



Title:	Families First Coronavirus Response Act Policy
Number:	313
Effective:	April 1, 2020
 Cancels:	N/A
Prepared by:	Danette Brannin, General Manager
Approved by:	Authority Board Resolution No. 2020-09

POL-313 – FAMILIES FIRST CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE ACT POLICY

This policy applies to all Mason Transit Authority (MTA) employees.

1.0 Purpose

This policy provides temporary protected leave and paid leave benefits for certain absences arising from the COVID-19 outbreak in accordance with the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA). The benefits available under this policy are available beginning on April 1, 2020. This policy will be administered in accordance with the FFCRA statute, regulations, and guidance.

The FFCRA provides for two categories of leave. The first expands existing Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) coverage to provide up to 12 weeks of partially-paid Public Health Emergency Leave (“PHEL/FMLA”) for eligible employees forced to miss work due to closure of their child’s school or the unavailability of the child’s childcare provider for reasons related to COVID-19. The second provides up to 10 days of Emergency Sick Leave for various reasons related to the COVID-19 outbreak. Details regarding each category of leave are provided in the sections below.

2.0 Public Health Emergency Leave (PHEL/FMLA)

2.1 Eligibility. Employees who have worked for MTA at least 30 calendar days are eligible for PHEL/FMLA leave. An employee need not meet the eligibility requirements for regular FMLA (12 months of employment and 1250 hours worked in the prior year) to be eligible for PHEL/FMLA.

2.2 Leave Entitlement. An eligible employee may take up to 12 weeks of protected leave if the employee is unable to work, or telework, based on a need to care for the employee’s child under age 18 because the child’s school or place of care has been closed, or the child’s child care provider is unavailable due to a public health emergency. A public health emergency means an emergency with respect to COVID-19 declared by a federal, state, or local authority. Per federal regulations, this leave is not available if another suitable individual is available to provide care. PHEL/FMLA may be taken intermittently only if approved by General Manager.

See Also: POL-309, POL-310, POL-312



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PHEL/FMLA is part of an employee’s regular FMLA leave entitlement. Accordingly, if an employee has already used FMLA for other purposes during the FMLA leave year, the amount of available PHEL/FMLA will be reduced by the amount of FMLA leave already taken. PHEL/FMLA leave will be available through December 31, 2020.

2.3 Partial Pay Entitlement. The first 10 days of PHEL/FMLA will be unpaid, although employees may elect to use accrued leave or Emergency Sick Leave during this period. For leave beyond the first 10 days, MTA will pay two-thirds of the employee’s regular pay, up to a maximum of \$200 per day or \$10,000 in the aggregate. Pay is calculated based on the number of hours an employee would otherwise have been scheduled to work. For employees with variable hours, hours will be determined based on the average number of hours scheduled over the six-month period preceding the leave (including paid leave hours) or on a reasonable expectation at the time of hire as to the hours per day the employee would normally be scheduled to work. Employees may elect to supplement the PHEL/FMLA paid benefit with their accrued leave.

2.4 Notification; Verification. Employees who need to take PHEL/FMLA leave should notify Human Resources as soon as practicable after the need for leave arises. Under the law, an employee seeking PHEL/FMLA leave must provide the following:

1. the employee’s name;
2. the date(s) for which leave is requested;
3. qualifying reasons for the leave;
4. the name of the child(ren) being cared for;
5. the name of the school(s) or childcare provider(s) that has/have closed or become unavailable; and
6. a representation that no other suitable person will be caring for the child while PHEL-FMLA leave is being used.

2.5 Other. This policy will be administered consistent with MTA’s existing Family and Medical Leave (FMLA) policy, except as modified by the FFCRA.



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3.0 Emergency Paid Sick Leave

3.1 Eligibility. All employees of MTA are eligible for up to 80 hours of Emergency Sick Leave. Emergency Sick Leave may be fully paid or partially paid, depending on the reason for taking leave (see below).

3.2 Covered Reasons for Using Emergency Sick Leave: Employees are entitled to use Emergency Sick Leave when they are unable to work, or telework, for any of the following reasons:

1. The employee is subject to a federal, state, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19. This includes a shelter-in-place or stay-at-home order issued by federal, state or local government if the order precludes the employee from working; an employee who is able to telework or who is not covered by the order (e.g., those performing essential services as defined by the applicable order) would not eligible to take leave for this reason.
2. The employee has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19.
3. The employee is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and is seeking a medical diagnosis.
4. To care for an individual who is self-isolating for one of the reasons described in (1) or (2) above. The individual needing care must be the employee's immediate family member, a person who regularly resides in the employee's home, or a similar person with whom the employee has a relationship that creates an expectation that the employee would care for the person if he or she were quarantined or self-quarantined.
5. To care for the employee's child under age 18 due to closure of the child's school or unavailability of the child's childcare provider due to COVID-19 precautions. A "child" is defined the same as under the FMLA; i.e., a biological, adopted, or foster child, a stepchild, a legal ward, or a child of a person standing in loco parentis who is either under 18 years of age or is 18 years of age or older and "incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability" at the time leave is to commence.

