

Annual Holiday Policy

Royal Mail Group supports our employees to take time off work through holiday entitlement and by giving them the opportunity to purchase additional annual holiday. This policy outlines holiday entitlement, authorisation and allocation and how to purchase additional annual holiday.

Main topic areas

- Overview
- Policy statement
- Entitlement
- Authorising and allocating annual holiday
- Carrying over holiday
- Accruing holiday
- Purchasing additional annual holiday
- Where to go for further information
- Related documents

Getting help

Contact your manager if you have any queries about this policy.

Managers can obtain advice by:

Calling the HR Services Advice Centre on 0845 6060603 / 5456 7100

Managers working for Parcelforce Worldwide should call 0845 6042787 / 5456 4747

For web access go to:
<https://www.psp.royalmailgroup.com>



Annual Holiday Policy

Overview

This policy applies to all employees of Royal Mail Group Ltd unless stated otherwise. This policy does not apply to agency staff, contractors or self employed workers. Within this policy 'Royal Mail Group Ltd' will be referred to as 'Royal Mail Group'.

This policy is effective from 06 March 2014.

This policy does not form part of contracts of employment. We reserve the right to amend this policy from time to time. However, some elements of annual holiday are contractual as detailed in employees' contracts of employment.

Policy statement

Royal Mail Group is committed to supporting our employees to take time off from work for relaxation, development and to manage personal commitments.

This policy sets out the annual holiday entitlement for employees, authorisation and allocation and how to apply for additional annual holiday.

Entitlement

All employees, except those with casual contracts, have an annual holiday entitlement, determined by the business usually in discussion with the appropriate trade union. All employees, including casual employees, have a statutory entitlement to 5.6 weeks paid holiday, pro rata for part time workers, each year, including bank holidays.

Holiday year

The holiday year is defined for all employees in all grades, businesses and business areas as running from 1 April to 31 March. For selection and allocation purposes, a 52-week period is commonly used starting from the first Monday in April, or the nearest Monday to 1 April.

Authorising and allocating annual holiday

Authorising holiday

Authority to take annual holiday must always be given by the manager.

The effects of authorising holiday on the needs of our customers must be taken into account before authorisation is given. During periods of high demand, permission to go on holiday may not be granted, for example during December, which is a closed holiday period in operational areas, or at the financial year end in some finance areas.

Managers will do their best to meet the needs of individual employees, taking into account the overall constraints on the business.

Allocating holiday

Selection arrangements are determined locally, normally within limits agreed for each team or work area. This is subject to the requirement that the process used must include all employees on an equal basis, whether full or part-time, and must not systematically favour certain employees, such as those who are more senior.

Reasonable effort should be made to meet particular personal requirements, including requests from employees seeking time off to pray or participate in religious and cultural festivals or to attend important family events.

Once holidays have been allocated, employees may arrange exchanges with colleagues within the same shift and business area, always subject to the agreement of their manager.

Holiday records will be maintained accurately with sufficient information included

to enable an accurate audit to be completed. An audit of holiday records will be carried out annually.

Employees off sick immediately before they are due to go on holiday must confirm to their manager that they are going on holiday on the due date, unless the sick absence continues.

When the holiday year is split between summer and winter periods, the balance of holiday not taken during the summer must be included in the winter allocation.

Where shift payments are paid as an average of a rotation, no more than three weeks of an employee's holiday entitlement may be taken from the most unsocial shift (the one that would as a stand alone shift attract the highest payment) of the rotation.

Carrying over holiday

Royal Mail Group encourages employees to take time off from work for relaxation, development and to manage personal commitments. Holidays should normally be taken during the current holiday year; however a maximum of five days can be carried over.

Employees who want to build up holidays beyond the five day maximum must seek to do so in advance with the agreement of their manager. Any such holidays must be taken after all other holidays have been allocated and at a time convenient to Royal Mail Group. Any excess annual leave will not be bought back by Royal Mail Group.

Where an agreement has not been reached any annual holiday remaining over five days at the end of the holiday year could be lost.

Accruing holiday

Annual holiday is not accrued during periods of unpaid absence, such as career breaks.

Employees who have a statutory right to paid annual holiday do accrue holiday and more details can be found in the *Maternity/Paternity/Adoption guides*.

Purchasing additional annual holiday

Total holiday allocation cannot exceed six weeks holiday per year, excluding bank holidays. Those employees whose existing entitlement is less than six weeks will be entitled to purchase additional annual holiday up to a total six weeks. However, HR Services employees have different terms which are set out at the end of this section.

For Royal Mail and Parcelforce employees (excluding HR Services employees), the following conditions apply:

- Each complete week of holiday purchased will result in a 2% adjustment of weekly basic pensionable pay
- Employees do not need to apply annually as an employee's holiday purchase agreement will continue until they obtain six weeks holiday, excluding bank holidays, through length of service, or until they change grade
- A holiday purchase agreement may only be cancelled from the beginning of a new holiday year
- The agreement cannot be withdrawn once the holiday year has begun

The holiday year commences from the first Monday of April or the nearest Monday to the 1 April and the adjusted level of pay will run throughout the holiday

year.

By purchasing additional holiday, this does not mean that employees can purchase a specific week of the year in which to take that leave.

HR Services employees

Employees working in HR Services may purchase additional holiday up to a maximum of seven weeks leave, irrespective of the amount of their individual leave entitlement. This is automatically continued until the employee opts-out and they do not need to re-apply on an annual basis. Each complete week of holiday purchased will result in a 2% adjustment of weekly basic pensionable pay or 0.4% per day.

Please see the Purchasing Additional Annual Holiday Guide for further information and details of how to apply.

Where to go for more information

The 'Getting help' box on the front page of this policy tells you where to find further information.

Guidance is also available on the *Policy and Information Site* on PSP.

In the event of any inconsistency between this policy and the supporting guide the terms of this policy take precedence.

Related documents

You may find it useful to read the following documents (located on the Policy and Information site on PSP HR pages on the intranet (non-PSP users)) in conjunction with this policy:

- *Annual Holiday Guide*
- *Purchasing Additional Annual Holiday Guide*
- *Maternity Leave Policy*
- *Paternity Leave Policy*
- *Other Time Off (Special Leave) Policy*
- *Notice Periods* (calculation of holiday outstanding on termination of employment)
- *Pay Compendium* (containing the annual holiday entitlements for each grade)
- *Career Break Policy*
- *Way Forward Agreement* with CWU (for selection principles in Royal Mail Letters)