

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT LIBERAL LEAVE

1. What is liberal leave?

- Liberal leave allows employees to request time off using accumulated vacation, personal leave, or compensatory time, or authorized leave without pay when the Inclement Weather and City Emergencies Policy is in effect. The normal advanced notice requirement is waived.

2. Who makes the decision for the City to be open with liberal leave in effect?

- The Mayor based on the recommendation of members of the administration.

3. How employees are notified that the City has implemented liberal leave?

- Call the City of Baltimore's dedicated hotline for employees (410) 361-9200
- Contact the City Hall operators at (410) 396-3100
- By email – an *Email Blast* is sent to all City email accounts which typically comes from the Office of the Labor Commissioner.
- Employees with assigned City email accounts can access the City email system outside of the office by logging onto the website - <https://owa.baltimorecity.gov>
- The Mayor's Press Secretary is responsible for providing information to the news media when City offices are closed, opening late or closing early.

4. Is approval needed to use liberal leave?

- Yes. Non-essential employees may be granted liberal leave with authorization from the agency, department head, or designee.

5. Is the use of liberal leave guaranteed to be approved?

- No. The approval is based upon the Agency's staffing and/or operational needs. Liberal leave is NOT guaranteed time off.

6. What types of accrued leave can be used if liberal leave is taken?

- Employees can request time off using accumulated vacation, personal leave, or compensatory time, or authorized leave without pay.

7. Can a probationary employee take liberal leave?

- Yes. Employees can request time off using accumulated personal leave, or authorized leave without pay.

8. What is a non-essential employee?

- Employees whose functions are not considered necessary for the operation of City services and who are not required to report to work during inclement weather, City emergencies or when the City is operating under the liberal leave policy or City offices are closed.

9. What is an essential employee?

- Employees who are designated as such by a department/agency head or designee for the purpose of providing essential services to City residents and/or other City employees during inclement weather, other City emergencies, and disasters when City offices are operating under the liberal leave policy or City offices are closed.

10. What is an emergency essential employee?

- Employees who are considered non-essential and are not generally required to respond to City emergencies outside of their normal workday, but who are designated for a period of time by their department/agency head or designee as essential. Emergency essential employees are required to report to work or remain at work as scheduled or as otherwise specifically directed due to the nature of the emergency or disaster. Employees will be informed when they are designated as emergency essential for an incident, and will return to their non-essential designation when their department/agency head deems their duties no longer necessary for that incident.

11. What is an essential City service?

- Essential City services include, but are not limited to police and fire protection, water and wastewater processing and treatment, utility maintenance, transportation services (including signal operations and maintenance) Convention Center services (including maintenance and preparation for contracted events), municipal telephone services, animal shelter, accounting, management information services, and departmental and citywide payroll functions.

12. Who would inform an employee if he/she is an essential and/or emergency essential employee?

- The Director, department head, or designee.

13. How much notice would an employee receive before being designated as an emergency essential employee?

- This can vary based on when the emergency or disaster occurs.

14. How much notice would an employee receive if the work shift will be changing due to a City emergency or disaster situation?

- This can vary based on when the emergency or disaster occurs.

15. What is considered a City emergency or disaster situation?

Some examples can include, but not limited to the following:

- Snow storm
- Any natural disaster up to and including a hurricane, earthquake
- Multiple water main breaks
- Sinkholes, tunnel