Leave of Absence

What to Expect

How to Apply for Leave

If you are out of work for more than seven consecutive calendar days or have an upcoming planned disability absence, such as childbirth or surgery, please follow these steps to request your leave of absence:

1. Contact your supervisor to report your absence.
2. Print the Leave of Absence Instructions located on the Life & Disability page at www.tribpubwellbeing.com, sign and date the Authorization to Release Information section, and leave with your physician or medical care provider at your next visit. Lincoln Financial requires your physician to provide information about your medical condition. If this information cannot be obtained, disability benefits may be delayed.
3. Report your claim/leave via www.myLincolnPortal.com (Company Code: TRIBPUB) or by calling 1-855-832-9585. Intake Specialists are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
4. Keep a record of your claim/leave number. Reporting your claim/leave online provides the added convenience of printing a report which includes a summary of your claim/leave details.
5. Check the status of your claim/leave online at www.myLincolnPortal.com or by calling your Disability Case Manager at 1-888-440-6118 or FMLA Leave Specialist at 1-877-353-7188, Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. ET.
6. Lincoln Financial will send letters acknowledging your disability/leave request. Subsequent letters will be sent notifying you if your request has been approved/denied.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How long does it typically take for a decision to be made on a claim?
   Typically, Lincoln Financial's initial determinations are made within 10 business days from when the claim is reported, provided they have obtained all medical information. Depending on how timely they receive your medical information and the complexity of your claim, this timeframe may be extended.

2. How does Lincoln Financial handle Early Submission Claims, which are claims submitted prior to a date of disability?
   An early submitted claim will be assigned to a disability case manager two days prior to the date of disability. A disability case manager will not process a claim prior to the date of disability. Once the date of disability has occurred, the case manager will begin the claims process.

3. What type of medical information will be requested from treating provider(s)?
   Case managers will collect a completed Disability Form as well as copies of your medical records, office visit notes, treatment plan and test results (if applicable). Once the request for medical information has been sent you will be mailed a letter from your disability case manager notifying you of their request. Lack of sufficient medical documentation may result in interruption of your pay and/or a denial of STD benefits.

4. How often does my case manager follow up when information has been requested from my treating provider(s)?
   After the initial request, if the information has not been received, the disability case manager will follow up with you and your treating provider(s) on an ongoing basis. If the information is not received within 45 days, your claim will be denied for failure to provide proof of disability. We ask that you follow up with your physician(s) to ensure all the requested information is sent. The maximum time frame to allow for this information to be submitted is 45 days.
5. **How will I know that my claim is approved?**
   Lincoln Financial will mail you a letter notifying you of your claim approval. You may also check the status of your claim anytime by contacting your case manager. If you need to be out of work longer than the approved through date, additional medical information will be required to support any extension of the disability claim.

6. **What happens if my claim is denied?**
   If your claim is denied, Lincoln Financial will mail a letter explaining the denial and instructing how to appeal this decision.

7. **How is disability pay calculated?**
   Only approved disabilities are eligible for pay. Employees do not receive pay while an STD claim is pending approval. Approved disability claims are paid as follows:

   **Non-Exempt** (hourly):
   - Week 1* – Paid using flexible paid time off – if annual accrual is exhausted, it is unpaid.
   - Weeks 2 – 5 – 100% of pay
   - Weeks 6 – 26 - 50/60/80% of Pay

   **Exempt** (Salary):
   - Week 1* – Paid using Flexible Time Off (FTO)
   - Weeks 2 – 5 – 100% of Pay
   - Weeks 6 – 26 - 50/60/80% of Pay

   Company holiday pay is not paid during STD leave, including the waiting week for both non-exempt and exempt employees.

   **For California:** State disability pay is used to offset company-paid disability. For example, if you receive a California state disability benefit of 60% of pay and are supposed to receive 100% STD pay, you would receive approximately 60% from the state and 40% from the company. If you receive a California state disability benefit of 60% of pay, and are enrolled in the 60% STD Plan, you would receive approximately 60% of your disability pay from the state and 0% from the company. If you are enrolled in the 80% STD Plan, you would receive approximately 60% of pay from the state and 20% from the company. Lincoln Financial will estimate the offset until they receive the awards letter.

   It is the California employee’s responsibility to apply and coordinate directly with the state.

