

MENDOCINO COUNTY POLICY #39	CATASTROPHIC LEAVE
ADOPTED: February 12, 2002	ADOPTED BY: Resolution #02-032

A policy providing a means for a county employee to donate hours of leave to a fellow employee who is facing a catastrophic illness or injury and who has exhausted his or her own leaves.

1. Catastrophic Leave and Establishment of a Catastrophic Leave Bank

- a. Catastrophic Leave is a paid leave of absence due to verifiable, long-term catastrophic illness or injury such as, but not limited to cancer and heart attack which clearly disables the employee, the employee's spouse, parent, or child.
- b. The County shall establish a Catastrophic Leave Bank with hours donated by other County employees.

2. Eligibility for Catastrophic Leave

All permanent employees of the County of Mendocino shall be eligible to receive Catastrophic Leave under the terms and conditions of this policy who have:

- successfully completed twenty-six pay periods in paid status;
- donated a minimum of one hour to the Catastrophic Leave Bank in the preceding 12 months and,
- exhausted all accrued sick leave, vacation leave, and compensatory time before qualifying for catastrophic leave.

3. Donation of Hours

- a. Catastrophic Leave is paid leave available from hours donated by other County employees.
 - (1) Vacation, designated holiday leave bank hours, compensatory leave, or other leave banks, which would normally be "cashed out" to the employee upon separation, may be donated.
 - (2) Sickness Leave and Personal Leave are specifically excluded.
 - (3) Donated time shall be credited on an hour for hour basis, regardless of wage of either donator or recipient.
- b. Employees donating vacation or compensatory leave must donate in increments of whole hours.
 - (1) The donating employee must have a vacation leave balance of at least forty hours remaining after such donation.
 - (2) Employees may donate all of their accrued compensatory time or holiday leave bank hours.
- c. Donations may be contributed by employees to the Catastrophic Leave Bank or to the account of an individual employee.
- d. All individual employee donations in excess of 480 hours will automatically revert to the general Catastrophic Leave Bank fund.
- e. Those hours donated to an individual employee not used by the recipient employee in excess of 40 hours will automatically revert to the Catastrophic Leave Bank.

4. Approval Process for Use of Catastrophic Leave Bank

- a. An employee requesting use of the Catastrophic Leave Bank must receive the approval of the Human Resources Director.
- b. Such leave may initially be approved up to a maximum of two hundred and forty (240) donated hours.
 - (1) If the catastrophic illness or injury continues, up to an additional two hundred and forty (240) donated hours may be approved.
- c. The Human Resources Director shall account for the donation and disbursement of catastrophic leave hours.
- d. Individual use of catastrophic leave cannot exceed 480 hours during any 12-month period.

- e. The decision of the Human Resources Director to deny the use of Catastrophic Leave may be appealed to the Civil Service Commission within ten (10) days of the decision.
 - (1) The decision by the Civil Service Commission shall be final.

5. Usage of Donated Hours

- a. An employee may use Catastrophic Leave to augment State Disability benefits not to exceed their base rate salary.
- b. While an employee is on Catastrophic Leave using donated hours, the employee will be treated as in pay status except that he or she shall not accrue any vacation or sick leave.
- c. An employee may not use Catastrophic Leave to supplement earnings while participating in the Mendocino County Return-to-Work Program or while on limited duty.
- d. Up to 40 hours of Catastrophic Leave not used by the recipient employee will remain in the employee's Vacation Leave balance.
 - (1) Upon the employee's return to work, any hours in excess of forty (40) not paid out to the employee from the Leave Bank or by individual donation will be returned to the Catastrophic Leave Bank.

6. Special Provision for Employees with Less Than 26 Pay Periods

- a. Employees with less than 26 pay periods of service are not eligible to use the Catastrophic Leave Bank.
- b. However, upon the recommendation and approval of the employee's department head and HR Director, an individual account may be set up separate from the Catastrophic Leave Bank. Donations may be made specifically to that employee's catastrophic leave account.
- c. If donated hours remain in that individual's account after the employee is able to return to work, or more than 480 hours are donated to that employee, those hours shall be transferred to the Catastrophic Leave Bank.