice President or portfolio owner as vital to the operation of a work group, whose presence is required regardless of the existence of an emergency condition or Institute closing, and whose presence allows the continuation of critical services, protects the safety and well being of the university population and/or physical plant and supports necessary timely work. Designated Essential Staff must remain at work or report to work. Employees who fail to remain at or report to work may be considered on an Unauthorized Absence Without Approval pending discussion with their supervisor.

Annually, or on a rotating schedule, certain employees will be designated by their supervisors as Essential Staff. This designation should be put in writing indicating that these employees provide critical services and are required to report to work or remain at work. The Division of Human Resources can provide guidance on making the determination.

Essential Staff may also be designated by the Vice President or portfolio owner based on the business needs of the department at the time of the emergency condition or Institute closing. Each unit/department will define its own staffing requirements in times of an emergency or Institute closing. Essential Staff in this category will be advised at the time of the liberal leave announcement.

Compensation:

When Rensselaer at Troy or Hartford, or a department of either (including offices in New York City, Washington D.C or other locations) are officially closed or Liberal Leave is invoked due to inclement weather or an emergency, non-exempt, Essential Staff will be compensated at one and one-half times their hourly rate (for hours worked over 40 hours in a week) and will receive equal time off for time worked from the time their campus or work location is closed or Liberal Leave is invoked to the end of their normally scheduled work shift. Such time off must be approved by the employee's immediate supervisor and must be taken within a reasonable period of time.

All staff not designated as "Essential Staff" arriving to work within a two hour period of time from the start of their shift or who leave work within two hours of the normal end time of their shift will be paid other paid time "OTH" for time taken within that two hour period of time. Staff electing not to report to work for the entire duration of their shift will utilize PTO leave or leave without pay for the entire shift.

Temporary and Fixed-term employees who are not eligible for PTO leave are paid for time worked only.