

**University of South Carolina
2008-2009 Mandatory Furlough
Frequently Asked Questions**

Updated December 18, 2008 — this document will be revised as new information is available.

What is a mandatory furlough?

A furlough is a leave of absence without pay that is enacted as a cost savings measure. There are two types of furloughs — voluntary and mandatory. When a mandatory furlough is declared, all employees paid from all funding sources in a particular area or department must take time off without pay for the period of time designated by the furlough.

Why would USC implement a furlough on any or all of its campuses?

This is one of the cost saving initiatives that many areas may need to use to meet budget limitations.

Who is required to participate in a mandatory furlough?

All USC employees in the unit specified by the furlough must participate in a mandatory furlough regardless of classification or funding source. That includes all administrators, faculty members, employees working in classified and unclassified positions, employees working in research grant, time-limited and other temporary or intermittent positions and all new hires in the affected area.

How many days do I have to take off as furlough days ?

In the areas implementing a mandatory furlough, all employees must take off the designated number of work days without pay prior to June 13, 2009. After receiving their supervisors' approval, employees may begin taking furlough days starting January 26, 2009.

Will I be paid for these days?

No. A mandatory furlough is leave without pay.

Can I take annual leave or sick leave on a furlough day?

No. A furlough is leave without pay.

Where do I go to make the selection of the plan?

<http://vip.sc.edu>

Is there a deadline for which I have to make a selection?

Yes, by 5 p.m. on February 2, 2009.

Once I have selected a plan (or defaulted to a plan) may I change my selection?

No. Your selection of a plan cannot be changed.

What happens if I do not make a selection by February 2, 2009?

You will default to the Weekly Plan.

When do I take time off for the furlough?

All employees must work with their supervisors to identify the appropriate number of work days for his/her unit between January 26 and June 13, 2009, to schedule as required furlough leave without pay. Hourly employees may schedule furlough time in partial-day or full-day increments. Supervisors may approve increments as appropriate to their departmental needs.

How will my paycheck be affected?

If the Weekly Plan is chosen, exempt, non-exempt or hourly employees will have each of the pay periods from February 15 – June 30, 2009, reduced by a specified amount to account for the furlough time without pay. Thus, there will be a LWOP reduction in pay from each of these 10 pay checks to account for the mandatory days of leave without pay for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2009.

What happens to my benefits?

Furlough leave without pay will not affect state benefits such as health insurance and retirement.

Employees will continue to accumulate annual leave, sick leave, and retirement benefits at their same rate.

An employee's review date, continuous state service, state hire date and leave accrual date will not be affected by any period of approved furlough.

The University of South Carolina will be responsible for making both the employer and employee contributions for those benefits that require employer and employee contributions if coverage would otherwise be interrupted during the furlough. For example: health insurance and state retirement require a monthly employee AND employer contribution. USC will pay both of these contributions for the days of furlough leave without pay to prevent interruption of coverage. Since USC will cover both contributions, the employee's coverage is not affected. USC will automatically make the

retirement contributions for the furlough hours or days. If the furlough hours or days result in an employee not being in pay status one half of the month, USC will make the employee's health contribution.

The employee remains responsible for making contributions that require only employee contributions.

The employee is responsible for all types of miscellaneous deductions/premiums, i.e. credit union and miscellaneous insurance companies.

How will the furlough affect an employee's 12 high quarters for retirement?

The furlough will not affect the 12 highest quarters. The contributions based on the budgeted salary will be reported during the furlough days and not what was actually paid to the employee.

Can I take more than the mandatory days to contribute more to the budget impact?

Yes, an employee may take more than the required days off without pay through a voluntary furlough. The employee would need to request permission from his/her supervisor in advance of taking additional days off without pay. The supervisor will need to contact the Department of Human Resources on the Sumter campus to ensure proper procedures are followed for the voluntary furlough.

Do I still participate if I am a temporary grant employee?

Yes, mandatory furlough applies to all employees, regardless of the source of funds, including but not limited to temporary grant employees.

I would prefer to have my entire salary reduction occur earlier in 2009. Is it possible to elect when to have payroll reductions, or must the reduction schedule be the same for all employees?

Yes. You can choose the Flexible Plan and take all your mandatory furlough days or hours earlier in the fiscal year.

What if I am a part-time employee?

The amount of time a part-time employee must take off for the mandatory furlough will be pro rated based on the employee's full-time equivalency (FTE). As an example, a half-time employee must take five days furlough leave (0.5 FTE times 10 days of mandatory leave without pay equals five days that must be taken off without pay).

How do I submit my leave?

All employees will use ITAMS (Internet Time and Attendance System) to document furlough days off. A separate code will be provided so that the mandatory furlough days are appropriately tracked within each respective department. Supervisors will be responsible for tracking their employees' furlough leave.

Does my supervisor have to approve when I am taking off?

Yes. Your immediate supervisor must pre-approve the requested furlough period.

How many consecutive days can I take off for furlough leave without pay?

You may take up to five consecutive days off. Your supervisor's pre-approval is required.

Can I take off partial days or does it have to be in full-day increments?

Yes, employees may take the required days off in partial-day increments. The supervisor of the area must pre-approve the time off.

What if I am a new hire after the program is in effect?

New employees hired anytime during the 2008-2009 FY will be required to participate in the program on a prorated basis. Supervisors should contact Payroll for guidance if needed.

What if a holiday occurs during the period of approved furlough and it is a scheduled workday?

During fiscal year 2008-2009, employees are expected to observe all paid holidays and are allowed to take accumulated annual and sick leave and other paid leave as necessary. However, employees are still required to take 10 days of furlough leave without pay during the fiscal year 2008-2009 and may not use other available leave to avoid taking required furlough leave without pay.

What if I am on FMLA during this furlough period?

You will still be expected to take 10 days of furlough leave without pay.

Do I have grievance rights?

The placement of an employee on mandatory furlough does not constitute grounds for a grievance or appeal under the State Employee Grievance Act.

Am I eligible for unemployment during my days off?

The University cannot make a determination as to whether an employee is eligible for unemployment compensation. Please refer to the Employment Security Commission for answers to your specific situation. Its website is located at <http://www.sces.org/index.htm>, with online services available from 7 a.m. – 6 p.m., Monday-Friday.

Who do I contact if I have additional questions?

To ensure that your questions are answered in a timely manner, please forward your questions to kellyb@maibox.sc.edu. You also may contact the Payroll Office at 803-777-4227.