Flexible Time Off (FTO) for Exempt (Salaried) Employees

FAQ

1. Why are we making this change?

Our success has always been – and will continue to be – a direct result of our people. We must engage, hire and retain top talent to continue to be successful. Our business transformation requires an extremely motivated and engaged workforce and we need to provide policies that energize employees rather than prohibit them. We need to focus on the value people add, the results they provide and the overall impact they have on our business results.

2. What is the new policy?

Effective January 1, 2017 (or when you actively return to work if you are on a leave of absence on January 1, 2017), regular full-time, non-union exempt employees will no longer have a set minimum or maximum amount of time that they can take off in a given calendar year. Employees can utilize the time for their individual needs, including for vacation, personal days, floating holidays, family care, non-extended illness and bereavement. The policy will provide the flexibility for employees to take the time they need, as long as they are delivering results. Those performance expectations include providing high-quality content and value for our readers and advertisers, meeting business needs and contributing to the overall success of our company.

The time off policies described in this communication are applicable to the non-union employees of the company. Time off for employees covered by collective bargaining agreements is addressed in those agreements, and is different from what is described in this communication.

3. Is there a set minimum or maximum under the policy?

No. In an effort to build a workplace where people are treated as responsible, trustworthy employees who are measured by their performance, there is no set minimum or maximum amount of time that can be taken in a given year (however, employees may not take more than ten consecutive work days off under this policy without getting pre-approval from the department head). No Company employee is authorized to make any representations or commitments to an employee that is contrary to this policy.

NOTE: Although the policy allows generally for unlimited time off, please see question #13 for how this policy applies to Leave of Absences.

4. How do I request FTO?

The process itself is not changing. You must seek your supervisor’s approval and should continue to request time off through the current online request process via Workday. Employees must continue to notify those who need to know about the timing and duration of any time off.
5. **How far in advance do I need to request FTO with my manager?**

Employees should give their manager as much notice in advance as possible, just as they do today, except in the case of an unexpected illness (in which case employees should still provide their supervisor with as much notice as possible).

6. **What if I have an emergency or a family situation that requires my absence?**

We understand that life cannot always be planned in advance. Employees should discuss any situation that requires their absence directly with their manager.

7. **Can my manager reject my request for time off?**

Managers will grant approval for absences on a business need basis, will not unreasonably deny any requests, and will provide you with a reason if they do have to deny your request. Managers will also grant time off consistent with any obligations under applicable federal, state, or local law (such as sick time entitlements, where applicable). Obtaining manager approval for time off will continue to be done on Workday as it is today. Time off MUST be tracked through the time off portal on Workday.

8. **Will I be denied a FTO request if I’m not meeting my goals?**

Being on a performance improvement plan or other corrective action does not, in of itself, prevent you from taking time off. You must, however, have your supervisor’s approval and be able to satisfy all of your professional obligations in a timely manner. If your time off does not allow you to satisfy those professional obligations in a timely manner, you may be subject to corrective action up to and including termination of your employment.

9. **Can I be disciplined for taking too much time off?**

As part of our commitment to our employees, we are providing you trust and respect to determine, in conjunction with your manager, what is best for your individual needs while balancing the needs for the overall company. As long as you continue to deliver on your individual performance expectations, you should take the time you need to stay motivated and engaged.

This policy doesn’t allow employees to simply “not show up” without first contacting their supervisor, except in the case of an unexpected illness (in which case employees should still provide their supervisor with as much notice as possible). Simply put, the success of this policy will come from the communication that takes place between employees, team members and their supervisors. Chronic tardiness, patterns of unapproved absences or failure to meet performance expectations are still unacceptable, and will still be managed as a performance issue.

10. **Can I be disciplined for not taking enough time off?**

As part of our commitment to our employees, we are providing you trust and respect to determine what is best for your individual needs and for the overall company. Studies show that when employees do not take the occasional time they need to renew and recharge, their work productivity can significantly diminish. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the individual employees and their supervisors to determine that they are taking the appropriate and necessary time off.
11. As a manager, what is expected of me with regard to this policy?

