

Hanna Ihsan 24.03.2020

## Coronavirus Temporary Holiday Policy

### General

This policy addresses some of the challenges and issues that the coronavirus pandemic raises for Interserve in booking, taking or cancelling holiday.

This temporary policy applies to all employees and workers for the 2020 leave year. Individual entitlements to annual leave (or holiday) are set out in the contracts of employment or terms and conditions and nothing in this temporary policy changes those entitlements. Similarly, there are different holiday years within the group, which do not change.

We will continue to monitor the situation and review this holiday policy at the end of June 2020. Whilst a number of principles are set out in this policy, we reserve the right to exercise discretion on a case by case basis.

### Cancelling pre-booked holidays

- We can (and reserve the right to) ask employees to cancel their pre-booked holiday at a principle level to support business continuity plans. This discretion will be exercised fairly and proportionately, bearing in mind the financial impact to the employee and/ or the level of inconvenience. We may need to ask employees to cancel pre-booked holiday, if they are in critical roles and where there is not enough cover.
- Requests for holiday by employees may not be granted, if business continuity plans need employees in critical roles to deliver services or support the business.
- Based on travel restrictions and government advice, some employees may need or want to cancel or postpone holiday they have already booked. If an employee's holiday has been approved and booked, there is no right for that holiday to be cancelled unless the business is willing to agree to that request. Requests should be granted where possible and line managers should be cooperative about employees asking to rebook leave. Employees need to be reminded however, that if holiday is not used, it may be lost if it cannot be taken within the holiday year.

### Booked holiday but are now self-isolating

- For those employees who have booked holiday and are self-isolating, there is no automatic right to cancel the holiday or treat it as sick leave. The time will be treated as holiday.
- Under the existing annual leave policy, only those in very limited circumstances who cannot go away on holiday (for example where they have a broken leg) and provided they have supporting evidence, can ask to have the holiday cancelled - however, this is the exception. An employee who simply falls ill at the beginning of the holiday will continue to be treated as being on holiday. This will be no different to self-isolation.
- Any employee may wish to take holiday as an alternative to scenarios where they would otherwise be on statutory sick pay or no pay.

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## Carry over of holiday

- In the current circumstances we have considered the ability (or desire) for people to take holiday and the cost of allowing carried over holiday if it cannot be taken within the leave year. The costs of allowing too much holiday to be carried over to the next year would be substantial. The policy therefore is to maintain the current position of allowing a carry-over of a maximum of 5 days, which must be taken in the first half of the holiday year in 2021.

## Holiday purchases - pilot groups in IT & HR

- Employees who have purchased additional holiday in 2020, may not be able to use their full holiday entitlement. They would therefore be given the option to have a refund of the purchased holiday, either now or at the end of the year. Those in the scheme will be written to separately to manage this process.

## Requiring employees to take holiday

- We can insist when some holidays must be taken, if proper and due notice is given. We reserve the right to do this, as the situation with COVID-19 evolves. For example, where a client site shuts down for a period of two weeks, we can require employees working at that client site to use two weeks' holiday for the shutdown. Every effort will be made to provide employees with reasonable notice of this.
- In the current climate, it is understandable that there may be a reluctance for employees to book holiday as they cannot travel due to the restrictions in place. The company encourages all employees to use holiday - the purpose of which is rest, recuperation and time with family. Holiday and time away from work can be taken even while social distancing is in place. The danger otherwise is of burnout and putting the health and safety of employees at risk.
- If employees do not use holiday throughout the year, there could be a massive demand for holiday at peak times, which may prove operationally difficult to accommodate. All employees are therefore strongly encouraged to take their holidays, distributed throughout the year. Line managers will review and monitor holiday usage on a monthly basis to make sure their teams are not left with a large holiday entitlement at the end of the holiday year. They may not be able to take holiday in the last quarter of the year due to lots of people wanting to take holiday at that time. This may result in them losing holiday entitlement.
- The company has a duty to make sure that employees take at least their statutory holiday within the leave year. For a full-time employee the statutory holiday is 28 days (20 + bank holidays) which is pro-rated for part-time employees. So that at least statutory holiday is taken, we require the following for employees whose holiday year runs from January to December:
  - 50% of an employee's annual leave entitlement ideally being taken by the end of June 2020 (meaning 10 statutory days leave plus the usual bank holidays that fall in the period); and
  - 70% of an employee's annual leave entitlement must be taken by the end of September 2020 (meaning 12 statutory days leave plus bank holidays that fall due in that period), which will leave 8 statutory days plus bank holidays between October and December to take.
- For leave years other than January to December there should be a similar apportionment.

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## **Other leave:**

### **1. Parental leave**

Employees requesting to take unpaid parental leave to deal with the shutdown of schools should be reminded that paid annual leave is available and should use this as much as possible before taking unpaid parental leave. For example, if they are asking for four weeks unpaid parental leave, they should take two weeks as holiday and two weeks as unpaid parental leave.

### **2. Unpaid Leave**

Except for parental leave, all other unpaid leave will be suspended unless an employee's full holiday entitlement has been used. Any request for unpaid leave will be approved if the operational needs of the business can be met.