

**STAFF NOTICE NO 60
To All Non-Industrial Staff**

Forestry Commission
Personnel Division
231 Costorphine Road
Edinburgh
EH12 7AT

CHANGES TO RULES ON AUTHORISATION AND RECORDING OF LEAVE

Following an Audit Report into Leave in the Forestry Commission, a number of changes are being made to the rules on authorisation and recording of annual leave.

The following is a summary of the main changes, which will be reflected in an amended Chapter 10 (Leave) of the Staff Handbook (SH) to be issued shortly. The rules take immediate effect for all non-industrial staff:

Annual Leave

- An increased leave allowance (e.g. following promotion, in recognition of length of service) must be approved in advance by Personnel Services, HQ. It is each officer's responsibility to make this application at the appropriate time, referring to the guidance on annual leave allowances in SH Chapter 10. After approval, your line manager must initial your E7A (Application for Leave of Absence form) to reflect the addition of any increased leave allowance.
- At the start of each new leave year, every officer must update his/her E7A with the new year's allowance and ask his/her line manager to initial the entry.
- Every officer must obtain the prior approval of his/her line manager before taking leave and all absences must be recorded in the E7A and initialled by the manager. If your manager is located remotely from where you normally work, the E7A must be initialled by another member of staff (such as the Office Manager or Personal Secretary) and checked periodically by your line manager.
- There is no requirement for managers to keep a 'central' record of annual leave. The need to retain records of hours worked and absences (including annual leave) is currently under review as part of the introduction of the National Minimum Wage. In the meantime, all E7A forms must be retained.

Note: The new annual leave entitlements which become effective on 1 April 1999 were set out in the Pay and Grading Agreement. These will be reproduced in Staff Handbook Chapter 10.

Recording Other Absences

- Absences on flexitime, special paid leave and time off in lieu must also be approved in advance and recorded on the E7A. A new leave form is being developed by Personnel Services and will be made available shortly. However, the current form should be used to record these absences in the meantime.

Special Paid Leave

- Cost Centre Managers have delegated responsibility for deciding on applications for special paid leave within the rules set out in the SH Chapter 10, which make clear that special paid leave is a concession and not an entitlement. Cost Centre Managers will not be required to forward details of special paid leave which they have approved to Personnel Services, but they must ensure that all authorised special leave is recorded on the officer's E7A form.
- Staff must formally request special paid leave in writing, explaining the circumstances, and enclosing their E7A. Cost Centre Managers must retain the request and a copy of their note of approval/denial in a confidential file. Cost Centre Managers who themselves wish to request special paid leave should apply in writing to their line manager.

The following reminders of current procedures must also be noted and applied:

Special Unpaid Leave

- There are no changes to the arrangements/rules for special unpaid leave, which are also set out in Chapter 10. However, special unpaid leave does require pay action and applications do need to be passed to Personnel Services after consideration by the Cost Centre Manager.

Sick Leave

- Form OR 2 is required to be completed and forwarded to Personnel Services, HQ by the line manager (or another designated person e.g. Office Manager, Personal Secretary) on the first day of an officer's sick absence from work.
- All staff are reminded that they must complete form OR 4 on the first day of their return from a period of sick absence and forward it to Personnel Services, HQ.
- The completion of these forms by different officers acts as a safeguard against errors, ensures that all sick absence is quickly and accurately recorded and input to the salary system by Personnel Services and that the reason for the sick absence is properly recorded.

Staff Handbook

- The Staff Handbook must be on display and available to all non-industrial staff at all times. Managers are asked to ensure that there is 'open access' to it and that staff are made aware of all amendments to the Handbook issued from Personnel Division, HQ.

W J Anderson
Director Personnel
10 March 1999