

MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT, TRADE, EMPLOYMENT AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

- 1. TITLE:** Paid Parental Leave
- 2. PURPOSE:** To prescribe the entitlement to paid parental leave including maternity, spousal, pre-natal/pre-adoption and adoption leave.
- 3. LEGISLATIVE PROVISIONS:** Section 34(2) of the *Public Service Act 1996* and section 686 of the *Industrial Relations Act 1999*.
- 4. APPLICATION:** This directive applies to:
- public service officers;
 - temporary employees engaged under sections 112(2)(a) and 113(2)(a) of the *Public Service Act 1996*;
 - general employees engaged under section 112(2)(a) of the *Public Service Act 1996*; and
 - long term casual employees, as defined in section 16 of the *Industrial Relations Act 1999*, and employed under sections 112(2)(b) and 113(2)(b) of the *Public Service Act 1996*.
- 5. STANDARD:** The conditions and entitlements prescribed in the attached Schedule apply.
- 6. EFFECTIVE DATE:** This directive is to operate from **1 July 2008**. Transitional arrangements apply for leave taken up to 12 weeks prior to 1 July 2008. See Circular C2/08 for details.
- 7. VARIATION:** The provisions of this Schedule may be varied in accordance with certified agreements made under Chapter 6, Part 1 of the *Industrial Relations Act 1999* or decisions of an industrial tribunal of competent jurisdiction.
- 8. INCONSISTENCY:** For industrial instruments made under the Queensland legislation sections 34 and 117 of the *Public Service Act 1996* and sections 686 and 687 of the *Industrial Relations Act 1999* apply if there is a conflict with an act, regulation or industrial instrument.
- For industrial instruments made under the *Workplace Relations Act 1996 (Commonwealth)* that act applies to the extent of the inconsistency between federal and state statutes, awards or agreements.
- 9. SUPERSEDES:** Ministerial Directive 18/05: "Paid Parental Leave".
Circular C5/05
- 10. PREVIOUS REFERENCES:** Ministerial Directive 3/01: "Parental Leave"
Paid Parental Leave Documentation to support Directive 3/01 "Parental Leave".
Circular 3/96
- 11. SEE ALSO:** *Family Leave (Queensland Public Sector) Award – State 2004*
Circular 5/05
Ministerial Directive: "Long Service Leave".
Ministerial Directive: "Leave without Salary Credited as Service".

SCHEDULE

PARENTAL LEAVE

1. Eligibility

1.1 Eligible employees, (that is public service employees excluding casual employees other than long term casual employees) covered by this directive and who meet the qualifying service period are entitled to access the paid parental leave entitlements on the conditions in this Schedule.

1.2 Exceptions:

- The qualifying period is nullified where there is a break in service.
- Casual employment is not recognised as contributing towards the qualifying service period except where the employment is on a casual long-term basis as defined in section 15A of the *Industrial Relations Act 1999*.

1.3 Employees who are ineligible are those who:

- are short term casual employees and do not accrue an entitlement to paid sick leave, or
- are solely remunerated by fees, allowances or commission, or
- are on unauthorised absence immediately before the start of the minimum period of maternity leave; or
- do not have a period of unbroken employment of at least 12 months except in the case of long term casual employees.

1.4 Part time and long-term casual employees are entitled to the provisions of this directive on a pro rata basis.

2. Definitions

2.1 “**Child**” shall be in accordance with the definition provided in the *Family Leave (Queensland Public Sector) Award – State 2004*.

2.2 “**Confinement**” is the birth of a child/children, or the ending of the pregnancy in other circumstances, that occurs no earlier than 20 weeks before the expected date of birth.

2.3 “**Long term casual employee**” shall be in accordance with the definition provided in section 15A of the *Industrial Relations Act 1999*, i.e.

“a casual employee engaged by a particular employer, on a regular and systematic basis, for several periods of employment during a period of at least 1 year immediately before the employee seeks to access an entitlement under this part”.

2.4 “**Parental leave**” shall mean maternity, spousal or adoption leave.

2.5 “**Primary care giver**” means a person who assumes the principal role of providing care and attention to a child/children.

2.6 “**Qualifying service period**” for the purposes of paid leave in this directive, means at least 12 months service in any one or more Queensland government departments or Queensland public service offices.

This service:

- is to be unbroken; or
- may be inclusive of paid and unpaid leave which is credited towards service.

