



SICK LEAVE BANK FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the Sick Leave Bank?

The Leon County Schools (LCS) Voluntary Sick Leave Bank provides full-time employees an opportunity to pool sick leave days together to protect its members from financial loss due to a serious personal illness, accident, or injury.

How can the Sick Leave Bank benefit its members?

In the event of a serious personal illness, accident, or injury causing a participating employee to be absent from work for an extended period of time, the employee may receive **paid leave** benefits from the Sick Leave Bank to minimize loss of salary.

Can employees retain their leave and use leave from the Sick Leave Bank?

No, prior to receiving paid leave benefits from the Bank, employees must use all of their accumulated sick, annual, and compensatory leave and be in unpaid leave status for five (5) continuous workdays.

What conditions does the Sick Leave Bank cover?

A serious personal illness, accident, or injury that may be sudden or unexpected to the employee and keeps him/her from work as verified by a licensed physician. Conditions that are short term in nature, including, but not limited to, common illnesses, injuries, and surgeries will not be considered. However, chronic illnesses or injuries, such as cancer or major surgery that are long term in nature may be considered.

Does the Sick Leave Bank cover elective surgery?

No, the Sick Leave Bank does not provide benefits for cosmetic or elective surgery.

Does the Sick Leave Bank cover stress related illnesses or chemical dependency?

No, the Sick Leave Bank does not provide benefits for illnesses related to stress or chemical dependency.

Does the Sick Leave Bank cover pregnancy?

No, the Sick Leave Bank does not provide benefits for sickness, illness, or surgery coinciding with or directly related to pregnancy.

What are the Open Enrollment Dates for the Sick Leave Bank?

September 1st - September 30th

February 1st - February 15th

How do I apply for membership in the Sick Leave Bank?

Information regarding the open enrollment periods will be sent out from the Benefits Department prior to each open enrollment period. Eligible employees may apply for membership during one of the open enrollment periods by submitting a completed Sick Leave Bank Membership Application and Leave Request to the leave accounting contact at his/her site.

What are the eligibility requirements to enroll in the Sick Leave Bank?

To enroll in the Sick Leave Bank an employee must:

- Be employed in a full-time regular position
- Be employed by LCS for at least twelve consecutive (12) months
- Have at least ten (10) days accrued unused sick leave, not including up-front days
- Have at least twenty-two (22) days accrued unused sick leave, not including up-front days, in the event the employee is a prior member who used benefits from the Bank.
- Contribute one (1) sick leave day to the bank during one of the open enrollment periods

Can a DROP participant be a member of the Sick Leave Bank?

Yes, to retain membership in the Sick Leave Bank upon entering DROP, an employee must:

- Be employed in a full-time regular position
- Be employed by LCS for at least twelve consecutive (12) months
- Have an accumulated sick leave balance of at least ten (10) days, not including up-front days, immediately prior to the date the DROP program begins.

- Have at least twenty-two (22) days accrued unused sick leave, not including up-front days, immediately prior to the date the DROP program begins, in the event the employee is a prior member who used benefits from the Bank.
- Contribute one (1) sick leave day to the bank upon entering DROP

Will employees retain membership in the Sick Leave Bank after using leave from the Bank?

In the event a member draws from the Sick Leave Bank, his/her membership shall be suspended after drawing all days authorized from the bank. Such members may be reinstated by the accumulation of twenty-two (22) sick days, not including up-front days, and contributing one sick day in the periods of September 1st through September 30th or February 1st through February 15th of any fiscal year.

What if an employee begins DROP participation, but does not have the required 10 days of accumulated sick leave necessary to retain membership in the Sick Leave Bank?

An employee participating in DROP whose accumulated sick leave is less than ten (10) days will terminate membership in the Sick Leave Bank at the time he/she enters DROP. A DROP participant whose Sick Leave Bank membership terminates as indicated above may rejoin the Sick Leave Bank during the next available open enrollment period provided he/she has completed at least twelve (12) calendar months of service after beginning DROP and he/she has at least ten (10) new days of unused accrued sick leave, not including up-front days.

How do I apply to retain membership in the Sick Leave Bank upon entering DROP?

Employees are given the opportunity to retain membership in the Sick Leave Bank when completing their DROP application in the LCS Retirement Office.

How do I apply for benefits from the Sick Leave Bank?

The Sick Leave Bank Benefits Application and two (2) physician's statements must be submitted to the Benefits Department no later than thirty (30) calendar days from the employee's first day of leave without pay in order to be considered.

What documentation must be submitted with the application for benefits from the Sick Leave Bank?

Physician's statements from two (2) doctors attesting to the member's extended illness, accident, or injury must be submitted with the application. The statements must certify the following:

1. The nature of the illness, accident, or injury.
2. The anticipated date the member would be able to return to work.

How soon can employees use the Sick Leave Bank after becoming a member?