The success of this policy depends upon our ability as leaders to lead people. In other words, it requires a great deal of trust, responsibility, accountability and communication. Here are some items for managers to consider as the policy is rolled out:

- Managers will need to set and manage clear expectations for themselves and their employees.
- Managers will have to plan ahead for projects that may be impacted by team members taking time off.
- Managers may need to have tough conversations and let their employees know when they can’t take time off because it will impede on their teams’ efforts and ability to complete tasks at hand (but while remaining sufficiently flexible to allow time off to meet the intentions of the Company under this policy, and as permitted under state and local sick time ordinances, such as preventive care, care, diagnosis, or treatment of an existing health condition of either the employee or the employee’s eligible family member).
- Managers should monitor their employee’s time off and, when appropriate, encourage employees to take time off.
- Managers will have to monitor performance outcomes on a regular basis to ensure their teams are performing in line with business expectations.

12. As an employee, what’s expected of me with regards to this policy?

The success of this policy requires a great deal of trust, responsibility, accountability and communication. Here are some items for you as an employee to consider when requesting time off:

- You will need to understand your supervisor’s expectations for your performance.
- You may not be allowed to take time off when there are key deadlines or projects due for which your work is critical, with the exception of time off to attend to qualified sick time needs.
- Your supervisor may not be able to accommodate every request for time off or may ask you to check in from time-to-time while you are on time off (though supervisors should try to limit such check-ins).
- You are accountable for managing your own performance. Therefore, it’s your responsibility to have an open discussion with your supervisor about your time off and its impact on your performance.

13. If I leave the company will I be paid out unused FTO?

Since there are no accrued “paid time off” days, there is consequently nothing to pay out upon your leaving the company. If you work in California, then any remaining accrued but unused vacation time earned or accrued under any former Tribune Publishing policy as of implementation or transition to the unlimited policy will be frozen and paid out upon termination of employment and no future hours will accrue. California employees will receive and be asked to acknowledge a personalized letter confirming their balance, which will also continue to be displayed in Workday.
14. Can FTO be used for leaves of absence or to supplement Short Term Disability (STD) pay?

FTO is intended for regular time off and not for extended absences. If you are absent from work for sickness or injury for a period of time greater than ten (10) consecutive working days, then you should work with HR to apply for an appropriate leave of absence (which, depending on the circumstances, may also involve applying for wage replacement coverage under applicable state programs, STD coverage, and/or Long-Term Disability (LTD) coverage).

For California employees, you have the choice to use your remaining accrued but unused vacation time to supplement pay for any type of leave of absence. You must make this election at the start of your leave and the election remains in effect for the entire leave or until you no longer have any accrued but unused vacation. In other words, you are not permitted to supplement only a portion of your leave and not another portion. If you elect to supplement, you will elect to use as much time as necessary to pay you at 100% of your current pay rate, until you have exhausted your accrued but unused vacation. This benefit only applies to STD coverage NOT LTD coverage.

15. Will Tribune Publishing still have an official holiday calendar?

Yes, we will continue to have a universal holiday calendar. Our employees across the country deliver exceptional products to customers every day of the year, including holidays, and critical personnel will continue to be compensated for holiday work accordingly. Employees are encouraged to use the FTO policy to observe additional floating holidays at their discretion.

The holiday dates are included in the Payroll Calendar and are as follows:
   January 2: New Year’s Day Observation
   January 16: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
   February 18: President’s Day
   May 27: Memorial Day
   July 4: Independence Day
   September 2: Labor Day
   November 28: Thanksgiving Day
   November 24: Day after Thanksgiving
   December 25: Christmas Day

Paid holidays for union employees are covered by their collective bargaining agreements and may be different from those given to non-union employees.