2.6.1 The qualifying service period need only be met once in an employee’s period of continuous service.

2.6.2 In determining the qualifying period for a part-time employee the passage of time and not the completion of equivalent hours worked as a full-time employee is to be used.

Example 1:

6 months	3 months	3 months	12 months
Normal working period	Paid leave recognised as service	Normal working period	= qualifying period

Example 2:

6 months	3 months	3 months	12 months
Normal working period	Paid and unpaid leave recognised as service	Normal working period	= qualifying period

2.7 “Spouse” of an employee includes –

- (a) a former spouse; and
- (b) a de facto spouse, including a spouse of the same sex as the employee.

3. Entitlement

3.1 Maternity Leave

3.1.1 An eligible employee whose expected date of confinement has been confirmed in writing by a medical practitioner will be entitled to fourteen (14) weeks paid maternity leave. The paid maternity leave is to be taken as the initial absence on the approved maternity leave period. This 14 week period of paid leave is inclusive of any public holidays arising within that time. The period of paid maternity leave can be extended by the employee taking the leave on a half-pay basis or by taking sick leave while on paid maternity leave.

3.1.2 In cases of financial hardship or other exceptional circumstances the employee may ask and the chief executive may exercise discretion in paying the full maternity leave entitlement in advance.

3.1.3 The employee will be entitled to access a further period of unpaid maternity leave in accordance with the provisions of the *Family Leave (Queensland Public Sector) Award – State 2004*. An employee shall confirm her intention of returning to work by notice in writing to the employer, giving not less than four weeks notice prior to the expiration of the period of maternity leave.

3.1.4 Pre natal Leave

(a) In addition to the paid maternity leave provisions above, an eligible employee who presents a medical certificate from a doctor stating that she is pregnant will have access to paid pre natal leave up to a total of either 36.25 or 38 hours (based on the average number of ordinary hours worked in a week) per pregnancy to attend medical appointments prior to the birth of a child/children.

(b) A written application shall be submitted for every absence for which pre natal leave is sought. Each absence on pre natal leave must be supported by documentary evidence relating to the medical appointment to the satisfaction of the Chief Executive (e.g. a medical certificate).

(c) The work unit should be flexible enough to allow such employees the ability to leave work and return on the same day.

3.2 Spousal Leave

3.2.1 An eligible employee who produces a certificate from a medical practitioner which states their spouse’s expected date of confinement, will be entitled to one week’s paid spousal leave in connection with the birth of a child/children for whom that employee has accepted responsibility. This period of paid spousal leave will be taken as the initial absence on parental leave and is

inclusive of any public holidays arising within that time. The period of paid spousal leave cannot be extended other than by the employee taking the leave on a half-pay basis.

3.2.2 The period of spousal leave taken shall be the "initial" absence. The exact timing of such leave shall be at the employee's discretion. For example:

- an employee may seek to take the spousal leave immediately after the birth, or
- an employee may prefer to continue working for the duration of the mother's stay in hospital, and take the first week the mother and child are home.

3.2.3 The employee will be entitled to access a further period of unpaid parental leave in accordance with the provisions of the *Family Leave (Queensland Public Sector) Award – State 2004*. If an employee has accessed the further period of unpaid parental leave they shall confirm their intention of returning to work by notice in writing to the employer, giving not less than 4 weeks notice prior to the expiration of the period of spousal leave.

3.2.4 In cases of financial hardship or other exceptional circumstances the employee may ask and the chief executive may exercise discretion in paying the full spousal leave entitlement in advance.

3.2.5 Pre natal Leave

(a) In addition to the paid spousal leave provisions above, an eligible employee who presents a medical certificate from a doctor stating that their spouse is pregnant will have access to paid pre natal leave up to a total of either 7.25 or 7.6 hours (based on the average number of ordinary hours worked in a day) per pregnancy to attend related medical appointments prior to the birth of a child/children.

(b) A written application shall be submitted for every absence for which pre natal leave is sought. Each absence on pre natal leave must be supported by documentary evidence relating to the medical appointment to the satisfaction of the Chief Executive (e.g. a medical certificate).

(c) The work unit should be flexible enough to allow such employees the ability to leave work and return on the same day.

