

Annual Leave and Public / Privilege Holidays

1. The Purpose

This policy sets out the Forestry Commission's (FC's) position on annual leave and public / privilege holidays (PPHs). Along with the associated procedure, it sets out the rights and responsibilities of employees and managers and affirms the FC's reputation as a good employer.

2. The Principles

The principles of this policy are to:

- provide employees with regular periods of annual leave, along with PPHs, for rest and relaxation, helping prevent the build up of stress;
- encourage employees to use their annual leave throughout the annual leave year;
- provide a degree of choice and flexibility around the use of annual leave allowances;
- confirm that taking annual leave and PPHs is always at the discretion of management;
- encourage managers and employees to plan ahead for annual leave and PPHs;
- reward loyalty through a one-off award of additional annual leave; and
- only make a payment for accrued untaken annual leave in certain circumstances.

3. The Policy

This policy, and the associated procedure, ensures that the FC is compliant with legislative requirements in respect to annual leave and PPHs, specifically the Employment Act 1996 and Working Time (Amendment) Regulations 2007.

The key elements of this policy, and the associated procedure, are as follows:

- The annual leave year runs from 1 April to 31 March.
- Annual leave allowances are as follows:
 - **Pay Bands 1 to 7**
25 days per year on entry/30 days per year after five years.
 - **Senior Staff Group**
30 days per year on entry.
- 10½ Public & Privilege holiday entitlement per calendar year.
- All annual leave and PPH entitlements are pro-rata for part-time employees.

- Employees must take a minimum of 28 days each annual leave year, including PPHs.
- Employees can anticipate up to 5 days or carry forward up to 20 days annual leave between leave years, subject to management approval.
- Where an employee completes 20 years' service, they are awarded a one-off additional 5 days annual leave.
- Annual leave and, where appropriate, PPHs must always be recorded on the appropriate forms.

3.1 Your Responsibilities as an Employee

You are expected to:

- make yourself aware of and understand this policy and associated procedure;
- take regular breaks throughout the year to relax and reduce stress, taking at least one period of two consecutive weeks each year where possible;
- obtain prior approval from your line manager for all periods of annual leave;
- record your annual leave allowance and balance, including anticipation and carry forward between leave years, and PPH entitlement and balance (where applicable) on the appropriate form; and
- retain annual leave records for 5 years for audit purposes.

3.2 Your Responsibilities as a Manager

You are expected to:

- make sure that you and your team are aware of and understand this policy and associated procedure;
- monitor the annual leave allowances and balances, including anticipation and carry forward, and PPH entitlements and balances of your employees;
- ensure all allowances, entitlements and balances are recorded and initialled by you on the appropriate form; and
- liaise with HR Services in relation to more complex cases of annual leave and PPHs.

3.3 Human Resources Responsibilities

Human Resources have responsibility for:

- monitoring and reviewing this policy, and associated procedure, in consultation with the FC Trade Unions;
- advising managers and employees in dealing with more complex cases, i.e. change of employee's hours, mid-year allowance increases, long-term sickness absence, employees transferring into the FC, etc.; and
- recalculating annual leave balances and arranging payments in lieu, as appropriate.