

**Cottonwood, Inc.  
Policies and Procedures**

**SECTION:** Personnel

**POLICY NO:** 03-022

**SUBJECT:** Leaves of Absence Without Pay

**PAGE(S):** 1 of 2

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** April 1986

**Policy:**

It is the policy of Cottonwood, Inc. to grant leaves of absence without pay under certain circumstances in order to enhance job security and protect rights accruing from seniority and continuous service.

**Procedures:**

1. The following leaves of absence may be granted to employees:

A. Temporary Disability/Health Issues: An employee who is granted a leave of absence because of temporary health issues/disability must use accumulated sick and vacation time before taking leave without pay. A signed release from the employee's physician will be required prior to the employee's return to work. See also Policy 03-043, Family and Medical Leave Act

B. Maternity/Paternity Leave: An employee not eligible for FMLA may be granted up to a total of six weeks of paid/unpaid leave. An employee must use all paid leave before using unpaid leave. See also Policy #03-043, Family and Medical Leave Act

C. Educational Leave: A leave of absence for the purpose of attending school will generally not be granted. Any exception to the usual policy must be approved by the CEO and will be considered only if deemed to be in the best interest of Cottonwood, Inc.

D. Military Leave - In the event that an emergency military leave is prolonged, Cottonwood, Inc. will guarantee the reinstatement of the employee to their original job or position of like status and pay without loss of service credits, seniority or other benefits. This leave of absence without pay may last as long as five years or as long as the emergency situation exists.

Returning after Military Leave:

Service of 1 to 30 days; An application for reemployment must be submitted to Cottonwood, Inc. on the next regularly scheduled work period that begins on the next calendar day following completion of service, safe travel back from military duty, and an 8 – hour rest period.

Service of 31 to 180 days; an application for reemployment to Cottonwood, Inc. must be submitted on the next business day after 14 days after completion of duty.

Service of 181 or more days; an application for reemployment to Cottonwood, Inc. must be submitted on the next business day after 90 days after completion of duty.

Cottonwood, Inc. will require documentation of a timely application for reemployment, and the person's separation from service was other than disqualifying under 38 U.S.C. Section 4304.

E. Emergency Leave -"Other" - Leave without pay may be granted for hardship not referenced in the above categories at the discretion of the department director.

2. In all cases, accumulated vacation time must be used before a leave without pay can be approved.

3. Requests for a leave of absence or any extension of leave must be submitted to your supervisor and approved by the department director or CEO, as far in advance as possible. It is the employees responsibility to inform his/her supervisor of any change in expected return date. If an employee does not return to work on the agreed upon date and time, they will be considered voluntarily resigned unless it is determined they were unable to communicate a change of plan to their supervisor or department director. For those employees who have worked for Cottonwood, Inc. 12 consecutive months or more, requests for extended leave for foreign travel and/or study must be made a minimum of three months in advance if the request will exceed the amount of vacation benefit available. In such cases, the total leave may not exceed 30 calendars days.

4. Cottonwood, Inc. does not guarantee except for family medical, qualified domestic leave, and military leave that it will be able to keep an employment position available for an individual who has taken a leave of absence.

In the case of family medical, qualifying domestic leave, and military leave, Cottonwood, Inc. will guarantee the reinstatement of the employee to the original job or a position of like status and pay, without loss of service, credits, or seniority provided the employee is able to perform the essential job functions.

5. If an employee does not return at the conclusion of the leave of absence, the employee will be considered as having resigned, and the effective date will be the last day worked.

6. There are a number of absences from work which are not excused and obviously would not be paid. Such unexcused absences would be those involving employees absent without an approved reason or those who are absent without receiving advance approval from their supervisor. An unexcused absence is grounds for disciplinary action including termination.

7. Employees will be informed, upon employment, of the normal working hours for a specific position. If for any reason an employee will be late, the immediate supervisor must be notified as soon as possible. It will be the employee's responsibility to report to work on time and be prompt in returning from rest periods and meal breaks. Excessive tardiness or failure to notify the supervisor is justification for termination. (Refer to Employee Discipline/Termination, Policy No. 03-024.)

8. For those employees who have worked for Cottonwood, Inc. 12 months (52 weeks) or more, and have worked a total of 1250 hours or more during the last twelve months, please refer to Policy #03-043 for further benefits under the Family & Medical Leave Act.

9. Vacation leave and sick leave benefits do not continue to accrue during extended periods of unpaid leave (in excess of 30 calendar days) except for FMLA leave.