



July 1, 2021

MANAGERS AND SUPERVISORS

SUBJECT: Timekeeping, Leave Policy, and Documentation Requirements

This memorandum reiterates the obligations of Managers and Supervisors to adhere to current policies regarding leave management and leave documentation. Practices must align with policy as outlined in the Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM) and Handbook F-21 *Time and Attendance*. Management must monitor leave usage, inform employees of leave regulations, conduct regular attendance reviews, and control unscheduled absences.

There is a requirement that upon approving a request for leave, an appropriate entry will be made into the Enterprise Resource Management System (eRMS). The eRMS application is designed to provide accurate attendance records, prevent overuse of leave, and assist the Manager and/or Supervisor in managing attendance. If a unit must also enter leave into the Time and Attendance Collection System (TACS) or the Rural Management Support System (RMSS), in addition to eRMS entries, timekeepers must complete entries timely and appropriately to prevent errors and unnecessary pay adjustments.

All employees requesting leave must submit a PS Form 3971, Request for or Notification of Absence. Submission can be done manually or may be electronically generated via the eRMS application. Managers and Supervisors must notate their approval or disapproval of the requested leave by signing the PS Form 3971, providing a copy to the employee, and retaining documentation as appropriate. Authorizations for sick leave must also be noted on page 2 of the PS Form 3971.

A properly completed PS Form 3971 will include dated signatures of the employee, the person recording the absence, and the Manager and/or Supervisor approving the leave. Copies of PS Form 3971 should be retained for a period of 3 years. Access to employee leave and/or timekeeping records is limited to individuals whose official duties require such access. Per Handbook F-21 §142.35, *"PS Form(s) 3971 for unscheduled absence and tardy situations must be kept in a secure location to prevent their loss, destruction, or unauthorized use. They should be maintained in a pending file during the employee's absence. When the employee returns to work he or she is required to complete the PS Form 3971 and to give it to his or her supervisor for action. The supervisor is to give the completed PS Form 3971 to the timekeeper."* Further safeguarding, retention, and disposal policies of PS Form 3971's can be found in Handbook AS 353 *Guide to Privacy, the Freedom of Information Act, and Records Management* §100.400.

Managers and Supervisors are encouraged to review attendance and leave related policies found in the ELM and relevant handbooks and manuals. Additionally, online training courses and/or study guides related to attendance management, eRMS, TACS, and RMSS can be found in the HERO application and on the Rural Delivery website. All training is available for immediate access.

Thank you for your continued efforts to adhere to proper leave and attendance management practices.


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