3.3 Adoption Leave

3.3.1 An eligible employee who presents documentation from the Director-General of the relevant Queensland Government department administering adoptions confirming that an adoption order or interim adoption order has been made for the relevant child/children, will be entitled to fourteen (14) week's paid adoption leave at the time of placement or taking custody if he or she is the primary care giver, or one week's paid adoption leave if he or she is the secondary care giver. This 14 week period of paid leave is inclusive of any public holidays arising within that time. The period of paid adoption leave can be extended by the employee taking the leave on a half-pay basis or by taking sick leave while on paid adoption leave.

3.3.2 In cases of financial hardship or other exceptional circumstances the employee may ask and the chief executive may exercise discretion in paying the full adoption leave entitlement in advance.

3.3.3 Applications for adoption leave will be in accordance with the *Family Leave (Queensland Public Sector) Award – State 2004*.

3.3.4 If the employee is the primary care giver, that employee will be entitled to access a further period of unpaid leave in accordance with the provisions of the *Family Leave (Queensland Public Sector) Award – State 2004*. If an employee has accessed the further period of unpaid parental leave they shall confirm their intention of returning to work by notice in writing to the employer, giving not less than 4 weeks prior to the expiration of the period of adoption leave.

3.3.5 Pre-adoption Leave

(a) In addition to the adoption leave provisions above, an employee who will be the primary care giver and who presents a letter from the Director-General of the relevant Queensland Government department administering adoptions, confirming the employee's status as a prospective adopter, will have access to paid leave up to a total of either 36.25 or 38 hours (based on the average number of ordinary hours worked in a week) per adoption to attend related interviews prior to the adoption of a child/children.

(b) An employee who will be the secondary care giver at the time of placement and who presents a letter from the Director-General of the relevant Queensland Government department administering adoptions confirming that the employee is a prospective adopter, will have access to paid leave up to a total of either 7.25 or 7.6 hours (based on the average number of ordinary hours worked in a day) per adoption to attend related interviews prior to the adoption of a child/children.

(c) A written application shall be submitted for every absence for which pre-adoption leave is sought. Applications shall be supported by evidence to the satisfaction of the chief executive.

(d) The work unit should be flexible enough to allow such employees the ability to leave work and return on the same day.

(e) An employee cannot be deemed to be both the primary and secondary care giver and therefore cannot access both entitlements to pre-adoption leave (i.e. 1 week and 1 day).

3.4 Conversion to an Hourly Basis

3.4.1 Leave prescribed in this directive may be converted to an hourly basis for the purpose of accrual, granting and recording of leave on the following basis:

3.4.2 If an employee's leave entitlement is expressed in weeks or days, it may be read as if it were expressed in hours using the following formula:

(a) $LE=W \times WH$

Where:

LE (leave entitlement) means the amount of leave entitlement expressed in working hours to which the employee is entitled.

W (weeks) means the entitlement accrued in calendar weeks under this directive

WH (weekly hours) means the employee's weekly hours of work or the average number of hours per working week of an employee during a pay period or the period that is reasonable under the circumstances.

(b) $LE=D \times DH$

Where:

LE (leave entitlement) means the amount of leave entitlement expressed in working hours to which the employee is entitled.

D (days) means the entitlement accrued in calendar days under this directive.

DH (daily hours) means the employee's daily hours or the average number of hours per working day of an employee during a pay period or other period that is reasonable under the circumstances.

Where an employee's existing entitlement is expressed in weeks the conversion from weeks to hours is determined by applying the formula. For example, to convert an entitlement for a public service officer whose weekly hours are 36.25 and who currently has 14 weeks leave:

$LE \text{ (weeks)} = 14 \times 36.25 = 507.5 \text{ hours full entitlement}$

3.5 Pro rata Payment for Part-Time Employees and Long-Term Casual Employees

3.5.1 A part-time or long-term casual employee's entitlement to 14 weeks paid maternity or adoption leave is to be calculated as follows:

Number of hours x working days of entitlement

Where number of hours = $\frac{\text{total ordinary hours worked over the last 12 months}}{\text{total ordinary hours of a full-time employee over previous 12 months}} \times 70 \text{ days}$

3.5.2 A part-time or long-term casual employee's entitlement to 1 week's paid spousal or pre natal leave is to be calculated as follows:

Number of hours x working days of entitlement

Where number of hours = $\frac{\text{total ordinary hours worked over the last 12 months}}{\text{total ordinary hours of a full time employee over previous 12 months}} \times 5 \text{ days}$

3.5.3 A part-time or long-term casual employee's entitlement to 1 day's pre natal leave is to be calculated as follows:

$\frac{\text{total ordinary hours worked over the last 12 months}}{\text{total ordinary hours of a full time employee over previous 12 months}}$

3.5.4 Notwithstanding the above formulae, any approved absence from work cannot be taken into account to disadvantage an employee when determining their paid parental leave payment.