See Also: POL-309, POL-310, POL-312



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6. The employee is experiencing any other substantially similar condition specified by the Secretary of Health and Human Services in consultation with the Secretary of the Treasury and the Secretary of Labor.

3.3 Paid Leave Entitlement. Full-time employees are entitled to up to 80 hours of Emergency Sick Leave. Part-time employees are entitled to the Emergency Sick Leave equal to number of hours they typically work over a two-week period. For employees with variable hours, hours will be determined based on the average number of hours scheduled over the six-month period preceding the leave (including paid leave hours) or on a reasonable expectation at the time of hire as to the hours per day the employee would normally be scheduled to work. Any Emergency Sick Leave available under this policy is in addition to accrued leave to which an employee was already entitled under existing MTA policies or labor agreements.

3.4 Reduced Benefit for Certain Leaves; Cap on Sick Leave Amount. Where Emergency Sick Leave is taken for reasons (1), (2), or (3) above (which cover leave due to the employee's own health or quarantine), the paid sick leave benefit is equal to the employee's regular rate of pay for the missed work time, provided that Emergency Sick Leave is capped at \$511 per day and \$5,110 in the aggregate when leave is taken for these reasons. Where leave is taken for reasons (4), (5), or (6) above (to care for another, to care for a child due to a school closure or unavailability of childcare, or where the employee is experiencing a substantially similar condition), the paid sick leave benefit is two-thirds of the employee's regular rate of pay, provided that Emergency Sick Leave is capped at \$200 per day and \$2,000 in the aggregate when leave is taken for one of these reasons.

3.5 Use of Paid Sick Leave; Sequencing with Other Leave; Intermittent Use. Employees may access Emergency Sick Leave for a covered reason before exhausting other accrued leaves. If an absence is covered by this Emergency Sick Leave policy and the PHEL/FMLA policy above, the employee may elect to use Emergency Sick Leave during the first 10 days of PHEL/FMLA in order to remain in paid status.

If an employee is using Emergency Sick Leave intermittently due to a closure of a child's school or unavailability of the childcare provider, the employee may take leave



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intermittently only with the General Manager’s approval. An employee may also use Emergency Sick Leave intermittently with General Manager approval if unable to telework his/her normal schedule of hours due to a qualifying reason (for example, if an employee can telework in the morning, but needs to care for a child in the afternoon due to a school closure). Per Department of Labor guidance, where an employee is not teleworking, intermittent use of Emergency Sick Leave is not permitted when leave is taken for reasons (1), (2), (3), (4), or (6) of Section 3.2 above. In such cases, Emergency Sick Leave must be taken in full-day increments and once leave is initiated for one of these reasons, the employee must continue to use Emergency Sick Leave until either (i) the full amount of Emergency Sick Leave has been used; or (ii) the employee no longer has a qualifying reason for taking Emergency Sick Leave. The Department of Labor has explained that this requirement is imposed because if an employee is actually or possibly sick with COVID-19, or is caring for someone who is sick or possibly sick with COVID-19, the intent of the law is to provide paid leave to prevent the spread of the virus.

3.6 Carryover/Termination of Benefit. The Emergency Sick Leave Benefit expires on December 31, 2020; any unused Emergency Sick Leave will not be carried over to the next calendar year or merged into other leave banks. Additionally, the entitlement to Emergency Sick Leave ceases beginning with the employee’s next scheduled work shift immediately following the termination of the need for paid sick leave. However, to the extent an employee subsequently needed additional time off for another covered reason prior to December 31, 2020, the employee could use any remaining Emergency Sick Leave available.

3.7 Notification. An employee who needs to take Emergency Sick Leave should notify the Administrative Services Manager as soon as practicable. After the first workday (or portion thereof) that an employee takes Emergency Sick Leave, the employee must follow the notice requirements required for use of regular sick leave.

3.8 Verification. An employee requesting Emergency Sick Leave must: specify the qualifying reason for requesting leave; state that the employee is unable to work or telework, for that specified reason; and provide the date(s) for which leave is requested. Depending on the type of leave taken, the Department of Labor requires



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that an employee provide the following additional information to substantiate the leave request:

1. Where leave is taken due to a quarantine or isolation order, the name of the government entity issuing the order;
2. Where leave is taken due to the recommendation of a health care provider to self-quarantine, the name of the health care provider making the recommendation; or
3. Where leave is taken due to a school closure or unavailability of a childcare provider: (a) the name of the child(ren) being cared for; (b) the name of the school(s) or childcare provider(s) that has/have closed or become unavailable; and (c) a representation that no other suitable person will be caring for the child while EPSL is being used.

4.0 Compliance.

This policy was developed to comply with the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. As the Department of Labor issues regulations and/or interpretations of the Act, such regulations and interpretations shall take precedence over the provisions of this policy.

5.0 Expiration of Policy.

This policy will expire on December 31, 2020.