

BULLETIN

Scheduling vacations

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What are the general guidelines you recommend for scheduling vacations? What happens if my vacation gets cancelled because of staff shortages?



As vacation scheduling can be a very sensitive issue, both members and union stewards should be proactive and be aware of deadlines for vacation requests and approvals. Ask for notification of these deadlines in writing, as well as who is responsible for making both the initial and final decisions about vacation scheduling.

For members covered by the Health Science Professionals Agreement, vacations must be scheduled on the basis of seniority in accordance with the provisions of Article 23.09.

Every member is entitled to two weeks off during the summer months, which are defined as June to September inclusive, and may take vacation at any time during the calendar year. Members cannot "carry over" vacation from one calendar year to the next, unless this has been mutually agreed between the member and the employer.

Most departments set a deadline for submitting vacation requests. There may be several "rounds" of vacation selection, each one granted on the basis of seniority.

Any employer policy on vacation scheduling must be clear, reasonable and applied consistently, including the application of deadlines.

An example of an unreasonable policy would be if only one member was allowed off at a time, even if casuals are available. Supervisors should be encouraged to develop the vacation policy in consultation with affected members.

The vacation scheduling policy should include a deadline for the employer to tell members that their vacation has been approved.

Any rescheduling must be approved by the employer. Changing a scheduled vacation can have a domino effect on other union members and create bitterness and resentment if not done with sensitivity. Once vaca-

tions have been approved, a member cannot use their seniority to change their first choice of vacation. It is useful if the member who wants a change can work with other union members to come up with a plan that works for everyone.

An employer can cancel a scheduled vacation but must have a strong argument for doing so.

If vacation must be cancelled, the employer must do so in the reverse order of seniority, and cannot treat members in an arbitrary or discriminatory manner. Members should be compensated for any resulting financial loss, such as flight cancellation costs.

If a members vacation is cancelled, she should be paid overtime at double time rates for working on a scheduled day off (Article 25.03 (b) (3)).

Similar provisions apply for HSA members covered by the Nurses, Community Social Services, or other contracts. See your contract for spe-cific details, and consult your steward if you have any questions. 

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