MANAGING EMPLOYEE LEAVE: THE VALUE AND VARIETY OF ABSENCE MANAGEMENT

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MANAGING EMPLOYEE LEAVE: THE VALUE AND VARIETY OF ABSENCE MANAGEMENT

Annual updates and growing legislative complexity mean organizations must determine the appropriate avenue for managing employee leave cases. With effective compliance resources and Absence Management by ADP® WorkForce Suite, employers can now manage leaves of absence in-house or with an external vendor to improve their experience.

Leave Case Management sits within Absence Management and helps to identify, assess, track and administer workers' leave of absence, such as medical, parental or military leave. It includes document verification, legal alignment with federal and state labor laws and coordination with attendance, pay and employee communication.

What are the types of leaves of absence within an organization?

- **Leave of absence (LOA)**, including mandatory and voluntary leave, extends beyond typical holiday float days or paid time off (PTO) requirements. It covers workers for specific qualifying reasons and is typically longer in duration, like weeks or months, while PTO is typically measured in hours or days.
- **Mandatory leave** is time off that companies must legally provide under federal, state or local rules. It's required for workers who meet the criteria and often reflects a duration of time away from work, with job and benefits protection. Updates and new laws often occur multiple times during the year.
- **Voluntary leave** is time off given as an optional benefit of company policy, not required by law. Examples include personal leaves or sabbaticals. Often reviewed annually and distributed through company handbooks, voluntary leave benefits existing employees and are incentives to prospective new hires.

What are the risks of not having a leave management strategy?

As an organization, lacking a proper absence management strategy may lead to:

- **Compliance issues:** Abiding by government-sanctioned leave is the law, not a benefit. By standardizing and addressing leaves, organizations can avoid costly discrimination or wrongful termination lawsuits.
- **Turning to unsecure programs:** Teams may turn to research methods like using generative artificial intelligence (AI) or outdated websites, leading to data privacy issues.
- **Manual administration:** HR teams spend hours per individual leave case sending notifications, researching laws and tracking eligibility. This can also result in errors navigating overlapping and complex federal, state and local laws.
- **Disconnect with workforce systems:** Different durations can cause systems to be turned off for workers, like employee badges, computer systems and payroll, leading to disruptions and loss of productivity. Disconnected dates can mean inaccurate scheduling, such as assuming a worker is back when they are not.
- **Employee turnover:** Disjointed and irregular communication can cause frustration, especially during a sensitive time in an employee's life. This can break trust and cause turnover.



Tamara, Washington, District of Columbia (D.C.), United States (U.S.)

Tamara is part of the 'sandwich' generation, tending to elderly parents. She's also newly pregnant and working full time. She needs to take partial time off for prenatal visits and to tend to her parents. When the baby arrives, she'll need full time off for maternity leave.



Thomas, Vancouver, British Columbia (BC), Canada

Thomas hurt his back while on PTO surfing in California and now requires surgery. He needs time off for recovery and to factor time spent on vacation.



Mariaelisa, San Antonio, Texas, U.S.

Mariaelisa's spouse is in the Air Force on alert duty and can be given short-notice deployment, creating unpredictable call-outs for Mariaelisa. She needs an easy way to submit LOA requests and access resources on current and prospective living locations to support job protection and permitted leave duration.

State or territory policies

Scenario considerations



For Tamara, the caregiver and expectant mom living in Washington D.C.:

- What policies inform the leave duration she can take consecutively versus nonconsecutively?
- What is the combined maximum paid leave she can take for both caretaking, prenatal and parental leave for D.C.?
- Are there programs for D.C. that allow her to take more time than the national standard annual leave?



For Thomas, the employee injured while out of the country on PTO, living in Vancouver, B.C.:

- What proof does he need to claim leave based on the laws in his location?
- What time off can be covered for rehabilitation services after surgery in Vancouver?
- What information can be provided on Vancouver-based policies for the transition from PTO to statutory sick leave?



For Mariaelisa, the Air Force spouse potentially leaving San Antonio, Texas at a moment's notice:

- What leave policies apply to her as a military spouse living in Texas?
- Will she need to provide information to prove the urgency of the situation?
- Are there any partial wage replacement initiatives in her jurisdiction?

