



Questions from Epidemic / Pandemic Leave Policy and Procedure

Q: Why does the employee need to keep 20 days annual leave? Is it not their right to be able to access their leave balances where possible?

A: This relates to the requirements to access the Epidemic/Pandemic Special Leave. Employees will be required to utilise their existing personal leave balances as well as any annual leave balance above 20 days prior to being able to access the Epidemic/Pandemic Special Leave. Should an employee need to remain on leave, after using the Epidemic/Pandemic Special Leave they can apply to access their remaining accrued leave, including annual.

Q: If an employee's annual leave is already below 20 days, would they still qualify for the Epidemic/Pandemic Special Leave?

A: Yes. Employees will be able to access Epidemic/Pandemic Special Leave if their annual leave balance is 20 days or lower.

Q: Once an employee has exhausted the Epidemic/Pandemic Special Leave, would they be able to access any remaining annual leave at this point if they previously had to keep it above 20 days? Failing this would they then go to unpaid leave?

A: Yes. Should an employee need to remain on leave they can apply to access their remaining accrued leave, including annual. Should this be insufficient, they may wish to request leave without pay.

Q: Is there a point when Epidemic/Pandemic Special Leave refreshes in the event that this goes on for a long period of time?

A: There is no specific timeframe upon which the leave refreshes within one Epidemic or Pandemic. Important to note is that employees may be able to access up to 10 days of Epidemic/Pandemic Special Leave on more than one occasion, following approval from their manager.

Q: In the event that an employee is travelling to a country not on the list of high risk countries, but that country is added to the list during their visit (or in the event Victoria closes its borders whilst they are interstate), are they eligible for up to 10 days Epidemic/Pandemic Special Leave during isolation?

A: In the case of business travel, the employee may be eligible for up to 10 days.

Employees choosing to travel to or through countries listed on authorised websites as places to avoid, or countries notified by Metro, will be required to undertake self-isolation for the notified term upon their return, as required by Victoria's Chief Health Officer. In these circumstances the employee's absence will be covered by their own accrued leave entitlement or leave without pay. Access to epidemic/pandemic special leave will not be available.

In exceptional circumstances, Metro may consider the provision of the Epidemic/Pandemic Special Leave.



Q: Where employees are self-isolating for 5 days and are unable to work from home, do we require a certificate / evidence of the employee or family member getting tested?

A: An employee should speak to their manager and explain why they need to self-isolate. The employee needs approval to be absent from work but doesn't need to provide evidence to take the time off.

The intent of the early intervention special leave is to provide time for an employee to undergo a medical assessment/testing and to get the results and any related diagnosis.

Metro does need to be provided with the diagnosis, so we know if it is safe for an employee to come back to work.

Employees who have a confirmed case of the infectious disease are required to provide proof by way of a medical certificate.

Q: If a person is 'high risk' and in a role that cannot work from home, should we be requesting they seek their own medical advice in relation to their personal risk and what they should/should not be doing?

A: Yes, the employee should seek medical advice.

Q: Paragraph 6.5, is the intent here to allow staff members to utilise carers leave to look after their kids? Ordinarily carers leave is only when the employee is the primary carer for a child that is sick, not unable to attend school or care.

A: Yes, this is an important clarification. Under normal circumstances, employees must access annual leave or leave without pay when caring for a child that is otherwise well but not attending school or care. Under the pandemic leave policy, employees may access their personal leave in order to care for a child where their school or care centre is closed.

Q: If the employee cannot perform meaningful work from home, but are not in any of the categories mentioned (caring for anyone, needing to self-isolate, etc.), will they will need to take annual leave? Will they have any entitlement to pandemic leave?

A: At this point in time, employees who can't perform work duties and do not fall into the categories mentioned within the scope of the Epidemic/Pandemic Special Leave will need to access an alternative type of leave to cover their absence.

Q: Is the leave required to be taken consecutively?

A: It is expected that any employee absence from work related to the spread of COVID-19 would be in one block and as such, any forms of leave accessed would be required to be taken consecutively.



Q: In a situation where an employee contracts an infectious disease and accesses Pandemic Leave and is subsequently re-infected, can they access the entitlement twice?

A: Yes, employees can access multiple times following an approval from their manager.

Q: If there is a full lock down where all work places close and employees are unable to work from home due to the nature of their role, once they have exhausted all their leave entitlements and they're not infected and thus unable to access pandemic leave, what happens next?

A: Any full lock down of the public transport system is unlikely given that it is a declared essential service. The company will consult with any employees subject to these circumstances.

Q: In MetroMe when employee chooses the pandemic leave option, will MetroMe only allow them to do it if they have met the requirements to access the leave (i.e. they have exhausted all of their personal leave and have an annual leave of less than 20 days)?

A: No. Managers will be required to monitor employee leave balances and ensure people are eligible to access pandemic leave as per the policy.

Q: The policy is effective from 24 March 2020. Were we going to consider applying the policy to any employees affected prior to that date?

A: Metro does not intend on retrospectively applying the policy but is open to discussions with employees impacted before this date, should they require additional support.