

## Personnel Policy for Disaster Service Leave –

### Second and Final Reading (7.19.18) – no changes made since First reading

#### **Policy Summary:**

1. *Recognizes that IMAT and other related service is different from the provisions of the FRCOG Outside Employment policy and is service to country.*
2. *Leave requires pre-approval.*
3. *Leave limited to 20 days per fiscal year and a single deployment cannot exceed 10 work days. To date, staff have not been deployed more than once in a year or for more than 10 continuous work days.*
4. *Staff can use paid or unpaid leave or a combination of both.*
  - a. *Staff can choose to be paid and use benefit time (but must retain a balance of vacation, personal or flex so that they can take time off to recover, if needed).*
  - b. *Staff can request unpaid leave. Unlike unpaid leave in the rest of the policy and in recognition of service to country, the FRCOG will continue to cover health insurance premiums and staff will continue to accrue benefit time.*
5. *Employees on leave are not eligible for workers comp and will not be covered by Tort.*

#### **M. Disaster Service Leave**

An employee of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments may request a leave, paid or unpaid or a combination of both, to serve in specialized disaster relief services such as the Northwestern Massachusetts Incident Management Team or other pre-approved disaster response/relief organizations or deployments.

#### Leave Time Request and Annual Maximums

The leave shall be approved at the sole discretion of the employee's supervisor and the Executive Director. Such request shall be made in a timely fashion as soon as the employee is aware of the request for disaster relief services.

Such leave shall be limited to a total of twenty (20) work days per fiscal year and a single deployment should not exceed ten (10) work days. In determining whether to grant such a leave to an employee, the FRCOG will consider the needs of the requesting agency for expertise in a particular area as well as the work needs of the FRCOG. Except in unusual situations, disaster service leave will not be considered for an employee with less than 90 days of continuous employment.

#### Paid Leave

Staff can opt to use their vacation, comp, flex or personal time to cover the absence from the FRCOG. Sick time cannot be used. Staff are required to maintain a minimum level of benefit

time (3 pro rated days) if they choose this option.

### Unpaid Leave

Staff may request disaster service unpaid leave for multi-day deployments. Time for employees to attend trainings or certification classes will not be considered for unpaid leave.

Suspension of benefits will not occur except as required by the Massachusetts State Retirement System or other State or Federal law. Please note that unpaid leave may impact creditable service accumulation with the MSRS. It is up to the employee requesting unpaid leave to understand the impacts of unpaid leave on their retirement benefits.

Recognizing the nature of the service and unlike unpaid leave for other purposes, an employee who is granted unpaid leave pursuant to this section shall not lose any existing insurance or health care coverage and shall only be responsible for the employee portion of insurance coverage. Employees will also continue to accumulate vacation and sick time. Employees are not eligible to receive holiday pay or FRCOG time while on unpaid leave.

This leave is not work-related. Thus, any injuries sustained by the employee while on Disaster Service Leave will not be eligible for Workers Compensation pursuant to Chapter 152 nor the protections available to an employee pursuant to Chapter 258.

In the event an employee fails to return to work on the designated return to work date, the employee may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. Such termination will be considered a voluntary resignation.