How ADP® WorkForce Suite helps

- **Access to a dynamic claim questionnaire and configurable workflow to help identify specific criteria like military status and eligibility by location**
- **Automated identification of laws by location in U.S., Canada and encompassing districts via profile details**
- **Configurable policy editor for company policies and locations outside the U.S., Canada and encompassing districts**
- **Visibility into multiple leave cases and timelines at once**
- **Search options and library with location comparison**
- **Support channels for inquiries**

Overlapping or intermitted leave

Scenario considerations



For Tamara:

- Can she ensure she has permitted partial leave time weekly for caregiving and prenatal appointments?
- What is the duration of paid and unpaid leave available for her after she gives birth?
- What documentation will she need to submit for approval of each leave situation?



For Thomas:

- How should his PTO bank be updated if he goes on leave of absence during PTO?
- Are there any company policies that dictate whether an employee can retroactively "cancel" vacation days to claim sick leave?
- What information can be made available to him should the injury transition into long-term impairment requiring leave beyond short-term protection?



For Mariaelisa:

- Can she separate leave of absence for a week-long site visit and to move without using PTO?
- What protections exist for military caregiving leave should her spouse be injured during deployment?
- What intermittent leave is available for attending mandatory pre-deployment briefings or appointments?

How ADP® WorkForce Suite helps

- **Visibility into multiple leaves at once**
- **Access to details on permitted consecutive or nonconsecutive legal policies and duration eligibility**
- **Automation with Time and Attendance and Job Scheduling to block out time and alert management as needed**
- **Visibility into PTO banks, approval workflows and adjustable timesheets**
- **Access to itemized breakdown of leave or time away on timesheet and reporting**
- **Workflows with decision criteria for mandatory, voluntary leave and PTO balances**

Employee experience and communication

Scenario considerations



For Tamara:

- How will she be informed of the important information during her leave, like formal start and end dates?
- What documentation will be made available to summarize eligibility and expectations for her specific leave?
- How can she ensure documentation regarding her, her newborn and elderly parent are protected?



For Thomas:

- What training do managers need to be sure he is educated regarding cross-country compliance to avoid legal mistakes?
- What are processes for him to digitally submit international medical documentation?
- What email and texting options are available for storing information, if he's away from his work laptop for extended periods?



For Mariaelisa:

- How can she request leave quickly for a short-notice deployment with unknown return to work?
- How will her information be updated if she moves states or countries during leave?
- Where can she upload necessary documentation for military orders?

How ADP® WorkForce Suite helps

- **An editable profile can be updated with non-work email addresses**
- **Email notifications, subscription and forwarding options can be sent for new and updated regulations**
- **With ADP payroll solutions and Time and Attendance, pay alerts and itemized pay breakdowns are available for unpaid or reduced pay leave**
- **Sensitive information is secured through data and document encryption**
- **Regular releases of software support for mandated leave laws in U.S., Canada and encompassing districts are provided**
- **Configurable policy automation for proper workflows when employees move**
- **Editable profiles and questionnaires to capture critical information and quickly handle time-sensitive changes**

Alignment to time and pay

Scenario considerations



For Tamara:

- How will her managers know what dates and times she will be on leave while caretaking?
- How can she confirm pay accuracy, especially when taking partial leave for two matters on the same day?
- Can the time tracking system support precision fractional-hour tracking?



For Thomas:

- How will managers know if he is on leave of absence or PTO?
- What are the paid and unpaid policies for leave of absence in Vancouver, B.C.?
- Can timecards be retroactively adjusted to correctly map PTO, sick leave and short-term disability?



For Mariaelisa:

- How can she ensure her pay wasn't wrongfully impacted by a last-minute leave of absence?
- How can she ensure her shifts are covered with submission of leave request?
- Does the time and attendance system support intermittent leave tracking to avoid incorrect time deductions?

How ADP® WorkForce Suite helps

- **Workers can track partial-day and hourly intermittent leave, along with reasons and updated balances**
- **Access to detailed breakdowns of partial hours of leave when paired with Time and Attendance and ADP payroll solutions**
- **Self-service PTO requests and balances available to workers and management**
- **Time tracking and rounding configured to fractional-hour and smaller, based on regulatory laws and organization policy**
- **Reports on PTO banks and leave types**
- **Reviewable terms for paid/unpaid policies and ability to configure criteria**
- **Access to workflows with auditable decision criteria for mandatory, voluntary leave and PTO balances for multi-variable pay decisions**
- **Worker unavailability, leave of absence notification workflows and self-service shift swap available in Job Scheduling**

What are outsourcing or internal management options for leave of absence solutions?

