

### 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 vacation leave, 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 without being charged leave when Liberal Leave is in effect.
- If Liberal Leave is invoked before or during the scheduled workshift, staff may elect to use vacation leave. If an employee chooses to report off work, but does not have vacation time, he/she will not be paid for the time away from work. The use of vacation leave and/or unpaid time applies to both exempt and non-exempt employees. Vacation time will be charged in one-hour increments.
- 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 deemed "Essential Employees" 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 absence. Time will be charged to vacation leave, if available, otherwise as unpaid leave. 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 leave. If Liberal Leave is invoked during the work shift nonessential employees may elect to leave work and use vacation leave. If vacation leave is not available, the employee will not be paid for the time away from work.
- Procedure** From time-to-time, it may be deemed necessary to modify the operating schedule. Altered schedules have resulted from events such as weather emergencies, interruption of utilities and local conditions. 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 will be made on the Public Safety Closing/Delay Information Line, through designated radio stations, through RenServe communication announcements, 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 campuses 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 Employees:

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

An Essential Employee 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, 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. Examples of such employees could be security, engineers or other heating plant and maintenance personnel, snow removal employees, etc. Designated Essential Employees must remain at work or report to work. Employees who fail to remain at or report to work may be considered Absent Without Approval pending discussion with their supervisor.

Annually, or on a rotating schedule, certain employees will be designated by their supervisors as Essential Employees. 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. Human Resources can provide guidance on making the determination.

An Essential Employee 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. Each unit/department will define its own staffing requirements in times of an emergency. Essential Employee's 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 is officially closed or Liberal Leave is invoked due to inclement weather or an emergency, non-exempt, Essential Employees will be compensated at one and one-half times their hourly rate (for hours worked over 40 hours in a pay period) and will receive equal time off for time worked from the time campus 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 deemed "Essential Employees" arriving to work within a two hour period of time from the start of their shift will be paid other paid time "oth" for time taken within the two hour period of time. Staff electing not to report to work for the entire duration of their shift will utilize vacation leave or leave without pay for the entire shift.

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