A participating member shall not be eligible to use sick leave from the bank until after he/she has been a member of the bank for six (6) months.

Can employees use the Sick Leave Bank while on Workers' Comp?

No, a participating member shall not be eligible to use sick leave from the bank if the employee is on worker's compensation, illness-in-the-line-of-duty leave, or other approved leave.

Can employees use the Sick Leave Bank while on any type of approved leave?

No, a participating member shall not be eligible to use sick leave from the bank if the employee is on worker's compensation, illness-in-the-line-of-duty leave, or other approved leave.

Can employees use the Sick Leave Bank while receiving disability retirement?

No, if the employee qualifies for disability retirement, that person will be eligible for the Sick Leave Bank **only** during the retirement application process.

Can employees use the Sick Leave Bank if permanently disabled?

No, if an employee becomes permanently disabled, that employee will not be eligible for use of leave from the Sick Leave Bank.

Can employees use the Sick Leave Bank in conjunction with a short-term disability policy?

An employee may opt for short-term disability income to begin at the end of the disability policy elimination period or at the expiration of sick leave (whichever is greater), or at the expiration of benefits from the Sick Leave Bank. If an employee opts to use benefits from the Sick Leave Bank, he/she must have used **all** of his/her accrued sick, compensatory, and annual leave.

Can employees use the Sick Leave Bank in conjunction with a long-term disability policy?

Yes, however, if long-term disability income is claimed by the employee, the Sick Leave Bank shall not be drawn on until the disability income is exhausted.

Can employees use the Sick Leave Bank if loss of income will be covered by a lawsuit or another personal insurance policy?

No, employees requesting a draw from the bank due to a personal accident (i.e., car accident) are exempt from the use of the Sick Leave Bank if they have a loss of income rider or if the individual causing the accidents' insurance company will be paying loss of income or if there is a lawsuit pending.

Who determines who can use or draw days from the Sick Leave Bank?

Upon approval of the Sick Leave Bank Benefits Application and two (2) physician's statements by the Benefits Department, a member will be allowed a single draw from the bank for an approved illness, accident or injury up to a maximum of fifty (50) paid sick leave days with a maximum of 150 days' lifetime usage, subject to the following provisions:

- Drawing of days from the Sick Leave Bank is based on availability of sick leave days in the bank in the best interest of all members.
- The Committee Chair or designee is authorized to grant up to the initial fifty (50) days of benefits.
- All cases will be reviewed by the Sick Leave Bank Committee when the 50th continuous day of benefits has been reached. At this time the Committee may request additional medical certification.
- Also, at this time any sick, compensatory, and annual leave that may have been accrued by the participant must be used before resumption of drawing from the Sick Leave Bank.

Who serves on the Sick Leave Bank Committee?

The Sick Leave Bank Committee consists of nine (9) members: two (2) appointed by the Leon Classroom Teachers Association; two (2) appointed by the Leon Educational Staff Professional Association; two (2) appointed by Local 1010, IUPAT; and three (3) appointed by the Superintendent, one (1) of which will be the Committee Chair.

Is the decision final?

The decision of the Committee to grant or refuse to grant Sick Leave Bank benefits shall be final. A denial of an employee's application is binding and cannot be appealed. Any denials will be explained to the applicant. An applicant may re-apply at a future date.

What if the Sick Leave Bank gets low on donated leave?

If the balance in the bank is diminished below 200 days, **all** participating members shall contribute one (1) additional sick leave day, in order to continue membership.

Participating employees will have a minimum of ten (10) working days from receipt of the replenishment notification to withdraw from the Sick Leave Bank.

One (1) sick leave day will be automatically deducted from the participating employee's sick leave balance, if the employee does not return the signed withdrawal form to the Benefits Department within the time limit. If an employee is unable to contribute the day, that person will be placed on suspension from the benefits of the bank until able to contribute the day.

If an employee has joined the bank within six (6) months of a replenishment notification, that person shall not be required to contribute to the replenishment contributions.

Do members of the Sick Leave Bank have to donate another day during Open Enrollment?

No, however all members will be asked to contribute one (1) additional sick leave day, in order to continue membership, if the balance in the bank is diminished below 200 days.

Can I withdraw my membership in the Sick Leave Bank?

Yes, an employee who wishes to withdraw from participation in the Sick Leave Bank may do so. Withdrawal will be effective immediately upon receipt by the Benefits Department of written notification of the employee's intent to withdraw. **The participating employee who chooses to withdraw from participation shall not be eligible to withdraw any sick leave already contributed to the bank.**

What if someone is suspected of abusing the Sick Leave Bank?

Alleged abuse of the Sick Leave Bank shall be investigated by the Committee. If an employee is found to have abused the use of the Sick Leave Bank, the employee shall repay all sick leave credit drawn from the Sick Leave Bank and be subject to such other disciplinary action as determined by the Board.