   **For New York and New Jersey:** State disability pay is used to offset company-paid disability. Lincoln Financial is our insurance carrier for the New York and New Jersey state disability plans. Your company disability benefit will be offset by what you are eligible to receive from the state. If approved for disability, Lincoln Financial will pay you directly for the state disability pay.

   *New Jersey Waiting Week – If an employee is disabled for more than three weeks, New Jersey state disability pays for waiting week. Therefore, New Jersey employees will receive the waiting week FTO offset by New Jersey state disability.

8. **When can I expect to be paid after my disability is approved?**
   Disability pay follows the same pay period as regular pay. Claims that are approved or extended through the Friday before pay day will be paid on the upcoming paycheck.
9. How is my time off applied while on a leave of absence?

**Short-Term Disability Waiting Week**
For the first 7 consecutive days of your short-term disability (five business days), the Corporate Benefits Team will apply the following:

- **For Non-Exempt Employees** – Flexible paid time off. Only flexible paid time off up to your annual accrual may be used. If your annual accrual is exhausted, waiting week is unpaid. Do not apply flexible paid time off in Kronos. STD pay will begin on the 8th consecutive day of your leave.

- **For Exempt Employees** – FTO

**Unpaid Leaves of Absence (FMLA and Personal Leaves)**
Company holiday pay is not paid during leaves of absence, for both exempt and non-exempt employees.

**Non-Exempt Employees:**
FMLA leave is unpaid. The Corporate Benefits Team will supplement your unpaid FMLA with any accrued available flexible paid time off:

- If you request bonding leave because of a birth, adoption or foster care placement of a child, any accrued available flexible paid time off will be substituted for unpaid family medical leave and run concurrently with your FMLA leave. If you report your return to work to Lincoln Financial after your disability is ended, your leave of absence would end. Any use of FTO after your return to work would be at the discretion of your manager/department head. It would be the responsibility of you or your manager to apply any additional FTO to your Workday calendar for this time.
- If you request leave because of your own serious health condition, or to care for a covered relation with a serious health condition, any accrued available flexible paid time off will supplement unpaid family medical leave and run concurrently with your FMLA.
- **California employees** will be required to exhaust up to two weeks of accrued available flexible paid time off to supplement unpaid FMLA regardless if they apply for Paid Family Leave (PFL) through the state. It is the employee’s responsibility to apply and coordinate directly with the state for Paid Family Leave.
- **New Jersey employees** may request to use accrued available flexible time off. Please send request to benefits@tribpub.com. It is the employee’s responsibility to apply and coordinate directly with the state for Paid Family Leave.
- **New York employees** may request to use accrued available flexible time off to receive difference between full pay and New York PFL. Please send request to benefits@tribpub.com. Lincoln Financial administers the New York PFL.
- If you request a personal leave of absence accrued available flexible paid time off will be exhausted to supplement your unpaid personal leave.
- Non-exempt employees have the option to save up to five accrued available flexible paid time off with advance written notice to benefits@tribpub.com.

**Exempt Employees:**
If approved for FMLA, the Corporate Benefits Team will supplement your unpaid FMLA with FTO for up to five weeks every 12 months.

- If you request bonding FMLA because of a birth, adoption or foster care placement of a child AFTER receiving disability pay, the bonding period is unpaid because you have exhausted the
five weeks of paid FMLA during the paid STD period. FMLA runs concurrently with STD; therefore, the first five weeks of STD is counted towards your five weeks of FTO eligibility.

- If you report your return to work to Lincoln Financial after your disability is ended, your leave of absence would end. It would be at the discretion of your manager/department head if additional FTO would be allowed in accordance with the FTO policy. It would be the responsibility of you or your manager to apply any additional FTO to your Workday calendar for this time.

- If you request bonding FMLA because of a birth, adoption or foster care placement of a child as the non-birth parent, you are eligible for up to five weeks of FTO while on FMLA per every 12 months.

- If you request a leave because of your own serious health condition, or to care for a covered family member (i.e. sick parent/spouse/child), up to five weeks of FTO will supplement your family medical leave and run concurrently with your FMLA.

