

# Catastrophic Leave

## Current Practices

The State of Maine has historically supported the establishment of catastrophic leave banks on behalf of employees in situations where an employee or immediate family member suffers a catastrophic accident, illness or comparable life-threatening occurrence that prevents the employee from returning to work for an extended period of time.

Employees shall not be precluded from consideration for a catastrophic leave bank if they receive any income protection.

Agencies will continue to review and approve leave requests on a case-by-case basis. The agency must have a personal services line to draw money from.

The State supports the establishment of catastrophic leave banks in accordance with the following procedures:

## Procedures

1. An employee's supervisor, manager or co-worker may request that a catastrophic leave bank be established to benefit the employee by submitting a written request to the appropriate department's Human Resources unit. It is recommended that such requests be submitted electronically through the State's e-mail system. Permission from the employee and medical documentation may be required.
2. The State supports the establishment of a catastrophic leave bank, on a case-by-case basis, when an employee or immediate family member (as defined in the Bereavement Leave Article of the applicable collective bargaining agreement) suffers a catastrophic accident, illness or comparable life-threatening occurrence. The catastrophic occurrence shall be of such serious detriment that it prevents the employee from returning to work for an extended period of time due to his/her health condition or, in the case of an immediate family member, requires the employee's presence as a primary caregiver.
3. Leave must be for a stated period of time and be reviewed periodically.
4. Upon establishment of a catastrophic leave bank, the department's Human Resources will send an e-mail to agency employees notifying them that a catastrophic leave bank has been established to benefit a co-worker. The e-mail will identify the recipient by name, as well as the recipient's job title and work location. The e-mail will not share any information concerning the recipient's medical condition.

## **Catastrophic Leave**

5. Employees may donate vacation, personal or comp time to the catastrophic leave bank. Donations shall be made in four hour increments (4, 8, 12, 16...).
6. An employee who is to be the recipient of time donated to a catastrophic leave bank must use all of his/her accrued leave prior to using any donated time.
7. Time contributed to the catastrophic leave bank shall be used and administered in accordance with the procedures governing sick leave use, and shall not be available after the situation giving rise to the catastrophic leave bank no longer exists.
8. Any donated time remaining in a catastrophic leave bank when the bank is closed, will be returned to the contributing employees on a pro-rated basis as vacation. No time will be returned to employees whose accrued vacation is already at the maximum permitted by contract.
9. Any questions regarding catastrophic leave banks should be directed to the Department's Human Resources Director, or the Director's designee.
10. Each bargaining agent must agree to allow this additional leave time to affected employees. A standard Catastrophic Leave Memorandum of Agreement has been developed for this purpose.
11. Catastrophic leave is done without precedent and is not a contractual benefit. The agreement will not be cited as precedent in similar or like situations by either party, will not be grievable, and will not be published or quoted in any other form.