Example 1:

6 months	3 months	3 months	Entitlement
Normal working period at part-time 0.5	Paid leave recognised as service	Normal working period at part-time 0.5	= Paid parental leave at part-time 0.5

Example 2:

6 months	3 months	3 months	Entitlement
Normal working period at part-time 0.8	Unpaid leave recognised as service	Normal working period at part-time 0.8	= Paid parental leave at part-time 0.8

Example 3:

18 months	12 months	Entitlement
Normal working period at part-time 0.5	Approved unpaid leave	= Paid parental leave at part-time 0.5

4. General Conditions

4.1 Timely Notice

4.1.1 An application for maternity or spousal leave is to be submitted at least 10 weeks before the expected birth of the child/children or, if the employee proposes to commence leave before the birth/date of confinement, 10 weeks before the date on which leave is to commence.

4.1.2 An application for adoption leave is to be submitted as soon as possible before the proposed period of leave.

4.2 Parental Leave and Access to Other Leave

4.2.1 Except where specifically provided under this directive, the provisions of the relevant industrial instrument shall apply e.g. the *Family Leave (Queensland Public Sector) Award – State 2004*.

4.2.2 Recreation Leave and Long Service Leave

(a) Where there is an entitlement, employees may use recreation and long service leave during the period of unpaid parental leave in accordance with the relevant Ministerial Directives.

(b) An entitlement to paid sick leave may be established during periods of recreation leave and long service leave in accordance with the relevant Ministerial Directives.

4.2.3 Sick Leave

(a) Paid sick leave is available to an employee on paid parental leave. Sick leave may be granted instead of paid parental leave already approved where:

- an employee submits a written application for sick leave, supported by a medical certificate or other evidence of the illness acceptable to the chief executive; and
- the period of illness is at least 1 calendar week.

(b) Paid sick leave is not available to an employee on unpaid parental leave.

4.2.4 An employee can only be on one form of approved leave at any one time.

4.2.5 In the case of school teachers who do not accrue recreation leave credits, the period of paid leave is exclusive of school vacation periods.

4.3 Access to a Second Period of Parental Leave

4.3.1 An employee:

- who becomes pregnant while on parental leave; or
- whose spouse becomes pregnant while that employee is on parental leave; or
- who is to adopt a child/children while on parental leave;

is eligible, without resuming duty, for a second period of parental leave in accordance with the provisions of this directive.

4.4 Less than the standard Parental Leave taken

4.4.1 Where less than the standard parental leave is taken the unused portion of the period of paid leave cannot be banked or preserved in any way.

4.5 Special Maternity Leave

4.5.1 Where a pregnancy terminates in other than the birth of a living child and the employee has already given notification of intention to proceed on maternity leave, the employee shall notify the chief executive of the changed circumstances as soon as practicable.

4.5.2 Where, after the first twenty weeks, a pregnancy terminates in other than the birth of a living child or where the child dies during the period of paid maternity leave, the employee shall continue to be entitled to 14 weeks paid leave.

4.6 Recognition of Service

4.6.1 **Continuity of Service:** Continuity of employment is not broken by authorised leave, paid or unpaid. However, absences on unpaid leave do not count as service except as provided under the applicable industrial instrument or directive (e.g. Ministerial Directive: *“Leave without Salary Credited as Service”*).

4.6.2 **Paid Leave Counted as Service:** Periods of paid leave during parental leave count as service for all purposes.

- 4.6.3 For employees with less than 12 months qualifying service, the first 12 weeks of parental leave (even though it is without pay) counts as service for all purposes except as time served for probation. (This does not extend the time period allowed for probation in the relevant industrial instruments).

4.7 Extension of Paid Parental Leave on a Half-Pay Basis

- 4.7.1 An employee may request and an employer may agree to extend the amount of paid maternity, adoption or spousal leave for which the employee qualifies by the employee taking the leave on half-pay i.e.

- 14 weeks paid maternity and adoption leave may be extended to 28 weeks at half-pay
- 1 week paid spousal leave may be extended to 2 weeks at half-pay

- 4.7.2 An employee cannot take pre natal/pre-adoption leave on half-pay.

