D. Leave of Absence

A personal leave of absence may be given to an employee at the discretion of the employer. Typically, leaves of absence are four weeks or longer. A leave of absence offers the option for extended time away from job responsibilities for employees who are acting as family caregivers or have suffered a loss, and for employees who have a serious health condition. A leave of absence policy may be considered supplemental to bereavement leave, sick leave and family leave. An employer should have a process for extending the length of a personal leave of absence, in case an employee needs an extension of his or her original request.

A leave of absence can be authorized on a case-by-case basis according to the employee’s needs and the impact of the employee’s absence on the functions of the workplace. The leave of absence is considered leave without pay. Health insurance still may be offered during personal leave if the employee agrees to pay the full premium. Although the accrual of benefits is suspended during the leave, all benefits that accrued before its start should be preserved.

SAMPLE POLICY (Leave of Absence):

An unpaid leave of absence is available to all full-time employees for no less than four weeks and no more than ten weeks.

Use of leave of absence must comply with the following:

- The human resources department must authorize the leave of absence. Authorization is done on a case-by-case basis by considering the needs and circumstances of the employee and the impact that the employee’s absence will have on the workplace.

- An employee must have one year of continuous employment with [COMPANY].

- The request must be submitted in writing and should include proposed starting and ending dates for the leave period.

- A request for an extension of the leave of absence must be made in writing and requested at least five working days before the end of the approved personal-leave period.

- An employee who subscribes to [COMPANY’S] health insurance benefit is responsible for the total monthly health insurance premium during the period of absence, unless otherwise provided by law. The employee will not accrue benefits while on leave of absence.

- An employee who takes an authorized leave of absence is guaranteed reinstatement to his or her job or to an equivalent position upon return from leave.