



Human Resources

Wounded Warriors Leave

The Postal Service™ supports the employment of veterans who have chosen to commence or resume a civilian career with the Postal Service following their military service. On November 5, 2015, President Obama signed the Wounded Warriors Federal Leave Act of 2015 (Pub. L. 114–75) (Act). The Act requires federal agencies to make leave immediately available to eligible disabled service members to attend medical appointments without loss or reduction of pay.

Wounded Warriors Leave (WWL), as designated, will be available to eligible veterans to attend medical appointments and receive related treatment for a service-connected disability. Eligible veterans include all Postal Service employees hired on or after November 5, 2016, that have a minimum 30 percent combined disability rating. WWL consists of 104 hours of leave to be used in the initial 12 months of employment. In addition to being available to new hires, the WWL benefit is also available to employees who return to the Postal Service on or after November 5, 2016, from military service or leave in which they have suffered a qualifying disability.

WWL is a separate leave category, distinct from annual or sick leave. WWL is only available during the first 12 months of employment, unless an employee returns from Military Leave (without a break in service) with a new service-connected disability rated at 30 percent or more. The WWL is offered to employees as a one-time benefit. Once the leave has been exhausted an employee is not eligible to receive the benefit again. Further, any WWL not used in the 12-month eligibility period is forfeited.

It is an employee's responsibility to notify the Postal Service of his or her eligibility before requesting WWL. Employees must provide documentation from the Department of Veterans Affairs, or on any Office of Personnel Management (OPM) certification form developed for administration of WWL, certifying that the employee has a qualifying service-connected disability. Send documentation to support WWL eligibility to the HR Shared Service Center.

- Via mail at PO Box 970400, Greensboro, NC 27497-0400; or
- Via fax at 651-994-3521.

Employees must request WWL in advance, unless the leave is unforeseeable. Prior to the absence, employees must complete PS Form 3971, *Request for or Notification of Absence*, designating the reason for the absence as "other" and writing "Wounded Warriors Leave" in the space provided. Within 15 calendar days from their return to work, employees must provide to their supervisor a completed PS Form 5980, *Treatment Verification for Wounded Warriors Leave*, signed by their medical provider.

WWL can be used in combination with other employee-accrued leave and may also be used in conjunction with the Family Medical Leave Act provided the employee meets eligibility requirements.

For additional information on the Wounded Warriors Leave program, please see MI EL-510-2016-7, *Wounded Warriors Leave*, and PS Form 5980, *Treatment Verification for Wounded Warriors Leave*, on PolicyNet at <http://blue.usps.gov/cpim/>.

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About

Requests for Wounded Warriors Leave

Foreseeable Leave

All employees requesting Wounded Warriors Leave must do the following:

- Submit their request on PS Form 3971, *Request for or Notification of Absence*, in advance to the appropriate supervisor; and
- Designate the reason for the absence as "other" and write "Wounded Warriors Leave" in the space provided.

Unforeseeable Leave

The Postal Service makes an exception to the advance approval requirement for unexpected treatment that qualifies for Wounded Warriors Leave. When the need to use Wounded Warriors Leave is not foreseeable, the employee must notify the appropriate supervisor of the following items:

- The employee's treatment;
- The expected duration of the absence; and
- The applicability of Wounded Warriors Leave, as soon as possible.

Alternatively, the employee may use the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system to record his or her absences. If the employee does not submit PS Form 3971 before the absence, the supervisor must provide it to the employee upon his or her return to duty.

Approval or Disapproval

The supervisor is responsible for approving or disapproving requests for Wounded Warriors Leave by signing PS Form 3971, and returning a copy to the employee. If a supervisor does not approve a request for leave as submitted, the supervisor must check the Disapproved block on PS Form 3971 and give the reason(s) for the disapproval in writing in the space provided. When a request is disapproved, the supervisor may also grant an alternate type of leave, if any, and give with the reason for the disapproval. Supervisors must also note Absences Without Leave (AWOL) determinations the same as disapproved leave.

Verification

To verify that Wounded Warriors Leave requested by an employee is appropriately used for the treatment of a service-connected disability, the requesting employee must submit to the supervisor a copy of PS Form 5980, *Treatment Verification for Wounded Warriors Leave*, certified by a health care provider that the employee used the leave to receive treatment for a covered disability. The employee must provide the verification no later than 15 calendar days after the employee returns to work.

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