The stress and work associated with staying up to date with changing policies and communicating with your people are some of the reasons why organizations outsource mandatory leave. Some leave of absence providers only support specific claims, such as short-term disability or maternity leave.

During moments of crisis in a worker's life, outsourcing all elements of leave can cause added stress. Unclear channels of communication, duplicative or error-prone vendor paperwork or acting as a go-between for the vendor and employer for approvals can cause poor employee experience and even turnover. For HR and benefits teams, a lack of visibility into leave eligibility or status, or connection to other HR systems, can lead to complaints and disruptions to operations.

Due to the dependency on time and attendance, scheduling and other absence types (like PTO banks), many organizations choose to manage all absences internally. Intermittent tracking, like employees taking leave in short, separate blocks, can also be challenging to outsource due to other time off dependencies.



Areas to consider when evaluating leave of absence solutions

Many labor laws can apply to the same case at the same time and factor into paid benefits. The best workforce management solutions for enterprises with large populations of deskless shift workers include advanced leave management capabilities that improve compliance, efficiency and your people's well-being. When evaluating workforce management software, confirm it includes:

- ✓ A rules engine to automate PTO and leave of absence data
- ✓ Ways to visualize and manage multiple leave requests in the same view
- ✓ Employee access to create and check on leave progress
- ✓ Integration with time management and payroll solutions for itemized payroll covering days at work, on PTO or leave of absence
- ✓ A breakdown of policies that detect the eligibility of each worker
- ✓ Synchronization to scheduling so calendars are blocked when the worker is away
- ✓ Timeclocks and attendance tracking with alerts for workers and managers
- ✓ Comprehensive reporting on PTO and leave of absence trends

Especially if you are using multiple vendor systems for your leave cases, consider the experience for HR teams managing those employees and the employees who take the leave themselves. When evaluating absence management software, confirm it includes:

- ✓ Editable email updates for leave-taking workers and managers
- ✓ Visibility into all leave cases for each worker, like status, progress bar and dates
- ✓ Local resources and support for software challenges
- ✓ Notifications and alerts during critical stages of leave

Not all leaves can be pre-planned. In moments of crisis, providing your people the pay they deserve helps them avoid financial stress. When evaluating absence management software, confirm it includes:

- ✓ Ways to validate employee return to work and time tracking appropriately
- ✓ Ways to alert managers for no-shows and unexcused absences immediately
- ✓ Record of leave and time off requests to cross-reference as needed
- ✓ Resources to confirm unpaid and paid leave

*"Two-thirds of organizations manage employees in multiple states, resulting in processing leave cases **40% to 50% slower** than single-state organizations, largely due to manual interpretation of overlapping eligibility rules and documentation requirements."*

HR Executive, Fragmented leave laws are slowing HR operations, report finds, 2026

How does ADP WorkForce Suite help manage absences and leaves better?

ADP WorkForce Suite unifies leave data into the flow of work, like automated time and attendance tracking, policy and rules automation, job scheduling and payroll.

Solutions like **Absence Management** with Absence Compliance Pack North America and research options such as **ADP Compliance on Demand** can be used for complete in-house management or together with partially outsourced benefits vendors, providing your internal HR teams with visibility into leaves, communication and legal responsibilities.

Especially during sensitive times in an employee's life, having a leave management strategy is essential. Whether outsourcing part of your solution or keeping everything in-house, ADP WorkForce Suite helps you manage mandatory and voluntary leaves of absence with PTO banks and usage, all in one solution. Make leave easy for your team and HR staff when it counts the most.

Workflows in ADP WorkForce Suite Absence Management

1. **Questionnaire completion by employee or HR staff**
2. **Questionnaire and profile updates**
3. **Eligibility analysis with profile and policies**
4. **Availibility of forms**
5. **Approval status**
6. **Data synchronization**
7. **Ongoing support and reporting**

Request a demo of ADP WorkForce Suite Absence Management and Absence Compliance Pack North America. To learn more, visit workforcesoftware.com/workforce-suite/absence-management/

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