- **California employees:** Paid Family Leave (PFL) is used to offset FTO during FMLA. This is for FTO eligibility with FMLA not related to bonding leave after receiving STD. FTO will be offset by what the employee is eligible to receive from the state for PFL. **It is the employee’s responsibility to apply and coordinate directly with the state for PFL.**

- **New Jersey employees:** Paid Family Leave (PFL) is used to offset FTO during FMLA. This is for FTO eligibility with FMLA not related to bonding leave after receiving STD. FTO will be offset by what the employee is eligible to receive from the state for PFL. **It is the employee’s responsibility to apply and coordinate directly with the state for PFL.**

- **New York employees:** Paid Family Leave (PFL) is used to offset FTO during FMLA. This is for FTO eligibility with FMLA not related to bonding leave after receiving STD. Lincoln Financial administers New York PFL for the company. If approved for PFL and FMLA, the company will pay the difference between the New York PFL and your base salary for up to five weeks.

- If you request a personal leave of absence, your personal leave is unpaid and cannot be supplemented with FTO. **California employees:** You may use your Vacation Accrual Balance (VAB) to be used with a personal leave of absence.

10. **For non-exempt employees, does flexible paid time off accrue while I am on a leave of absence?**

   Employees **do not** accrue flexible paid time off during leaves of absence or other periods of inactive service, unless such accrual is required by applicable law.

11. **For exempt employees, will I be paid up to five weeks of FTO for every FMLA leave I take?**

   Your eligibility for up to five weeks of FTO while on FMLA is a 12 month rolling period measured backward from the day you use any FMLA. FMLA runs concurrently with STD; therefore, the first five weeks of STD is counted towards your five weeks of FTO eligibility.

12. **How are my benefits deducted while on a leave of absence?**

   Please review the enclosed Benefit Continuation Chart to see which benefits continue while on each type of leave. Benefits will be deducted as follows:

   - **Short-Term Disability** - Benefits are deducted from STD pay. If STD claim is pending, benefits will be held in arrears and taken as double deductions upon approval of claim. Denied STD claims may be direct-billed and non-payment can result in cancellation of benefits and COBRA would be offered.

   - **FMLA** - IfFML is paid, benefit deductions are deducted from FTO or flexible paid time off. **If FMLA is unpaid,** benefits are held in arrears and taken as double deductions upon your return until arrears are paid.
• **Personal Leave** – You will be direct-billed for the cost of benefits. Non-payment can result in cancellation of benefits and COBRA would be offered. If you return to work and still have an arrears balance, this will be taken as double deductions until paid.

• **Workers’ Compensation** – You will be direct-billed for the cost of benefits. Non-payment can result in cancellation of benefits and COBRA would be offered. If you return to work and still have an arrears balance, this will be taken as double deductions until paid.

• **Long-Term Disability** – You will be direct-billed for the cost of benefits. Non-payment can result in cancellation of benefits and COBRA would be offered. If you return to work and still have an arrears balance, this will be taken as double deductions until paid.

13. **How do I report my return to work (RTW)?**
   
   You may return to work the day after your approved leave end date. Once you’ve been cleared to returned to work by your physician, you must report your “Return to Work” date within 7 days by calling Lincoln Financial’s **Return to Work Hotline** at 855-832-9585, option 4. The Corporate Benefits team will be notified of your RTW and return you from leave in WorkDay to reinstate regular pay. It is important that you report your RTW to avoid any delays with your regular pay. Please remain in open communication with your supervisor/HR manager regarding when you are expecting to return to work. When you’ve returned, please report to your supervisor/HR manager.

14. **How do I report Intermittent FMLA?**

   When taking intermittent FMLA, please notify your supervisor and contact Lincoln Financial. Lincoln Financial will mail you a detailed instruction sheet once your Intermittent FMLA is approved. Please report the working hours you are taking for FMLA. Do not include your lunch break. The Benefits Team will handle time entry for Intermittent FMLA on your behalf in WorkDay. Do not enter Intermittent FMLA in KRONOS.

The purpose of this summary is to provide highlights of Your Company Benefits plan. Eligibility and benefit payment determinations will be governed by the plan documents. In the event of a discrepancy between the information provided in this material and the plan documents, the plan documents will govern. The Company reserves the right to change, amend or terminate the benefit plans at any time for any reason. Your eligibility for benefits does not guarantee continued employment at the company or any of its entities. Benefits for union-represented employees are subject to collective bargaining and may differ from the benefit plans described above. Also, premiums for union-represented employees who participate in one or more of these plans may be different. Local Human Resources or Tribune Publishing Benefits Service Center representatives can answer any questions about benefits for union-represented employees.