- 4.7.3 The employee may choose to combine a period of full and half-pay but this option should be made before the commencement of the parental leave. The employer would not be expected to agree to any change in leave payments once leave has commenced unless the employee offers a substantial reason for the change.

- 4.7.4 The minimum period of parental leave on half-pay is two calendar weeks (irrespective of the rate of pay for the period). The leave may be taken in conjunction with long service leave and recreation leave, including at half-pay in accordance with the relevant Ministerial Directives.

- 4.7.5 Granting of the parental leave on a half-pay basis is subject to departmental convenience however requests for leave should not be unreasonably refused.

- 4.7.6 *Leave Accrual:* The period of the leave will be recognised as normal full time or part time service applying to the employee at the time of taking the leave, i.e. accrual of sick leave, recreation and long service leave will remain at the normal entitlement for the period of half-pay parental leave for employees working full time and at the relevant proportional rate for employees working part-time.

- 4.7.7 *Leave Debit:* Periods of half-pay parental leave will be debited on a full-time equivalent basis e.g. half-pay maternity or adoption leave for a period of 28 weeks will attract a debit of 14 weeks from full pay credits; half-pay spousal leave for a period of 2 weeks will attract a debit of 1 week from full pay credits.

- 4.7.8 *Locality Allowance:* For those employees with an entitlement under an industrial instrument, this allowance will be paid on a proportionate basis for the period of the leave i.e. half the normal entitlement.

- 4.7.9 *Public Holidays falling Within a Period of Parental Leave Taken at Half-Pay:* Public holidays falling within periods of half-pay are paid for at the half-pay rate. Where a public holiday falls either at the beginning or at the end of a period of half paid leave, and is immediately preceded/followed by a period of unpaid leave, the public holiday shall be paid at the half-pay rate.

4.8 Promotion

- 4.8.1 An employee on paid or unpaid parental leave continues to maintain their rights to promotion as if they were on duty. An employee can apply for and succeed in being promoted and transferred as well as lodging appeals and grievances.

- 4.8.2 An employee cannot be denied promotion because they are unavailable to take up duty before the completion of the paid or unpaid parental leave.

4.9 Professional Development

- 4.9.1 An employee on parental leave may be offered opportunities for professional development to keep their skills current. The employee's participation in this training or development is voluntary.

4.10 Higher Duties Allowance While on Paid Parental Leave

- 4.10.1 A public service officer (as defined in section 8 of the *Public Service Act 1996*) on parental leave who, before taking the leave had been directed to assume higher duties and responsibilities for the immediately preceding 12 months, is to continue to receive the higher duties amount while on paid parental leave. Such employees taking half-pay leave options are not to be disadvantaged by this provision.

4.11 Recall to Duty

- 4.11.1 Subject to agreement between the employee and the employer, or provisions of any industrial instrument/legislation, the employee may be temporarily recalled to duty. This recall does not break or extend the period of parental leave. Instead the employee may be paid as a casual under a mutually exclusive second (casual) contract.
- 4.11.2 An employee on unpaid parental leave continues to receive entitlements associated with this leave as well as entitlements due when working as a casual employee whilst on unpaid parental leave. These two contracts of employment are mutually exclusive and the entitlements accrued under the second (casual) contract cannot be transferred to the first contract of employment. This clause is not intended to encourage employees to undertake casual employment whilst on parental leave, however makes provision should the situation arise.
- 4.11.3 Subject to the provisions of any industrial instrument/legislation, a recall to duty while on paid or unpaid leave is voluntary on the part of the employee. An employee who declines the offer of a recall to duty under these circumstances is not to be discriminated against as a result of that decision.

4.12 Access to Flexible Work Practices

- 4.12.1 On return to work from parental leave, flexible work practices (eg part-time employment) may be utilised in accordance with the *Family Leave (Queensland Public Sector) Award – State 2004* where suitable to both the employer and employee.
- 4.12.2 A copy of the Flexible Work Practices - Framework and Options Kit (as part of the Attraction and Retention Series) is available on the Department of Industrial Relations website at <http://www.psier.qld.gov.au/publications/index.html>.

4.13 Grievance Procedure

- 4.13.1 The agency's grievance procedure is to be used for any grievance related to the application of these conditions and entitlements.